LUTKA
4
2022

Lutka – na meji sama s seboj

Potencial lutke je v njenem nastajanju, v zapol-njevanju njene izhodiščne nične točke. Lutka nenehno prevprašuje predpostavke in definicije, ki jo poskušajo zaobjeti v jasne teoretske prem-ise. Tem teoretskim zaznamkom se lutka izmika in samo sebe transcendira v neulovljivo prezenco.

Izhodiščen prazen prostor lutka zapolnjuje v ko-munikaciji s sodobnostjo. Preobraža se od animi-ranega figurativnega predmeta v obliko animirane forme, entitete, misli, pomena. Prevzema vloge in oblike drugih umetniških zvrsti in se inter-medialno povezuje. V ekspanzivnosti in fluidnos-ti njenega medija lutkovno umetnost opredeljuje amplituda razvoja, ki večplastno reflektira vsa področja njenega udejanjanja. Lastna tradicija ji daje temelj, ki pa lutke ne determinira. Kon-tinuirano se redefinira in prav nenehno iskanje lutkovnega je njeno bistvo. Vedno je *na robu* in morda jo prav to najbolj opredeljuje.

Revija za lutkovno umetnost in gledališče an-imiranih form *Lutka* tokrat zajema mejne točke na ravni prakse, teorije in politike, ki jih lutkovna umetnost v svojem bistvu pogosto vz-postavlja in preseega. Še danes ohranja svo-jo zgodovinsko naravo socialnega komentiran-ja, razpiranja tabuiranih tematik in premika meje družbenih diskurzov s subverzivnimi gest-ami. S svojim potencialom umetniškega protesta in družbenokritičnih komentarjev se odziva na družbeno stvarnost. Sledi vlogi umetnosti, ki nudi refleksijo in poudarja pravično in solidar-no stvarnost. Lutkovna umetnost lahko misli al-ternativno, kar je izredno pomembno v današnjih časih. Revija *Lutka* tako prinaša zgodovinski in aktualni pregled lutkovnih praks, ki zajema-jo družbeno angažirano gledališče in v širokem smislu udejanjajo svojo politično naravo.

Lutkovna umetnost lahko deluje na ravni ne-posredne uprizoritvene akcije in upora, lahko pa tudi na ravni teorije razgrajuje ustaljene konvencije, kako mislimo družbene vidike st-varnosti. Teoretski prispevki v novi številki

prevprašujejo tudi osnovni princip obravnave. Na teatrološki ravni in tudi na ravni družbenih sfer ponudijo v razmislek novo izhodišče obravnave. Njihovo razumevanje presega binarni konstrukt (živo : neživo, človek : nečlovek, animirani : animator), ki je bil pogosto namen-jen opredelitvi lutkovne umetnosti. Obrača se v razkrajanje binarizma – v možnost drugačne-ga, horizontalnega in bolj fluidnega pristopa do lutkovnega. Tovrstno izhodiščno mesto pa se lahko aplicira tudi na družbene sfere, na primer na prevetritev samega koncepta spola in na specifično odmaknjeno razumevanje človeka, družbe in zgodovine.

Lutke ne determinirajo ustaljena fizična podo-ba, družbeno okolje in norme. Zaradi kameleon-ske oblike lutke se ustaljene meje našega do-jemanja stvarnosti in lutkovne umetnosti lahko prevprašujejo in gradijo na novo. Lahko mislijo zunaj okvirjev in razkrajajo navidezno samoumev-no. Lahko ustvarjajo svetove, ki niso vezani na naše družbene predispozicije. Potencial lut-ke je v njeni brezmejnosti in hkrati v njeni nedoločenosti, ki nam omogoči, da vidimo svet z drugačne in novonastale perspektive. Postavi nas lahko na rob z našim lastnim vedenjem.

Revijo je podprl evropski projekt Kritiška plat-forma sodobnega lutkarstva EU, ki združuje šti-ri znane evropske ustanove z bogato lutkovno dediščino. V njem poleg Lutkovnega gledališča Ljubljana sodelujejo tudi Akademija za umet-nost in kulturo iz Hrvaške, Vilensko gledališče "Lėlė" iz Litve in Puppet Animation Scotland iz Združenega kraljestva. Glavni cilj projekta je ponovno vzpostaviti teorijo in kritiko lut-kovnega gledališča kot element javnega diskurza. S projektom sta se vzpostavili sodobna lutkov-na mreža in spletna platforma ECPCP, na kateri so dostopne mednarodne refleksije in teatrološke analize s področja sodobne lutkovne umetnosti.

Tjaša Bertoncelj, odgovorna urednica

The Puppet – On the Edge With Itself

The potential of the puppet lies in its creation and in filling the gap it has left from its starting point, zero. The puppet constantly questions the assumptions and definitions that attempt to frame it in clear theoretical premises. It eludes these theoretical characterisations and transcends itself into an elusive presence.

The puppet fills the originally empty space by communicating with the contemporary. From an animated figurative object, it transforms into an animated form, an entity, a thought, and becomes filled with meaning. It takes on the roles and forms of other fields of art and makes intermedial connections. Puppetry, because of its expansiveness and fluidity as a medium, is defined by the richness of its development, which in many ways reflects all areas of its realisation. Its own tradition forms its foundation, but it does not define puppetry. It is constantly being redefined, and puppetry's constant search for new qualities constitutes its essence. It is always *on the edge* and perhaps that is what defines it most.

This issue of *Lutka* (Puppet), the Journal on Puppetry Arts and the Theatre of Animated Forms, looks at the margins at the level of practise, theory, and politics that puppetry often establishes and transcends in its substance. Today, it still maintains its historical character by making social commentaries, addressing taboo subjects, and pushing the boundaries of social discourses through subversive gestures. With its potential for artistic protest and the expression of socially critical commentary, it responds to social reality. It follows the role of art that offers reflection and emphasises just and solidary reality. Puppetry can adopt an alternative way of thinking, which is extremely important in today's world. *Lutka* thus provides an overview of past and present practises of puppetry that encompass socially engaged theatre and, in the broadest sense, reveal its political character.

Puppetry can operate on the level of direct representational action and revolt, but also on the level of theory as it breaks down established conventions of thinking about the social aspects of reality. The theoretical contributions in this new issue revisit the basic principle of analysis. They offer a new starting point for analysis at the level of theatre studies, but also at the level of social spheres. Their understanding goes beyond the binary construct (the animate vs. the inanimate, humans vs. non-humans, the animate form vs. the animator) that has often been a means of defining puppetry. It turns to the dissolution of binarism – the possibility of a different, horizontal, and more fluid approach to the elements of puppetry. However, this starting point can also be applied to social spheres, for example, the process of rethinking the concept of gender and a specifically elusive understanding of people, society, and history.

Puppets are not determined by a fixed physical image, social context, and norms. Through the chameleon-like form of puppets, it is possible to rethink and reshape established boundaries in relation to our perception of reality and puppetry. They can think outside the box and dissect what seems to be taken for granted. They can create worlds that are not bound by our social preferences. The potential of puppetry lies in its boundlessness and at the same time in its indeterminacy, which allows us to see the world from a different and new perspective. It can push us and our knowledge to the edge.

The journal is supported by the EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform, a European project that brings together four well-known European institutions with a rich heritage in puppetry. In addition to the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, the project involves the Academy of Arts and Culture from Croatia, Vilnius Theatre "Lėlė" from Lithuania, and Puppet Animation from United Kingdom. The main aim of the project is to re-establish puppet theatre theory and criticism as elements of public discourse. The project has established a modern puppet network and the online platform ECPCP, which provides access to international reflection and theatrical analysis in the field of contemporary puppetry.

Tjaša Bertoncelj, Editor-in-Chief

MAŠA JAZBEC

Virtualna želja po aktualizaciji lutke
Kako misliti lutko v umetnosti z Gillesom Deleuzom

Časi, ko se je tradicionalnim oblikam lutke pridružila kopica novih lutkovnih oblik, so že preteklost. Avtomatiziranim, mehaniziranim, tehnološko naprednim, digitalnim, strojnim, androidnim, hibridnim in v najširšem možnem pomenu animacijskim oblikam se v trenutku izrekanja tega že pridružujejo nove. Kako torej premišljevati o lutki in animiranih oblikah v tako hitro spreminjajočem se času in prostoru umetnosti? Ne le, da se je »lutka«[1] v najžlahtnejšem pogledu znašla na svojem robu, zdi se, da se mora »lutka« postaviti po *robu* sama sebi.

Premislek o »lutki« zahteva izstop iz ustaljenih okvirov in klic po novem pristopu. Čeprav francoski filozof 20. stoletja Gilles Deleuze v svoji dolgi filozofski karieri ni pretežno niti izrecno premišljeval o lutki ali lutkovnem gledališču, se zdijo njegove postavke in koncepti naravnost privlačni za premišljevanje lutkovnega v svetu umetnosti.

1 | »Lutka« v navednicah »pomeni« sodobne lutkovne oblike in vprašanje, kaj vse, z odklonom od tradicionalnih lutkovnih oblik, uvrščamo v polje lutkovnega.

Lutka išče svoj *Abecednik*

Mnogi so že uporabili Deleuzove misli znotraj lutkovnih in animiranih oblik,[2] pri čemer so se osredotočali na njegova najpomembnejša filozofska dela (nekatera je napisal skupaj s Félixom Guattarijem), kot so *Razlika in ponavljanje*, *Tisoč platojev*, *Kaj je filozofija*, *Anti-Ojdip*, *Logika smisla*, *Podoba- -gibanje*, *Podoba-čas* in druga. Zanimive pristope ubira tudi francoska raziskovalka, filozofinja in predavateljica Flore Garcin-Marrou v svojih študijah,[3] kjer Deleuzovo filozofijo premika na področje gledališča. V enem svojih člankov piše o možnosti dramatizacije oziroma teatralizacije filozofije znotraj oblike abecede po navdihu *Abecednika* Gillesa Deleuza. Gre za svetovno znan sklop intervjujev, ki jih je s francoskim mislecem posnela njegova bivša študentka Claire Parnet nekaj let pred filozofovo smrtjo, objavljen pa je bil po njegovi smrti leta 1996. Pomeni pomemben del Deleuzove zapuščine, saj prek oblike abecednika širšemu občinstvu omogoča vpogled v njegove najpomembnejše filozofske koncepte. Osemurni intervju z vsako črko francoske abecede razpira vprašanje na določeno temo. Črka A tako predstavlja *Animal* ('žival'), črka B *Boisson* ('pijača'), črka C *Culture* ('kultura'), D *Désir* ('želja'), vse do zadnje črke Z kot *Zigzag* ('cikcak'). Nabor tem ne razlaga ali poskuša razlagati konceptov, ki jih je v svojem večdesetletnem delu razvijal Deleuze. Prav tako intervjuvanec pred snemanjem ni bil seznanjen z vprašanji, poznal je le teme za posamezno črko. Med intervjujem se pred gledalcem počasi odvija dogodek spajanja filozofske misli in razmišljanja o vsakodnevnem, banalnem. Kot primer, črka R kot *Résistance* ('upor') preide od govora o začetni uporni drži posameznika, da se postavi po robu vsesplošnemu mnenju, človeški vulgarnosti in neumnosti, k občutenju sramote, ki jo mora čutiti vsak ustvarjalec. Sramote zaradi tega, ker človeška narava sili človeka k temu, da življenje zapira v ječo, medtem ko umetnost življenju odpira pot in človeka opominja na vitalno moč ustvarjanja. Ravno s takšnim formatom intervjuja se kaže daljnosežnost Deleuzove misli. Njegovi koncepti so del procesa nastajajočih vprašanj in problemov. Po besedah filozofa vprašanj namreč ne smemo postavljati oziroma fiksirati, temveč jih moramo proizvajati oziroma fabricirati (*fabriquer une question*) zavoljo proizvajanja problema. Novi koncepti nastanejo šele s proizvajanjem vprašanj in problemov. S tem se omogoči posebna igra vprašanj in problemov, ki ne kliče k singularnemu in dokončnemu, temveč pušča prostor mnogoterim možnostim in pluralnim interpretacijam. Deleuza zanima vmesni prostor (*entre*), ne toliko med pomeni, temveč prostor »med« urejenimi označbami. Kar v danem trenutku procesa označuje nekaj, lahko vodi v drugo označbo, lahko odpira drugo pot in zdrsne v drugo označevalno polje. Intenzivnost teh ustrojenih označb pa sili v ustvarjalno dejavnost. Misliti po Deleuzu pomeni ustvarjati, proizvajati in snovati novo.

Misliti lutko in oblike lutkovnega bi lahko začeli z *Abecednikom*, le da bi ga tokrat prestavili na polje lutkovnega.[4] Katere teme določajo lutko, katere označbe lahko pripišemo lutki? Predvsem pa, katere odnose in razmerja lahko zaznavamo, ko govorimo o lutkovnem? Glede na to, da »lutkovni abecednik« še ne obstaja, vsaj ne po merilih Deleuzove misli, lahko začnemo s prvimi koraki proizvajanja vprašanj in problemov. S pomočjo študije, ki jo razvija Flore Garcin-Marrou, bomo iskali odnose med lutko in Deleuzovimi koncepti, kot so decentralizacija (razsrediščenje), rizom (micelij), čas- -prostor, virtualno-aktualno.

Razcep in razsrediščenje lutke

V številnih primerih premišljevanja o lutki uporabljamo filozofske pojme, kot so objekt, subjekt, živo, neživo, fizično, metafizično. Poleg omenjenih binarnih konceptov se v lutkarstvu nenehno dotikamo pojma animacije. Kako je lutka animirana, kdo lutko animira ter kaj vse je lahko animirano. Zdi se, da se vedno znajdemo na neki vertikalni lestvici premišljevanja o lutki, vertikalni v smislu hierarhičnega sopostavljanja tistega, kar je animirano, in tistega, kar animira. Navpična in s tem hierarhična struktura omogoča, da se osredotočimo na en vidik oziroma en dejavnik znotraj tovrstne strukture. Kaj pomeni tisti, ki animira, za tisto, kar je animirano? Ali je animirano podrejeno tistemu, ki animira? Ali je tisti, ki animira, nadrejen tistemu, kar šele bo animirano? Razmerje in odnos sta tako vedno vzpostavljena, a le na način osredotočanja oziroma centraliziranja enega od elementov binarnega koncepta. Če premišljujemo torej, kaj pomeni animator, bo ta vedno pomenil izhodišče za nadaljnji premislek. Animator bo postal središčni pojem, iz katerega

---

2 | V tem prispevku se je avtorica posvetila nekaterim študijam raziskovalk Aline Wiame in Flore Garcin-Marrou.

3 | V tem prispevku so v ospredju: Flore Garcin-Marrou. »De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze.« *Marionnette, corps-frontière*, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. »Corps et voix«, 2016.; Flore Garcin-Marrou. »Pas si bete la marionnette!«. *Bêt(is)es: Entre Derrida, Deleuze-Guattari et Sloterdijk*. Chimeres, let. 3, št. 81, 2013, str. 131–138.; Flore Garcin-Marrou. »L'Abecedaire de Gilles Deleuze«. *Dossier: Art et alphabet*. Revue Ligeia, št. 153–156, januar–junij 2017, str. 212–219.

4 | Flore Garcin-Marrou v svojem prispevku o Deleuzovem *Abecedniku* (vir naveden zgoraj) omeni primer kanadske koreografinje Andrée Martin in njenega dela *L'Abécédaire du corps dansant* (2016) kot premestitve Deleuzovega *Abecednika* na področje plesne umetnosti. Deleuzova filozofija se s tem primerom prestavi, »teatralizira« v polje umetnosti.

bomo izpeljali njegov odnos do tistega, kar bo animirano, pa naj bo to predmet, snov, lutka. Prav tako se način premišljevanja o animiranem ne spremeni. Če premišljujemo animirano, bomo to najprej vzeli za izhodišče, mu določili njegove značilnosti in njegovo naravo, in šele zatem iskali silnice, ki določajo animirano v odnosu do tistega, ki ga animira. Filozofska misel Gillesa Deleuza nas postavlja pred drugačno strukturo premišljevanja. Namesto hierarhične, vertikalne lestvice, kjer se premikamo od enega osrediščenega pojma do drugega in se ujamemo v miselno prestavljanje po lestvici navzgor in navzdol, francoski filozof ponuja horizontalno strukturo premišljevanja. Izhodišče, iz katerega bomo spodbujali oznake, zdaj ne bo igralo poglavitne vloge, saj se nanj znotraj premišljevanja ne bomo povsem osredotočili. Namesto kroženja od enega izhodišča do drugega bomo izbrali način premikanja po različnih premicah, črtah misli in vztrajnega preizpraševanja samega medija (lutke), med njimi pa iskali njihove različne teritorije, polja in dogodke. Animirano in tisti, ki animira, zdaj ne bosta postavljena eden proti drugemu, nista mišljena kot vsak svoja posameznost. Živo ne bo postavljeno nasproti neživemu, kakor tudi ne subjekt nasproti objektu, temveč se bodo oznake spletale v svojstveno gibanje mnogoterega. Gib animatorja lahko nakazuje poteze animiranega, poteza animiranega se členi v afekte (občutja) gledalcev in začrta novo oznako v animatorju. Znotraj procesa gre za prepletanje oznak in intenzitet, pri čemer ne moremo jasno razmejiti ali determinirati neke osrednje točke dogajanja, podobno kot pri rizomu (miceliju)[5]. To, kar predstavlja dogajanje, niso stvari same ali njihove danosti, temveč dinamizmi v njihovem postajanju. Znajdemo se v območju nerazločljivega, kjer v stvareh, pojavih, zaznavah ne iščemo primanjkljaja ali odsotnosti nečesa drugega, temveč prehajamo med različnimi identitetami tako, da je neka označba (stvari, pojava ali zaznave) lahko vedno nekaj drugega. Če umetniški dogodek poskušamo gledati skozi prizmo Deleuzove misli, se z njegovimi komponentami vedno soočamo na način »bodisi-bodisi« (bodisi videno, slišano, zaznano ali lutka, animirana oblika, animator označuje x bodisi y), vmes pa obstaja zdrsljiva površina nastajajočih pomenov. Razcep, način odcepljanja od ustaljenih, fiksiranih pojmov, vzpostavlja deleuzovsko gledališče resničnega gibanja.[6] Ne-

nehna produkcija beleženja in konzumacije (v zaznavnem svetu gledalca ali ustvarjalca nenehno presnavljanje medija in materiala) je za Deleuza ustvarjalna dejavnost, procesnost ali proces kot možnost osvobajanja.[7]

Če se vrnemo k uvodni misli, da se mora »lutka« postaviti po robu sama sebi, bi to pomenilo izstop oziroma razcep od njene ustaljene identitete in proizvajanje novega polja pojmovanja »lutke« in lutkovnega. Vsaka ideja o lutki je njen potencial, možen začetek ali konec. Znotraj umetniškega dogodka, v katerem se porodi ideja oziroma potencial lutkovnega (animiranega, proizvajajočega, mehaniziranega), gre za splet intenzitet in iskanje skupne limite, ki dogajanje v času in prostoru preobrazi v ustvarjalno dejavnost. Ustvarjalca, ki operira s potenciali lutkovnega, sili v ustvarjanje senzacij (občutij) in nenehno proizvajanje vprašanj in problemov v polju lutkovnega. Deleuze je (sicer znotraj koncipiranja misli o kinematografiji in filmski umetnosti) to poimenoval »tekoča percepcija,«[8] kjer koncept išče svoj teritorij. V polju lutkovnega bi lahko rekli podobno; lutka, ki se postavlja sama sebi po robu, mora iskati svoj teritorij in nenehno proizvajati vprašanja in probleme, preden bo izoblikovala svoj koncept.

Avtomat kot paradigma vitalne energije

V članku »Od rizomatske lutke do duhovnega avtomata pri Gillesu Deleuzu«[9] Flore Garcin-Marrou ponuja premislek o pomembni vlogi filozofije Gillesa Deleuza in njegovih konceptov za novo razmišljanje o lutki in lutkovnem gledališču. Natančna Deleuzova bralka predstavi pregled različnih pojmovanj človeka lutke skozi obdobja zgodovine filozofije, pri čemer opozori na pomemben preobrat, ki ga je v drugi polovici 20. stoletja storil Deleuze z novim branjem nemškega dramaturga in pisca Heinricha von Kleista in njegovega eseja »O marionetnem gledališču«[10] ter njegovim konceptom podobe gibanja in podobe časa v filmski umetnosti.

Kleist kot predstavnik obdobja nemške romantike ima lutko za igralčevo antagonistko. Človeški ustvarjalec se v duhu takratnega obdobja izkaže za nepopolnega, neokretnega, lutka pa predstavlja popolno, naravno umerjeno prisotnost. Lutka

5 | Gilles Deleuze je pojem prenesel iz botanike v filozofijo. *Rizom* pomeni splet, ki mu ne moremo določiti središčne točke. Podobno kot pri koreninskem spletu ne moremo razločiti točke začetka ne konca rastline. Vsaka točka je možen začetek ali konec. V filozofiji se pojem *micelija* (slovenska raba pojma rizom) obravnava kot deskriptiven model, v katerem elementi niso urejeni hierarhično.
6 | Na Deleuzov pojem opozori tudi Aline Wiame v svojem prispevku: Aline Wiame. »Deleuzovo "Lutkarstvo" in etika nečloveških kompozicij«, uredili Kraigher A., Rooss A. *Gledališče animiranih form*. Maska št. 179–180/Lutka št. 59, 2016, str. 60–67.

7 | Gilles D., Guattari, F. *Anti-Ojdip : kapitalizem in shizofrenija*, Krtina. 2017, str. 478–479.
8 | Gilles Deleuze. *Podoba-gibanje*. Studia humanitatis, 1991.
9 | Flore Garcin-Marrou. »De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' à l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze.« *Marionnette, corps-frontiere*, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. »Corps et voix«, 2016.
10 | Kleistov esej je bil objavljen v *Berliner Abendblätter* in je nastal na podlagi refleksije plesnega dogodka.

je namreč popolnoma podrejena zakonom mehanike in se upira nepopolni naravi človeške posameznosti. Lutka uboga želje svojega animatorja in je tako najbolj dovršena izvajalka umetniškega dogodka. Njena prednost je to, da ne podleže nepopolnostim svojega telesa, naloga in moč animatorja sta, da jo spravi v njeno popolno gibanje. Kleist v lutkinih značilnostih, njenih mrtvih okončinah in strogo naravnanih mehanizmih, ki sledijo zakonu težnosti, vidi popolnost giba. Za nemškega romantika je lutka simbol idealne človeške narave in reprezentacije popolne gledališkosti, saj ne razpolaga z nikakršnim življenjem zunaj gledališkega polja.

V enem od komentarjev Kleistovega besedila pa Deleuze poudari, da lutka ne more slediti samo zakonu težnosti in moči svojega animatorja. Vez, ki veže lutko in animatorja, namreč ni čisto in popolno gibanje, temveč je to multipla vez. Gre za vez, ki nosi v sebi različne intenzitete virtualnosti in aktualnosti. Virtualno v deleuzovskem kontekstu pomeni nekaj, kar se lahko aktualizira. Vez lutke in animatorja se torej ne kaže zgolj v nazorni, figurativni reprezentaciji, temveč v svoji virtualnosti (nekaj, kar je še lahko aktualizirano). Prav ta virtualnost, ki sili idejne, telesne in narativne potenciale lutke (hkrati in ne samo z njenim animatorjem), da postanejo dogodek, pa je razplastena, razsrediščena ali razslojena. Lutka in animator vzpostavita možne odnose po načelu »sem in tja«,[11] lutka se lahko virtualizira v animatorju, animator se aktualizira v lutki in obratno. Tako se zgodi, da lutka prevlada nad animatorjem, saj se »animator virtualizira v njej (postaja del fikcije), medtem ko se lutka aktualizira, saj pusti verjeti, da nenadoma oživi v realnosti«.[12]

Ko Deleuze govori o razliki med gledališčem in filmom, na več mestih opozori na odnos med videnim in slišanim. Gledališče hkrati govori o nečem in nam nekaj prikazuje, slišano in videno nastaja v istem času in prostoru. Film pa nekaj prikazuje, a tisto, o čemer govori, se vzpostavi »pod« podobo (kot nova plast podobe). Po Deleuzu gre za razliko med dramsko in »avtomatsko« podobo, ki zahteva novo pojmovanje akterja ali vloge. Gledališki igralec izživlja ali oživlja spoj svojega glasu in telesa, filmski igralec, nasprotno, pa nekakšen prelom ali premestitev telesa in glasu, podobno kot lutka. To, kar je lastno filmu, je premeščanje slišanega in videnega, pravi Deleuze.[13] Gledališki igralec neposredno

izreka besede, uporablja svoje telo za dialogiziranje z dramsko strukturo ali neposredno z gledalcem. Film pa gledališki dialog dekonstruira; preobrne absolut drame in v dialog vnese razcep med tukaj in zdaj izrekanja. Vloga ali akter postaneta avtomatizirana. Filmski igralec tako ne uporabi enake tehnike izražanja, njegovi gibi postanejo del zvočnega in vizualnega gradiva filmske podobe. »Avtomatski igralec je izjemen tudi po svojem pristopu h gibanju. Ker gibanje ni dramatično, ampak avtomatsko, drama ni več osnova dejanja: gibanje postane 'neposredni podatek kinematografske podobe'.«[14] Koreografske ali gledališke podobe so vedno pričvrščene na neko gibalo, nekaj, kar jih spravlja v gibanje, filmska podoba pa sama ustvarja gibanje. Gibanje je tako izvzeto iz njegove figurativne narave. Flore Garcin-Marrou navaja Deleuzove kinematografske primere različnih filmskih režiserjev. Prikazano gibanje naravnih elementov, kot so voda, morje, reka, ni zgolj naravno gibanje, temveč ti prikazani elementi postanejo avtomati (avtomatizirani akterji), ki sicer ohranjajo svojo posameznost, dodani pa so jim še drugi znaki, percepti in afekti (znaki percepcije in občutenja). Vse to avtomatizirano delovanje gre torej v smeri daleč stran od preproste reprezentacije in prispeva k proizvajanju moči gibanja. Gibanja, ki zaradi intenzitete perceptivnih znakov in afektov kliče po novi subjektivnosti. »Ta paradigma duhovnega avtomata, podedovana od Spinoze, označuje to stanje misli, ki je sposobno povezati idejo z idejo, podobe s podobami neodvisno od kakršnegakoli sklicevanja na predmet, v radikalni emancipaciji od dramatičnih in mimetičnih zahtev. V tej novi avtomatski subjektivnosti tudi gledalec postane duhovni avtomat, ko vstopi v kohezijo z gibalno podobo, katere vibracije doživlja.«[15]

Deleuzov koncept »mehaničnosti« in figure avtomata kot paradigme vitalne energije, samogibanja in pomnoževanja možnosti zaznave znotraj polja filmske umetnosti se prekriva z njegovim premišljevanjem o estetskih, družbenih in ekonomskih prevratih 20. stoletja. Flore Garcin-Marrou s premišljevanjem Deleuzovih konceptov poudarja nujnost novega premisleka gledališča in filozofije, ki vse bolj tehnološkemu napredku sveta ne more ubežati.

11 | Flore Garcin-Marrou. »De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze.« *Marionnette, corps-frontiere,* etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. »Corps et voix«, 2016, str. 7. Flore Garcin-Marrou uporabi besedno zvezo »va-et-vient« v smislu nenehnega prehajanja med priti in oditi.
12 | Ibid.
13 | Deleuzov nastop na konferenci *Kaj je ustvarjalno dejanje?* (*Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création ?*), Fundacije Femis, 17. 5. 1987.

14 | Flore Garcin-Marrou. »De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze.« *Marionnette, corps-frontiere,* etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. »Corps et voix«, 2016, str. 8.
15 | Ibid., str. 9.

Lutka avtomat

Prav tako tehnološkemu napredku ne uide »lutka«. Naj bo to klasična, tradicionalna lutka vseh oblik, naj gre za lutke stroje, androide ali vse druge oblike, ki jih danes poimenujemo animirane oblike. Ključen izsledek, ki naj sledi Deleuzovi misli in pomeni prvi korak proizvajanja vprašanja in problema o lutkovni, animirani obliki v polju umetnosti, je razcep lutkovnega od njegove metafizične narave. Gilles Deleuze je kot eden prvih pomembnih filozofov 20. stoletja razmišljal o vlogi kinematografije v svetu umetnosti, sočasno s premišljevanjem o umetnosti znotraj tehnološko vse bolj razvijajoče se (ne pa nujno naprednejše) družbe. Podobno pot lahko ubere »lutka«. Micelijski, rizomatski pristop, kjer je treba lutko gledati iz različnih smeri in jo vedno znova postavljati v nov kontekst ter iskati novo možnost teritorija, je pristop, ki pritiče spreminjanju družbe. Lutka, virtualizirana ali aktualizirana, lahko vedno postane avtomatizirana podoba ali raje dogodek. A le toliko, kolikor avtomatiziran dogodek pomeni nujen klic ustvarjalca, da življenje spravi v gibanje, da življenje osvobodi ustaljenih in vsakodnevnih spon, v katere ga tako radi utesnjujemo.

POVZETEK

Čeprav francoski filozof Gilles Deleuze ni nikoli izrecno govoril ali pisal o lutkovnem gledališču, je z njegovimi koncepti mogoče ponovno vzpostaviti pojem lutkovnega in animiranih oblik. Z vzporednim branjem del francoske teoretičarke Flore Garcin-Marrou, ki v svojem delu pogosto izhaja iz deleuzovske misli, se prispevek osredotoča na drugačen pristop pojmovanja lutkovnega, pri čemer opozori na horizontalnost premišljevanja lutke kot odstranitev od vertikalne hierarhične razporeditve, vpelje aktualno in virtualno v polje lutke, v drugem delu pa lutko in gledalca označi za duhovni avtomat.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

Gilles Deleuze, filozofija, animirane oblike, polje lutkovnega, gledališče, umetnost, virtualno-aktualno, Flore Garcin-Marrou, micelij (rizom), deteritorializacija, Abecednik, znaki-percepcije, vitalna energija, duhovni avtomat, podoba-čas, podoba-gibanje, potencial lutkovnega, ustvarjalno dejanje

O AVTORICI

Maša Jazbec se je po študiju filozofije in primerjalne književnosti na Filozofski fakulteti (Univerza v Ljubljani in Univerza v Burgundiji) posvečala izobraževanju na področju francoskega jezika, pedagogike in gledaliških praks. Delovala je kot dramaturginja in sodelavka za gledališki govor, zadnja leta pa raziskuje lutkovno umetnost, ko piše za Kritiško platformo sodobnega lutkarstva EU, in prevaja (poezijo, dramska besedila, strokovne članke). Posveča se poučevanju francoskega jezika, raziskovanju pripovedovalskih veščin, izvaja dogodke kulturno-umetnostne vzgoje in lutkovno-gledališke predstave v slovenščini in francoščini. Kot pedagoginja, prevajalka in performerka aktivno sodeluje s Francoskim inštitutom v Sloveniji, francoskim Centrom za ustvarjalno otroštvo (Centre de Créations pour l'Enfance, Centre culturel de Tinqueux, France), Vodnikovo domačijo v Ljubljani in Lutkovnim gledališčem Ljubljana.

Literatura

Aline Wiame. »Deleuzovo 'Lutkarstvo' in etika nečloveških kompozicij«, uredili Kraigher A., Rooss A. *Gledališče animiranih form.* Maska št. 179–180/Lutka št. 59, 2016. | **Beauchamp, H., Garcin-Marrou, F., Noges, J., Van Haesebroeck, E.** *Les Scènes philosophiques de la marionnette.* Éditions L'Entretemps et Institut International de la Marionnette avec le soutien de l'Université de Toulouse, 2016. | **Deleuze, Gilles.** *Podoba-gibanje.* Studia humanitatis, 1991. | **Deleuze, Gilles.** *Podoba-čas.* Studia humanitatis, 2020. | **Deleuze, Gilles.** *Razlika in ponavljanje.* Založba ZRC SAZU, 2011. | **Deleuze G., Guattari, F.** *Micelij : esej.* Hyperion, 2000. | **Deleuze G., Guattari, F.** *Kaj je filozofija?* Študentska založba, 1999. | **Deleuze G., Guattari, F.** *Anti-Ojdip : kapitalizem in shizofrenija.* Krtina, 2017. | **Flore Garcin-Marrou.** »L'Abecedaire de Gilles Deleuze«. *Dossier: Art et alphabet.* Revue Ligeia, št. 153–156, januar–junij 2017. | **Flore Garcin-Marrou.** »De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze.« *Marionnette, corps-frontiere*, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. »Corps et voix«, 2016. | **Flore Garcin-Marrou.** »Pas si bete la marionnette !«. *Bêt(is)es: Entre Derrida, Deleuze-Guattari et Sloterdijk.* Chimeres št. 81, 2013. | *L'abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze:* avec Claire Parnet, DVD, Montparnasse, 2004. | *Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création ?* (*Kaj je ustvarjalno dejanje?*). Femis, 17. 5. 1987.

TJAŠA BERTONCELJ

Pogoj neživega v lutkarstvu

Živo in lutkarstvo sta v očitni medsebojni analogiji. Temelj lutkovne umetnosti opredeljujejo *bivanje*, *nastajanje* in *znamenje biti*. Nastajanje bivajočega pa predpostavlja izhodišče, *ki ne biva* in ki ga opredeljuje *nebivajoče*. Glavnina obravnave in opredeljevanja lutkarstva se zato osredotoča na lutko kot *neživi* objekt, ki ga opredeljuje dejanje *oživljanja*.

Zanimalo nas bo, koliko lahko o tej obči predpostavki podvomimo in ali je lahko še naprej osnova za opredelitev lutkovnega gledališča. Hkrati pa bomo v razčlenitvi različnih modusov bivajočega in nebivajočega zaznali, kakšni pomeni *živega* in *neživega* se tvorijo v sodobnih lutkovnih uprizoritvah.

Temelj neživega

Dejanje oživljanja ima zanimive konceptualne nastavke, ker animiranemu objektu pripada drug ontološki status bivanja, kot se kaže v uprizoritvi. Pomembna fascinacija lutkovne umetnosti je pravzaprav osredinjena na določenost *neživosti*, ki jo z lutkovno animacijo spremenimo v *živo*. Temu pa sledi vprašanje: Kako percipiramo neživo?

Neživo pogosto mislimo kot nekaj diametralno nasprotnega od človeškega bivanja. To se namreč kaže kot ultimativno merilo živega. Neživi snovi in stvarem torej umanjkajo avtonomnost, zavest, razumnost, samozavedanje, mentalni pojavi, sposobnosti komunikacije, čutnosti in lastno gibanje. Tovrstno binarno dojemanje sveta na eni strani dojema živahne in aktivne subjekte, na drugi strani pa pasivne in stabilne pojave oziroma »neinstrumentalne entitete«.[1]

Izhajajoč iz »vzhodnih« principov bivajočega se v drugem miselnem sistemu *živo* razprostira tudi prek človeškega, živalskega in rastlinskega sveta. Nekaj, kar navadno dojemamo kot neživo, ima lahko samosvoje življenje ali pa vsebuje animistične zametke dojemanja, po katerem imajo vse stvari dušo. Podvomimo in prevetrimo lahko »ustaljen« antropocentrični temelj in najdemo dvoumnost in kulturno pogojenost opredeljevanja neživega. Slednje pa še bolj poglabljajo novodobni diskurzi, ki opolnomočijo svet nečloveškega.

John Bell v poglavju *»Playing with the Eternal Uncanny«*[2] zapiše, da lutke rekonstruirajo našo superiornost nad materialnim svetom. Z njimi lahko podvomimo o moderni paradigmi in moči nad znanostjo in raciem. Človek ni več absolutna predpostavka oziroma »poslednji kriterij smisla biti [...] in vsega v svetu bivajočega«,[3] kot opredeli Edmund Husserl. Zunaj takega po človeku ustvarjenega konvencionalnega pogleda lahko razkrojimo determinirano strukturo neživega.

Animator v sodobnem lutkarstvu ni več absolutni demiurg, ki totalno obvladuje materiale in objekte. Ti pridobijo avtonomnejšo naravo, na katero se animator odziva. Pozornost se preusmerja na avtonomijo gibanja objektov in njihove senzualne kvalitete, ki kažejo na lastno voljo in kaprice objektov.[4] Ekspresivni potencial objektov nas tako odvrača od človeka – upravljalca – boga. Kot pravi Nika Arhar: »Neživi svet materialnih stvari ne izraža zgolj antropocentričnega vzgiba uravnavanja sveta, ampak lahko v novem razsrediščenem svetu nastopi kot gibalo z lastno močjo kot soustvarjalec skupnega sistema in smisla, kar lahko najlepše pokaže prav sodobno lutkovno gledališče.«[5] Na novo je problematizirana »pozicija subjekta, ki vodi, uravnava, deluje, vzgiba in podeljuje pomen«.[6]

Na novo lahko prevprašujemo, kaj je neživo. Kako ga mislimo v lutkovnih uprizoritvah, pa je pogosto povezano s tem, kaj predstavlja *oživljanje*. Neživo se vendarle izraža v odnosu z živim. Ozavestimo lahko ontološko stanje lutke, preden oživi in postane »imaginarni subjekt«.[7] To pa bo pokazalo, da predmet animacije ni vedno *neživa stvar*, temveč sega tudi v območje živega in živih bitij.

Znaki živega

Dejanje lutkovnega oživljanja nedvoumno odpira vprašanja bivanja: kaj je življenje, kaj je živo in znak živega? Kdaj in zakaj lahko rečemo, da nekaj biva? Kako razumeti pojav obstoja? Pa tudi – kaj v sodobnih lutkovnih praksah reprezentira oživljanje lutke? Je morda indikator njen spremenjeni ontološki status, iluzija samosvojega karakterja lutke ali kaj drugega?

Konvencionalno oživljanje smo lahko videli v predstavi Philippa Saumonta z naslovom *'3'* (Le Théâtre Des Tarabates v koprodukciji z La Passerelle – Scène nationale de St--Brieuc, 2021). Upodablja rojstvo oziroma utelešenje lutke, ki se preobrazi iz oživljene dlani v končno podobo po meri človeka. V dejanju osamosvajanja lutke, samonastajanja in prisvajanja animatorja ter v upravljanju in manipuliranju z njim pridobiva vse bolj polno in lastno podobo. Dovrši se v končnem prizoru, ko telo lutkarja postane telo lutke.[8]

1 | Keren Turbahn, Julia. *Kako stvarem pustiti, da so.* 2018, *https://emanat.si/media/330171e19e/Kako.stvarem.pustiti.da.so-JKT--Jan.Rozman_Predmetenje-FINAL.pdf*; pov. po Lepecki, André. *Singularities – Dance in the Age of Performance*, Routledge, 2016.
2 | Bell, John. »Playing with the Eternal Uncanny«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, str. 50–51.
3 | Hribar, Tine. *Ontološka diferenca.* Fenomenološko društvo, 1992, str. 12.

4 | Margolies, Elanor. »Return to the Mound«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, str. 322–323.
5 | Arhar, Nika. »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, uredila Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.
6 | Ibid.
7 | Piris, Paul. »The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, str. 40.
8 | Pričujoči deli povzemajo in dopolnjujejo razčlembe iz moje pretekle objave, gl.: Bertoncelj, Tjaša. *Festival v Charleville--Mézièresu, paleta svetovnih lutkarskih izrazov.* ECPCP, oktober 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/festival-v-charleville-mezieresu-paleta-svetovnih-lutkarskih-izrazov/.

Končna *živost* lutke je v tem primeru dovršena, ko pridobi človeško obliko telesa. Vse ostale abstraktnejše in fragmentirane oblike živosti (na primer prstna lutka, lutka kot dlan in tako dalje) pa se izkažejo kot nepopolne oblike življenja. Merilo življenja je v tem primeru vezano na konvencionalno idejo, ki temelji na figuralni podobi človeka.

Lutkovno zgodovino zaznamuje ustvarjanje čim bolj prepričljive iluzije življenja skozi podvajanje človeškega in živalskega življenja.[9] To iluzijo Bert States opredeli kot »binokularen pogled«, ki »omogoča gledališkemu občinstvu, da podeli fiktivno življenje karakterjem ali predmetom na podlagi njihovega vedenja in uprizoritvenega okolja, kar spodbuja gledalce, da projicirajo psihologijo in čustva v človeške igralce ali nežive predmete«.[10] Večji ko je približek življenju živih bitij, kot jih poznamo, bolj se zabrišejo razlike med imaginarnim in realnim.

Predstava Lutkovnega gledališča Ljubljana v koprodukciji s Floto *Tihožitje* (2020) v režiji Tina Grabnarja hiperrealistično oživlja *bitja, ki so nekoč živela*. Obravnava težko ulovljivo vprašanje pojava življenja in razpira vprašanje razmerja med življenjem in smrtjo. Iluzija življenja se pojavi v hiperrealističnih slikah animiranih nagačenih zajcev, ki (ponovno) oživijo. Poudarjena je vrnitev v življenje, ki se poskuša čim bolj približati njihovemu naravnemu (preteklemu) bivanju – pašnji na travniku, umivanju na kamnih, hranjenju mladičev. *Tihožitje* tematizira in govori o življenju pred smrtjo. Pred uporabo zajčjih bitij v namene taksidermije in pred njihovo uprizoritveno rabo. Vrača v primarno in neokrnjeno živečo bit in jo poskuša priklicati nazaj na odrske deske. Hkrati pa oživljanje spremlja paradoks *mrtvega* – tudi ko se najbolj približamo njihovemu živemu stanju v naravi, jih določa neživo.

Predmetna animacija in nato ekspanzija lutkovnega medija razgrajujeta konvencionalni znak živega, ki je temeljil na fizičnem videzu. Figuralna podoba bitja pri lutki ni več nujni pogoj, da soustvarja simbol življenja. Kakšni znaki življenja pa se vzpostavljajo tedaj, ko animacija ne podvaja več realističnih podob in ko fizična podoba lutke ne soustvarja iluzije življenja?

Karakterizacija lutkovnega subjekta je izrazita v spletni različici predstave Ariela Dorona, *Iz škatle* (Unboxed, 2021)[11]. Ta upodablja animacijo določenega dela telesa animatorja – telo animatorja prevzema vlogo lutkovnega, animiranega

objekta, ki naj ne bi imel lastnega življenja. Njegova leva roka se vzpostavlja kot samosvoj objekt, ki ga animator animira s tehniko stop motion. V nadaljevanju predstave pride do preobrata, v katerem roka pridobi svoj vir življenja. Lutkovno oživljanje tako privede do nove vloge in s tem povezane odrske subjektivitete. Ustvari se popolnoma samosvoj fiktivni karakter. Znaki življenja so zajeti v liku, ki čuti, misli, deluje, se giblje in zaveda »neodvisno« od svojega animatorja.

Sprva spremljamo klasično metaforo lutkarstva: bog – animator – daje življenje predmetu in je s tem edini pogoj za to življenje. Predmet se med predstavo »osvobodi« svojega animatorja, kar privede do tega, da lutka poseduje lastno bit. To razmerje tematizira znano delo Philippa Gentyja *Figure 1.1*, v katerem se marioneta Pierrot začne zavedati svojega manipulatorja in se osvobodi v neodvisno življenje ter udejanji svojo pravico do ne-biti.

Pri Gentyju je razprto razmerje med človekom/ustvarjalcem in objektom/ustvarjenim, v Doronovem delu pa se skrivajo še druge ravni pomenov. Avtor predpostavlja odnos med animatorjem samim in animatorjevim delom telesa. Čeprav gledalci v predstavi konstantno spremljamo animacijo Doronovega telesa, se animatorjeva roka prvotno v predstavi vzpostavi kot neživa lutka, odrezana od Dorona. Kasneje pa ta pridobi svojo neodvisno bit in se s tem še duhovno loči od svojega »lastnika«. Modusi neživega in živega so precej bolj kompleksni in so vezani na umanjkanje ali pridobivanje osebnosti. Roka *oživi*, ker pridobi svoj (neodvisni) karakter.

Zmes živega in neživega v obsežnih metafizičnih razsežnostih pa je vidna v kombinaciji lutkarstva in vizualnega gledališča. V vizualnem gledališču je predmet animacije celovita odrska podoba in s tem skupek različnih animiranih elementov. Nizajo se gibajoče podobe, ki vključujejo »animirana telesa in animirane stvari ter njihovo interakcijo in integracijo v celovito podobo«.[12]

Predstava *Oslovska maša* (La Messe de l'Âne, 2021) v režiji Oliviera de Sagazana in produkciji Compagnie Ipsul se giblje med vizualno umetnostjo, fizičnim gledališčem in animacijo celovite odrske podobe. Znotraj predstave prihaja do aktov, ko nastopajoči na svoja telesa nanašajo glino in s tem dopolnjujejo svojo telesno podobo. Telesa se deformirajo in ustvarjajo učinke abstraktnejših skulptur. Med animatorjem in animiranim ni več ločnice, saj postaneta

9 | Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T. »Programming Play«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routhledge, 2014, str. 308.
10 | Ibid., str. 308–309.
11 | Originalna različica se imenuje *Boxed* (2019).

12 | Butler Garrett, Thomas. *The Puppet, the Cinematic and Contemporary Visual Theatre: Principles, Practices, Logos*. University of Brighton, 2009, str. 78.

uniformirana enota. S spretnim kombiniranjem živih in ne-živih elementov – luči, zvoka, glasbe, besedila, teles, podob in akcije – pa se na odru v celotni predstavi vzpostavlja novo ter abstraktnejše pojmovanje oživljanja.

Deziluzivnost lutkovnega gledališča, ki se odmika od ce-lovitega upodabljanja življenja, poraja vse bolj abstrak-tne *znake živega*. V sodobnem lutkovnem gledališču so se merila živega razširila in se pretvorila v bolj neopredeljive simbole glede na jasno figuralno podobo po meri človeka, z lucidno glasovno in gibalno karakterizacijo ter jasnim upo-dabljanjem življenjskih znakov.

Namesto jasno izoblikovane podobe življenja, iz mimezisa človeškega in živalskega, smo prešli v imitacijo[13] in izmuz-ljivost jasne subjektivitete. Priča smo abstraktnejšim kazal-nikom, napotitvam in metaforam živega. Iluzija živega se lahko torej abstrahira v znak diha. Je *živo* potemtakem dih? Gib? Subjekt? Misel v gledalcu? Kakšna je torej tista *živost*, ki zajema sodobno lutkarstvo?[14]

Eden glavnih simbolov življenja in opredelitev animacije v lutkarstvu je *gibanje*. Primera lutkovnega gibanja, ki ne vzpostavlja karakterizacije lika, sta v predstavah *Svojo sla-vo sem podedoval po Rostamu* (Man anam ke rostam bovad pahlavan, 2016) Alija Moinija (produkcija Selon L'Heure ter Festivala Montpellier Danse, La Passerelle – Scène Nationa-le de St Brieuc in La Filature Scène Nationale de Mulhouse) ter v *Rekviemu za prihodnost* Maje Smrekar, ki je nastal v koprodukciji Zavoda Aksioma in LGL, v partnerstvu s festi-valom Mesto žensk v letu 2016.

V predstavi *Svojo slavo sem podedoval po Rostamu* je upri-zorjena animacija kovinskega ogrodja skupaj z mesnim tki-vom. Ali Moini in kovinska lutka v naravni velikosti upri-zarjata sinhrono gibanje. Vsak plesni gib animatorja najde svoj odmev v lutkinem metalnem ogrodju. V imitaciji gibov lutka postaja človeški dvojnik. Predstavlja duplikat človeškega gi-banja in ni vzpostavljena kot samostojni bivajoči lik. Dvoj-nost med živim/upravljalcem in neživim/odvisnim še bolj poudarja razlika med človeškim, organskim telesom in ko-vinsko, umetno strukturo. V to avtor vpelje kose mesa, ki jih proti koncu predstave pripne na kovinsko strukturo. Ume-tnemu materialu doda nekaj, kar je bilo nekoč del živega.

Golo dejanje gibanja uprizarja tudi performans *Rekviem za prihodnost*. V raziskovanju asociativne paradigme giba živa-li in stroja avtorica oblikuje tri dele predstave: PES, DRON in odsoten ČLOVEK. S predstavo avtorica želi razbijati an-tropocentrično razmerje in vzpostavljanja povezave med tehnologijo, naravo, hibridno antropo-zoo-tehnomorfnostjo robotov in živali.[15] Lutka je v tem primeru *živo bitje* – pes. Pri oživljanju so prisotni manipulacija, animacija giba in vzpostavljanje odnosa do animiranega. Kaže se bistvena la-stnost sodobnega lutkarstva, ki z *upravljanjem* animiranega »objekta« izgublja neposreden stik s konceptom oživljanja.

Masahiro Mori[16] meni, da je gibanje »fundamentalno za to, kako ljudje dojemajo žive in nežive objekte«. Martina Maurič Lazar[17] tovrstno misel metafizično nadgradi. Lutkovno je »mi-selno gibanje – gibanje pomenov, metamorfoz, gibanje metafor, ki sprožajo različne konstelacije, uporabe predmetov, objektov in pomenov na odru«. Gibanje torej lahko sega v predmetnost animiranih objektov in tudi v nadpredmetno pomensko sfero. S tem tudi opredeli, da ni vsako gibanje na odru že lutkovno, temveč mora vsebovati intenco *animiranja pomena*.

Bolj kot to, da gibanje animiranega »objekta«[18] opredeljuje znak življenja, bi lahko rekli, da v sodobnih lutkovnih pra-ksah gibanje tvori pomene. Namesto animacije kot dejanja *oživljanja* lahko na tem mestu govorimo o *manipulaciji/ upravljanju/odnosu* do animiranega. Slednje pa predpostav-lja točko preloma, kjer bolj kot o klasičnem *živem* lutkovnem liku lahko govorimo o *animiranem* x.[19] Lutkovno gledališče v teh primerih ne kreira semiotičnega orodja živega in neži-vega, saj sistem znakov ne opredeljuje več ustvarjanja nepo-sredne iluzije življenja, ampak ima animacija drugo izhodi-šče – v ustvarjanju pomenov. Morda moramo podobno kot Henryk Jurkowski izpeljati to izhodišče iz značilnosti lutk: »da morajo premagati svoje nepremično stanje«,[20] to pa lah-ko razumemo tudi v metaforičnem in metafizičnem pomenu.

13 | Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T.. »Programming Play«, uredili Pon-ser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, str. 310–311.
14 | Zanimive razmisleke ponudi tudi prispevek Maše Radi Buh z nas-lovom *Neznosna svoboda asociativnih misli*, objavljen na slovenski podstrani Kritiške platforme sodobnega lutkarstva EU, 21.10.2021.

15 | Iz opisa predstave: https://veza.sigledal.org/uprizoritev/rekvi-em-za-prihodnost.
16 | Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T.. »Programming Play«, uredili Pon-ser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, str. 310.
17 | Maurič Lazar, M. »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, uredila Tja-ša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https:// repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.
18 | Pogosto v kombinaciji s karakterizacijo.
19 | x kot neznanka, kot najširši potencial animiranega. x je lahko objekt, material, svetloba, zvok, misel ...
20 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Aspects of Puppet Theatre: A collection of Essays*. Puppet Centre Trust, 1988, str. 8.

Prehajanje iz oživljanja v animacijo

Animirati je izpeljanka iz lat. *animare*. Pomeni *oživiti*. Kljub temu da predvsem asociira na proces, ki je vezan na *neživo* – torej da *neživo oživi* oziroma da *postane kdo živ*, pa je bistvena komponenta to, da postane kdo *živahnejši in dejavnejši*.[21] S tem objekt oživitve ni vezan na lastnost živega ali neživega, temveč je lahko vezan na kinetiko, na specifično aktivacijo, na odnos, ki se vzpostavi do objekta, ali na vzpostavljanje nekega metafizičnega pomena. To potrjuje tezo, da lutkarstva ne moremo več omejevati na definicijo oživljanja neživih objektov, temveč je bistveno izhajati iz geste animacije. V sodobnem lutkarstvu lahko govorimo o epistemološkem premiku od lutke kot objekta in lika (*živega, figuralnega, karakteriziranega objekta*) k lutki kot posledici manipulacije (*lutka je vsaka animirana entiteta*), pri čemer ima beseda *animacija* precej širok spekter pomenov in s tem tudi številne načine upodabljanja. Lutke zaradi novodobnega potenciala medija ne opredeljuje več toliko, kaj je, v kateri fizični podobi se izraža in v kakšnem ontološkem statusu biva, temveč predvsem njen proces obuditve. Lutke se sicer prikazujejo tudi v kombinacijah živega in neživega, a so precej bolj kompleksne ter premeščajo jasno binarno razmerje med živim in neživim.

Postmoderno analizo družbenega stanja in umetnosti opredeljuje fluidnost, saj se stvari kažejo bolj neopredeljive kot zakoličene v determinirane kalupe. Odprtost in fluidnost oživitvenega momenta v lutkovni umetnosti proizvajata odprtost in brezmejnost lutkovnega mišljenja in prakse. Morda sta prav stalno prevpraševanje in postavljanje novih definicij nujnost strokovnega vpogleda v lutkovno umetnost. Kot že zaključi Jurkowski – v analizi lutkarstva v prejšnjem stoletju, ki ostaja aktualna še sedaj – »ne obstaja ena sama zadovoljiva definicija lutkovnega gledališča«.[22] Tako lahko ponovno razmislimo o opredeljujoči lastnosti neživega pri lutki in tudi o njeni klasični definiciji, ki se v razgradnji konvencionalnih struktur razteza v vedno nove oblike. Ne glede na to, da se lutka upira definiranju in presega izhodišče neživega in živega, še vedno obstaja v nihanju med živim in neživim. Njen temelj pa je medtem (p)ostal hibridna prazna točka.

SELON L'HEURE, FESTIVAL MONTPELLIER DANSE, LA PASSERELLE – SCENE NATIONALE DE ST BRIEUC IN LA FILATURE SCENE NATIONALE DE MULHOUSE, ALI MOJI SVOJO SLAVO SEM PODEDOVAL PO ROSTAMU (MAN ANAM KE ROSTAM BOVAD PAHLAVAN, 2016) | FOTO **ALAIN SCHERER**
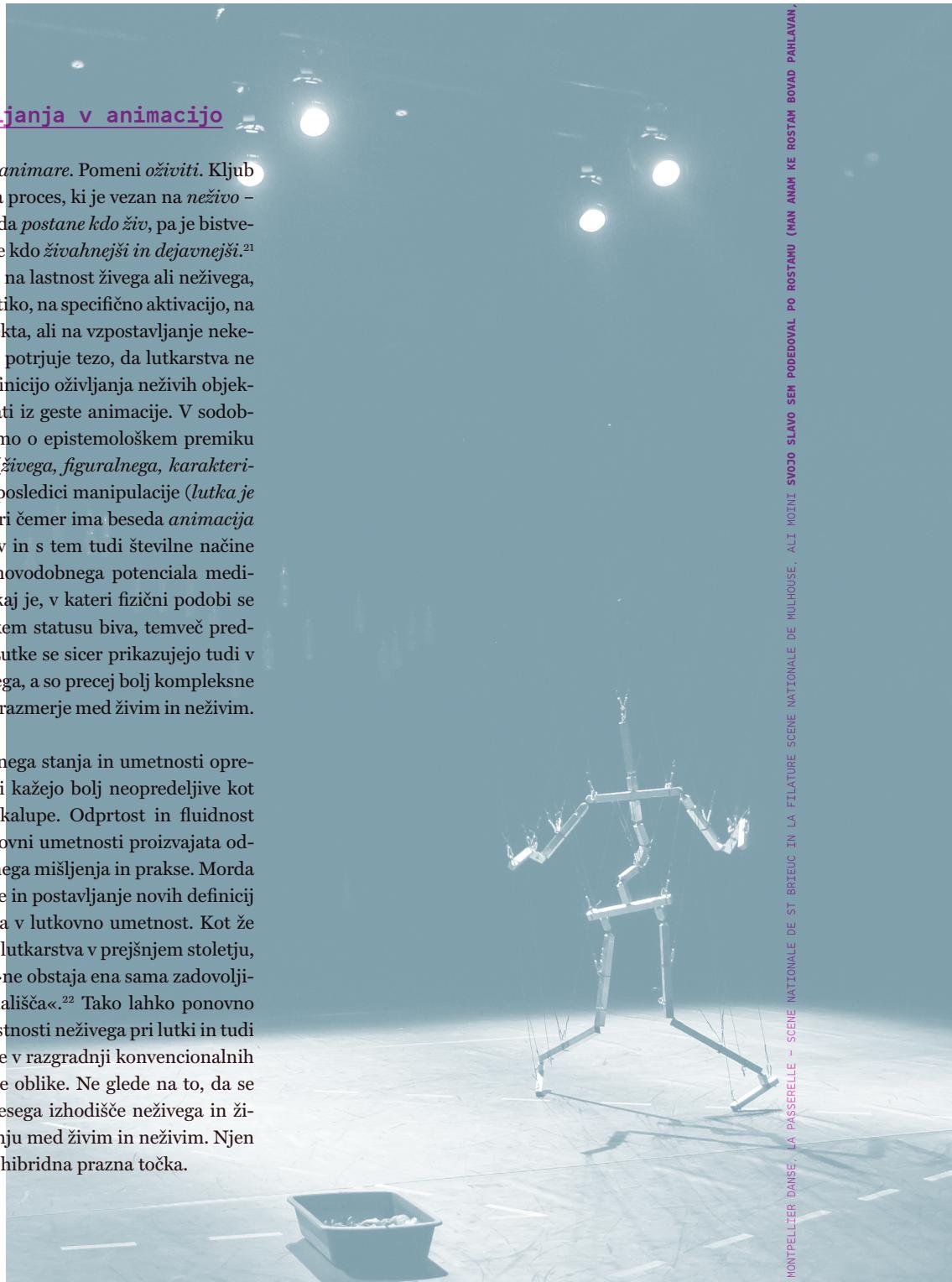
21 | Animirati. (b.d.). V Slovarju slovenskega knjižnega jezika. Pridobljeno s www.fran.si.
22 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva: 1. knjiga*. Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998, str. 16.

POVZETEK

Prispevek razpira ontološke temelje lutke, ravni *živega* in *neživega*. Analizira klasično definicijo lutkarstva; ta izhaja iz lutke kot neživega objekta, ki z animacijo oživi in pridobi iluzijo življenja. Razčleni različne moduse neživega in živega v uprizoritvah, ki spreobračajo oziroma premikajo jasne zamejitve neživega kriterija v lutkarstvu in tudi mišljenje animacije kot dejanje oživljanja. Lutkarstvo prehaja svoj temelj neživega, znaki živega so postali abstraktnejši in niso več nujni pogoj za lutkovno animacijo. Veliko bolj smiselno izhodišče v sodobnem lutkarstvu je teoretski preobrat v lutkovno animacijo. Postmoderna fluidnost in »nezmožnost« definiranja sta torej lutkarstvu inherentna.

O AVTORICI

Tjaša Bertoncelj je urednica, dramaturginja, kustosinja in teatrologinja. Magistrirala je iz sociologije in filozofije kulture na Filozofski fakulteti v Ljubljani. V zadnjih letih se je profilirala na področju lutkovnega oziroma animiranega gledališča. Kot praktična dramaturginja je sodelovala z uveljavljenimi režiserji (Matija Solce, Tin Grabnar, Fabrizio Montecchi) in bila v sezoni 2019/2020 zaposlena kot dramaturginja v Lutkovnem gledališču Ljubljana. Deluje tudi kot piska, kustosinja in urednica. Od leta 2019 je souredica mednarodne strokovne revije za lutkovno umetnost in gledališče animiranih form *Lutka* in urednica slovenske Kritiške platforme sodobnega lutkarstva EU. Leta 2021 je zasnovala in oblikovala digitalno razstavo o slovenskem sodobnem lutkarstvu.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

živo, neživo, oživljanje, animacija, gibanje, upravljanje animiranega objekta, animiranje pomena, lutka

Literatura

Animirati. (b.d.). V Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika. Pridobljeno s www.fran.si. | **Arhar, Nika**. »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, uredila Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. | **Bell, John**. »Playing with the Eternal Uncanny«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Bertoncelj, Tjaša.** *Festival v Charleville-Mézièresu, paleta svetovnih lutkarskih izrazov.* ECPCP, oktober 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/festival-v-charleville-mezieresu-paleta-svetovnih-lutkarskih-izrazov/. | **Butler Garrett, Thomas.** *The Puppet, the Cinematic and Contemporary Visual Theatre: Principles, Practices, Logos.* University of Brighton, 2009, https://research.brighton.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/the-puppet-the-cinematic-and-contemporary-visual-theatre-principl. | **Hribar, Tine**. *Ontološka diferenca.* Fenomenološko društvo, 1992. | **Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T.**. »Programming Play«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Keren Turbahn, Julia.** *Kako stvarem pustiti,* da so. 2018, https://emanat.si/media/330171e19e/Kako.stvarem.pustiti.da.so-JKT-Jan.Rozman_Predmetenje-FINAL.pdf; pov. po Lepecki, André. Singularities – *Dance in the Age of Performance,* Routledge, London/New York, 2016. | **Margolies, Elanor**. »Return to the Mound«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Maurič Lazar, M**. »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, uredila Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. | **Piris, Paul.** »The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet.«, uredili Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Aspects of Puppet Theatre: A collection of Essays.* Puppet Centre Trust, 1988. | **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva: 1. knjiga.* Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998.

HNK IVANA PL. ZAJCA RIJEKA, GRADSKO KAZALIŠTE LUTAKA RIJEKA, LUCIANO DELPRATO **KRALJ OJDIP** (KRALJ EDIP 2021) | FOTO **HNK IVANA PL. ZAJCA RIJEKA**

IGOR TRETINJAK

Z zavestno pasivizacijo k absolutni oblasti

Uvod

Lutke so v številnih starodavnih kulturah v svoji »ničti«, statični fazi obvladovale človeka oziroma so, kot je zapisal Henryk Jurkowski, »imele posebno magično moč, ki jim je omogočala oblast nad določenimi skupinami ljudi«.[1] Ključni element oblasti je bilo »verovanje, da lutka izvira iz drugega sveta, s posebnega, sakralnega ozemlja«.[2] Veliko stoletij in razvojnih faz pozneje so se lutke vrnile k svojim »statičnim« začetkom in sklenile krog oziroma, povedano z besediščem Jurkowskega, »spiralo«[3] in tako znova prevzele oblast nad človekom, vendar tokrat ne v vlogi njegovega »sakralnega podložnika«, temveč demiurga. S tem so zaokrožile razvojno pot od idola in simbola prek nadomestnega[4] in osrednjega lika ter soigralca in partnerja do demiurga lastnega demiurga. V nadaljevanju besedila bomo to dolgo in kompleksno izvedbeno potovanje omejili na kratek pregled s posebnim poudarkom na velikem preobratu v sklepni fazi.

Zgodovinski pregled odnosa med lutko in njenim animatorjem

Kot meni del zgodovinarjev, na čelu katerih je Charles Magnin, je bila lutka v svojih prazačetkih statični idol, katerega prve gibe je pomenilo sodelovanje na procesijskih povorkah.[5] To »nepremično mobilnost« je v srednjem veku zamenjala mehanska gibljivost, s katero je lutka v cerkvah z nepričakovanimi premiki rok, obraza in oči opozarjala na čudež vere, s čimer je postala snovna potrditev moči nesnovnega.

V naslednji razvojni fazi je vlogo pasivnega vira občudovanja zamenjala z aktivnim virom zabave ter tako zakorakala (tudi dobesedno) v izvedbene vode. Hkrati je vero kot dotedanjega »animatorja« zamenjala s človekom. V njegovih rokah je prestala številne razvojne faze in vloge od ljudske zabavljačke prek umetne kopije igralca do strogo nadzorovane zvezde izvedbe, na tej poti pa so se kot njeni viri poleg idolov in ikon pojavile tudi otroške igrače. V tem širokem loku med ritualom in igro je lutka gradila lasten izraz, v katerem se v ključnih trenutkih pokaže izstop igralca iz sence na sceno. Čeprav so številni lutkarji ta trenutek napovedovali kot začetek konca lutkarstva, se je izkazal kot ključna stopnica pri vrnitvi na vladarski prestol. Odprta animacija je na eni strani izvajalcu omogočala lastno predstavitev, na drugi pa ga izvedbeno izenačila z lutko. Do takrat vsemogočni vladar, ki je iz sence vlekel niti, nadzoroval in oblikoval usodo lutke, je postal (tudi) njen enakopravni scenski partner.

Novonastalo partnerstvo je omogočilo številne možnosti grajenja odnosa med igralcem in lutko, v katerem je izvajalec včasih prepustil demiurško vlogo lutki. To je včasih naredil zavestno, včasih nezavedno, nekoliko nepričakovano; s tem se je posebej zanimiv odnos razvijal v trenutkih lutkine negibljivosti, v katerih je na prvi pogled scensko neživa prevzemala oblast nad svojim demiurgom. Če na ta odnos pogledamo skozi romantično Kleistovo idejo o marioneti in plesalcu,[6] je lutka v teh trenutkih začetno nezavedno in nepremično oblast in nato zavestno premično odvisnost od animatorja tokrat zamenjala z zavestno nepremično oblastjo in tako postala umetni predstavnik boga na sceni.

1 | Jurkovski, Henrik. *Teorija lutkarstva: Ogledi iz istorije, teorije i estetike lutkarskog teatra*. Subotica, 2007, str. 28.

2 | Ibid.

3 | Henryk Jurkowski pravi, da se je lutkarsko gledališče v zadnjih desetletjih spreminjalo in vračalo k obstoječim izrazom »kot po nekakšni spirali. [...] To pomeni, da se je po zavrnitvi nekaterih oblik in gotovih tem kot že obrabljenih k njim po nekem času vrnilo, vendar na drugi ravni odnosa, tudi če ta vrnitev poteka nezavedno.« Jurkowski, Henrik. *Metamorfoze pozorišta lutaka u XX veku*. Međunarodni festival pozorišta za decu Pionir, 2006, str. 127.

4 | Zmanjšane umetne kopije igralca, op. I. T.

5 | Več v: Jurkowski, Henryk. *Povijest europskog lutkarstva 1: Od začetaka do kraja 19. stoljeća*. Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2005, str. 22–23.

6 | Romantično idejo o stopnjevanju od nezavedne popolnosti narave prek zavestne nepopolnosti človeka do končno zavestne popolnosti genija Kleist v svojem slavnem delu »O marionetnem gledališču« pretaka v niz, v katerem se nezavedna popolnost marionete v osveščenem plesalcu izgublja in pretaka v nepopolnost, nato pa se končna in zavestna popolnost utelesi v Bogu. Več v: Kleist, Heinrich von. *O marionetskom kazalištu*. Scarabeus-naklada, 2009.

Lažna oblast

Razvoj lutke in njenega odnosa do animatorja je trajal stoletja, v predstavi *Kralj Ojdip*, premierno izvedeni leta 2020 v koprodukciji Hrvaškega narodnega gledališča Ivana pl. Zajca in Mestnega lutkovnega gledališča Reka ter v režiji Lucijana Delprata, pa se je pretočil v eno sceno. Odnos med lutko in animatorjem se je v celotni predstavi spreminjal in postajal vprašljiv, nato pa je lutka v omenjeni sceni v furioznem ritmu prevzela večino vlog – od rekvizita prek živega lika v animatorjevih rokah do njegovega enakopravnega partnerja in končnega vladarja. Ta kratkotrajna zmaga lutke nad lastnim demiurgom je bila izvedena v scenskem suspenzu, v katerem Ojdip fizično obračuna z vsemi, od likov do njihovih gibal, od lutk do animatorjev, na koncu pa obvlada tudi scenskega očeta, ko stvari vzame v svoje lesene roke in zavlada nad lastnim demiurgom. Lutkina oblast je bila kljub temu posledica zavestne odločitve animatorja, ki se je motiviran v glavnem z možnostmi scenske (so)igre samo na videz odločil prepustiti vodstvo lastni lutki ter tako za trenutek prevaral tudi umetnega junaka in gledalce.

Podobno se je zgodilo tudi v antologijski predstavi *Zbor* (Skup, GK Komedija in Dubrovniške poletne igre, 1983) v režiji Joška Juvančića in likovni zasnovi Zlatka Boureka, v kateri se je osamljeni igralec znašel v umetnem svetu lutk. Na svojem terenu so lutke igralcu določale lastna pravila in se do njega obnašale kot do scenskega partnerja, a tudi dela scenografije, s čimer se v svojih projektih pogosto poigrava sodobna lutkarska umetnica Ilke Schönbein.[7] Čeprav v teh primerih umetnost (v smislu narejenosti, zaigranosti, op. p.) na prvi pogled obvladuje živega izvajalca, ta to počne pod vodstvom animatorjev, v senci ali zunaj nje, s čimer je tudi sama oblast samo posledica scenske fikcije.

K (delni) svobodi

Izvajalčevo poigravanje z demiurško vlogo lutke omogoča številne izvedbene možnosti, vendar ostaja v prostoru teatralnosti oziroma igre s sloji gledališča iluzije. Korak naprej od lutkarskega zavestnega poigravanja z gledališčem v gledališču se oblikuje v situacijah, ko je prisiljen prepustiti lutki del oblasti. Paul Piris meni, da te situacije potekajo v trenutkih, ko

se nam zdi, da »lutka beži od svoje snovnosti in začne delovati svobodno«.[8] Nasprotno kot meni Piris, lutki včasih prav njena snovnost omogoča delno svobodo oziroma (samo)nadzor.

V predstavi *Kamorkoli* (Anywhere, 2016) Théâtra de l'Entrouvert v režiji in izvedbi Elise Vigneron in Hélène Barreau je marioneta oblikovana iz ledu. Ta lastnost je v celoti določila potek predstave, ker je imela lutka od začetka nepredvidljiv rok trajanja. Med izvedbo se je lutka topila in puščala mokre sledi scenskega obstoja oziroma same sebe, na koncu pa so tudi te sledi izginile v pari. V strogo določenem časovnem okviru sta bili izvajalki samo delni vladarici lutke, katere scensko življenje je bilo odvisno od številnih elementov, kot sta temperatura dvorane, scenografije in animatorjinega telesa ter dinamika soigre. S tem sta bila lutkina snov in njena fizična bit kontrolorki igre in lutkinega (scenskega) življenja. Werner Knoegden je napisal, da z »'živo' snovjo imenujemo tisto, kar ima sposobnost, da samo sebe, od znotraj, spreminja, kot je to na primer pri rasti«.[9] Lutka v predstavi *Kamorkoli* ni rasla, vendar se je samostojno, brez vpliva animatorja, zmanjševala, s čimer je delno postala ne samo scensko, temveč tudi dejansko živa.

Podobno je situacija oblikovana v predstavi *Smrt ali o življenju* (Smrt ili o životu, 2019) Akademije za umetnost in kulturo v Osijeku, v kateri so študenti petega letnika pod mentorstvom Tamare Kučinović in Maje Lučić v vrsti etud gradili življenjsko zgodbo materialov in predmetov, ki so izbrani za smrt. Z izbiro nestabilnih umetnih elementov, kot sta perje in grelnik za vodo, so izpostavili trenutnost življenja s preizkušanjem animacije v nenadzorovanem okolju. Tudi v tem primeru izvajalci niso obvladovali igre – v grelnikih se je voda segrela v lastnem ritmu ter tako občasno povzročila težave, ker je različen čas segrevanja motil potek igre. Prav tako je na perje precej bolj od samih animatorjev vplivala nestabilnost okolja oziroma nemirnost zraka in plamena sveč, ki so jih pričakale na koncu njihovega leta. V teh primerih se je lutka poistovetila z lastnim materialom in se po zaslugi njegovih značilnosti uspešno uprla absolutni oblasti animatorja ter mu delno vsilila svoj ritem in potek igre. V naslednjih primerih so lutke naredile korak naprej in so se v poskusu vzpostavitve oblasti nad animatorjem odrekle svoji ključni lastnosti – gibljivosti.

7 | Več o umetniškem delovanju Ilke Schönbein in njenem odnosu do lutk v: Younge, Janni. *Reconfiguring Being: Puppetry and Perspectives on Being Human Explored Through the Work of Ilka Schönbein*. Critical Stages / Scènes critiques, št. 19, 2019, http://www.critical-stages.org/19/reconfiguring-being/.

8 | Piris, Paul. »The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet«. uredili Bell, J., Posner, D. N., Orenstein, C., . *The Routledge companion to puppetry and material performance.* Routledge, 2014, str. 39.

9 | Knoegden, Werner. *Nemogući teatar: O fenomenologiji kazališta figura.* ULUPUH, 2013, str. 25.

Aktivna moč pasivnega

V predstavi *Cesarjeva nova oblačila* (2020), nastali v koprodukciji Mestnega gledališča Reka in Lutkovnega gledališča Maribor ter v režiji Zorana Petroviča, nepremične lutke niso obvladale svojih animatorjev, temveč so jih v veliki meri zamenjale, tako kot v prejšnjih primerih, s kontekstom. V tem primeru je šlo v prvi vrsti za tekoči trak in videokamero, katerih dinamično gibanje je oživilo prostor okrog statične lutke, kar je posredno oživilo lutko. Petrović se je s podobnimi aktivacijami lutke s pomočjo videokamere ukvarjal tudi v zgodnejših projektih v sklopu Kulturno-umetniškega društva Moment. V predstavi *Viktorija 2.0* (2016) je nepremične lutke Barbie v sceni igranja tenisa »s pomočjo kamere in projekcije na zaslonu pretočil v zelo dinamične in žive gibe. Te statične barbike in njihove nevidne žogice so zadihale s polnimi 'projekcijskimi' pljuči prek previdnega in natančnega zumiranja in premikanja kamere ob dodatnem duhovitem športnem komentiranju.«[10] Z združitvijo mrtvega telesa na živi sceni in oživljenega telesa v za izvedbo »mrtvem« mediju je Petrovič »premaknil fokus s predmeta animacije na samega opazovalca«,[11] ki je previdno voden z očesom kamere postal soustvarjalec igre prek potencialnega dodajanja nevidnih žogic v igro tenisa.

Neživo masko je z neživim zvočnim zapisom na sceni združil Juraj Aras v predstavi *Desnica: Igre pomladi in smrti* (Desnica: Igre proljeća i smrti, Teatro Verrdi, 2017), oblikovani iz delov refleksivnega eksistencialističnega romana *Pomlad Ivana Galeba* Vladana Desnice. Maska se je torej pojavila v zgodbi, ki pomeni kontemplacijo in mirovanje ali, v tradicionalnem lutkarstvu, scensko smrt lutke. Če temu dodamo radiofonsko posnet, torej izvedbeno neživ glas, dobimo dvojno scensko neživost, katere posledica je ontološka nestabilnost lutke. V tej »labilnosti« se je lutka ves čas rojevala in umirala na sceni, prehajala iz vloge rekvizita, dela scenografije in kostumografije, v samostojen lik, animatorjevega partnerja, v nekaterih trenutkih pa tudi demiurga lastnega demiurga. Sredi te scenske »dinamične neživosti« je bil izvajalec, ki je kot scenska partnerja enakomerno uporabljal lutko in radiofonski izraz. Lutkina glava v njegovih rokah je bila zdrav razum v bolnem telesu, nataknjena na stojalo za plašče je postala bolnik, ki se z infuzijo sprehaja po bolnišničnih hodnikih, ležeča v postelji je postala bolezen sama, medtem ko je predvajani zvok postal notranji glas in partner v igri

šaha. V tem kompleksno izvedenem trisu je junak nenehno poplesaval med vizualnimi in zvočnimi elementi ter naslovnima pomladjo in smrtjo ter ju ločeval in pretakal v eno. V tem plesu je bila lutka bolj vodja kot vodena, kar jo je postavilo v nadrejeni položaj, iz katerega je poleg lastne delne samostojnosti vplivala tudi na samega animatorja ter tako vzpostavila dvojno delno oblast.

Od premičnega simbola do nepremičnega vladarja

Okrog trideset let pred *Cesarjevimi novimi oblačili* in *Desnico* je pasivna lutka za kratek čas skoraj v celoti prevzela oblast nad svojim animatorjem. To se je zgodilo leta 1988 v predstavi *Zakaj smo v Vietnamu, Minnie?* (Zašto smo u Vijetnamu, Minnie?) Zagrebškega lutkovnega gledališča v režiji Branka Brezovca. To predstavo, neznačilno za gledališče, ki še danes neguje tradicionalni izraz, pa tudi za hrvaško lutkarstvo nasploh, je Marin Blažević poimenoval »histerija vzporednih projekcij«,[12] ki »do zasičenosti, prav ekstrema, privede koncept multimedijske gledališčne polifonije«.[13] Izvedeno »goščavo« je skupaj ohranjala lutkarska dramatizacija romana *Smrt trgovskega potnika* Arthurja Millerja. V njej se je razvijal slojevit odnos med Biffom in Happyjem Lomanom v izvedbi igralcev na eni strani in s projekcijami njune mladosti, ki sta jih razlagali lutki, ti sta animirala ista igralca (torej sama sebe), na drugi. Do trenutka preobrata sta bili lutki odvisni od igralcev, kar ustreza vsebinskemu sloju, v katerem slika preteklosti predstavlja izkrivljeno projekcijo, ki jo oblikujeta družina in okolica. Odvisnost lutk in preteklosti od likov in sedanjosti je poudarjena z grobo in pretirano animacijo ter duhovitimi medsebojnimi primerjavami in doseganji premoči.[14]

Prelomno točko v predstavi pomeni scena, v kateri Biff odkrije, da ima oče in zgled družine Willy Loman ljubico. To spoznanje poruši temelj, na katerem se je gradila in rasla družina Loman. S tem sta na mesto okrog 70 centimetrov visokih kompaktnih namiznih lutk, s katerima sta, podobno kot z lastno preteklostjo, manipulirala lika, stopili veliki, mehki, nerodni in groteskni lutki, katerih pasivnost in

---

10 | Tretinjak, Igor. *Duhovito igranje kazalištem i kilama*. Artos, online časopis AUK, št. 7, 2018, http://www.uaos.unios.hr/artos/index.php/hr/kritika-br-8/tretinjak-viktorija-2-0.
11 | Ibid.

12 | Blažević, Marin. *Razgovori o novom kazalištu 1: Branko Brezovec, Ivica Boban, Damir Bartol Indoš, Vjeran Zuppa*. CDU – Centar za dramsku umjetnost, 2007, str. 47.
13 | Ibid., str. 78.
14 | V sceni s trebušnjaki se igralec – lik – zlomi zaradi bremena let in pomanjkanja telesne pripravljenosti, lutka kot njegov nekdanji mlad, močen in idealiziran *jaz* pa jih s pomočjo animatorja in tudi soavtorja pri ustvarjanju te projekcije dela z lahkoto

nezmožnost animiranja predstavljajo uteži, ki so pretežke za Biffa in Happyja. Prelomna situacija je torej privedla do točke, v kateri lutki, do takrat v popolni lasti svojih animatorjev, postaneta njuni vladarici, uteži, ki vlečeta lika (in animatorja) proti dnu. In vse to počneta iz vloge pasiviziranih likov. V celotni predstavi sta namreč igralca s poudarjeno nenatančno animacijo zavestno rušila avtonomnost in scensko življenje lutk s prikazom lastne nadmoči. S preprečitvijo, da postaneta lika, sta lutki pretočila v simbola neuspeha in metafore problema, s čimer sta jima hkrati odvzela scensko življenje in povečala pomen, posebej s povečanjem pasivnosti, ki je označevala tudi povečanje njunega vpliva na lika.

S stopnjevanjem animacijske nemoči se je povečevala njuna vsebinska moč, kar ju je približalo Tadeuszu Kantorju, za katerega so objekti oziroma lutke »človekova prejšnja, pozabljena bit, njegov jaz v spominu, ki ga še naprej spremlja in pod katerega oblastjo nastopajo človeški akterji«.[15] Čeprav v *Minnie* človeški akterji niso nastopali dobesedno pod oblastjo lutk, so te z razvojem vsebinskega sloja zavladale. Njihova oblast pa se ni ohranila samo pri vsebinskem razumevanju, temveč tudi v izvedbenem vidiku, v katerem sta pasivnost in vztrajnost postali dobesedno breme za igralca ter tako jasno prikazovali njegovo nemoč. Lutka se je torej osvobodila lastnega animatorja in pridobila močen vpliv na njegov lik. Popolni oblasti nad animatorjevo (in svojo) izvedbeno usodo se je lutka še bolj približala leta 2014 v predstavi *Omadeževani in mladenka* (Nečisti i djevojka) Lutkovnega gledališča Zadar.

K absolutni oblasti

Lutka brez gibanja na sceni postane »ustavljeno življenje«,[16] meni hrvaški lutkar Luko Paljetak, z ustavitvijo scenskega življenja pa lutka ni več lik in subjekt, temveč postane simbol oziroma objekt. S tem lahko lutka na sceni funkcionira dvojno – kot aktivni subjekt in pasivna ikona, kot smo videli v prejšnjih primerih. Po besedah Henryka Jurkowskega lahko lutka na eni strani »zamenja scenski lik z izkoriščanjem vseh privilegijev scenskega subjekta, na drugi pa je lahko pasiven simbol tega lika, instrument, ki ga uporablja igralec, tako da mimogrede prikazuje lastno profesionalno znanje«.[17]

V predstavi *Omadeževani in mladenka* v režiji Reneja Medveška sta se ti dve skrajnosti združili. Nepremična lutka je bila pasivna ikona, v celoti odvisna od svojega animatorja. S tem ni postala lik, temveč je ohranila svoj položaj simbola lika. Na drugi strani je s svojo statičnostjo usmerjala, spodbujala in silila animatorja, da z lastnim telesom vdihne gibanje liku in s tem prenese lik in lutko na sebe. Tako je animator postal simbol simbola in je svojo začetno vlogo demiurga prepustil lutki, zdaj gibalu lastnega gibala, demiurgu lastnega demiurga. Temu »vodenemu« gibanju so bili igralci večinoma zvesti celotno predstavo, celo v trenutkih, ko niso imeli lutke v rokah, kar jih je po izvedbeni plati dodatno približalo statusu lutke. S to soigro in somanipulacijo lutke in igralca je Medvešek relativiziral scensko resničnost – lutke je izkoristil kot dodatni fiktivni ovoj, scensko igro pa spremenil v dvojno pravljico, s čimer je vzdušje približal lastnemu – ljudski ustni zgodbi. Hkrati je lutko privedel do točke, v kateri se je skoraj v celoti približala svojemu predniku idolu in s tem zaokrožila spiralo.

Zaključek – sklenjen krog

Lutka je v sodobnem (hrvaškem) lutkarstvu naredila razvojno spiralo in se vrnila k lastnim prazačetkom, v katerih je v vlogi nepremičnega idola obvladovala človeka. Na sledi prednikov je opustila gibanje in tudi vero v gibalo ter pozornost in oblast usmerila proti lastnemu bogu – animatorju – in tako zavladala nad njim. S tem je naredila »kleistovski« razvojni skok od pasivnega in nezavednega vladarja nad častilci do pasivnega, vendar zavestnega vladarja nad lastnim vladarjem in tako pokazala svojo trajno in mistično moč ter neskončne možnosti. Sklenitev tega kroga je odprla vprašanje nadaljnjega razvoja lutkarskega medija na Hrvaškem. Bo nadaljeval pasivizacijo animatorja prek robotike in umetne inteligence ali se bo spiralno vrnil k odnosom in področjem, ki so še vedno nezadostno raziskana v tem lutkarskem prostoru? Iz trenutnega položaja na prestolu so vse njene poti široko odprte.

15 | Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramsko kazalište.* CDU – Centar za dramsku umjetnost, ThK – Centar za teoriju i praksu izvođačkih umetnosti, 2004, str. 94.
16 | Paljetak, Luko. *Lutke za kazalište i dušu.* Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2007, str. 22.
17 | Jurkovski, Henrik. *Teorija lutkarstva.* Subotica, 2007, str. 289.

POVZETEK

Prek analize primerov hrvaškega in evropskega sodobnega lutkarstva besedilo spremlja vlogo lutke glede na njenega demiurga od začetne pasivne in nezavedne oblasti prek aktivne podrejenosti do sodobne zavestne vrnitve k pasivni oblasti. Ta spiralna vrnitev, »kleistovsko« razumljena, postavlja lutko v vlogo umetnega scenskega boga.

O AVTORJU

Dr. Igor Tretinjak, gledališki kritik in teatrolog. Predavatelj na Akademiji za umetnost in kulturo v Osijeku. Glavni urednik portala kritikaz.com, urednik regionalne platforme Od malih nogu, urednik, mentor in vodja osiješkega dela projekta Kreativne Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva EU. Avtor monografske študije Fenomen Pinklec – od rituala do igre: 30 godina Kazališne družine Pinklec (Čakovec, 2017) ter več znanstvenih in strokovnih člankov, povezanih z lutkarstvom, gledališčem za otroke in izvedbene umetnosti.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

animacija, animator, lutka, neanimabilnost, demiurg, pasivizacija, idol

Literatura

Blažević, Marin. *Razgovori o novom kazalištu 1: Branko Brezovec, Ivica Boban, Damir Bartol Indoš, Vjeran Zuppa.* CDU – Centar za dramsku umjetnost, 2007. │ **Jurkovski, Henrik.** *Metamorfoze pozorišta lutaka u XX veku.* Međunarodni festival pozorišta za decu Pionir, Subotica, 2006. │ **Jurkovski, Henrik**. *Teorija lutkarstva: Ogledi iz istorije, teorije i estetike lutkarskog teatra.* Subotica, 2007. │ **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Povijest europskog lutkarstva 1: Od začetaka do kraja 19. stoljeća.* Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2005. │ **Kleist, Heinrich von.** *O marionetskom kazalištu.* Scarabeus-naklada, 2009. │ **Knoegden, Werner.** *Nemogući teatar: O fenomenologiji kazališta figura.* ULUPUH, 2013. │ **Lehmann, Hans-Thies.** *Postdramsko kazalište.* CDU – Centar za dramsku umjetnost, ThK – Centar za teoriju i praksu izvođačkih umetnosti, 2004. │ **Paljetak, Luko.** *Lutke za kazalište i dušu.* Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2007. │ **Piris, Paul.** »The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet«, uredili Bell, J., Posner, D. N., Orenstein, C. *The Routledge companion to puppetry and material performance.* Routledge, 2014. │ **Tretinjak, Igor.** *Duhovito igranje kazalištem i kilama.* Artos, online časopis AUK, št. 7, januar 2018, http://www.uaos.unios.hr/artos/index.php/hr/kritika-br-8/tretinjak-viktorija-2-0. │ **Younge, Janni.** *Reconfiguring Being: Puppetry and Perspectives on Being Human Explored Through the Work of Ilka Schönbein.* Critical Stages / Scènes critiques, št. 19, 2019, http://www.critical-stages.org/19/reconfiguring-being/.

MAŠA RADI BUH

Posthumanistično— feministična intervencija

Preplet palete sodobnih tehnoloških inovacij in lutkovne umetnosti dandanes ni več eksotična noviteta, saj počasi prehaja iz svoje pionirske faze prvotnega in prelomnega odkrivanja in spoznavanja v fazo raziskovanja vseh možnih mej in opcij, ki jih tehnologija omogoča. Včasih močno antropomorfizirana figura lutke, pa naj bo to kot imitacija človeškega telesa ali pa kot počlovečen element flore in favne, se trenutno intenzivno razvija prek/zunaj te kategoričnosti in demokratizira/razširja domišljijo tega, kaj vse je lahko lutka in kaj je tisto, kar lutko napravi lutko. Vse te spremembe po eni strani vsekakor navdajajo z upanjem, a po drugi strani je prav ta moment nezamudljiva priložnost za pretres vloge družbenega spola v tem polju. Gre za trenutek v času, primeren in odprt za prevpraševanje omejujočih in diskriminatornih prepričanj in samoumevnosti, ki konstituirajo temelje lutkovne umetnosti – med katerimi je tudi vprašanje družbenega spola, na uprizoritveni in tudi na sistemski ravni, na ravni mikro- in makrodramaturgije, kot ti dve plati poimenuje flamska plesna dramaturginja Marianne van Kerkhoven.[1]

Fluidnost, nedefiniranost in nehomogenost sodobnega lutkarstva s širjenjem, potiskanjem in preseganjem meja je prostor igre in eksperimenta, kjer je – tako, kot je lahko lutka že karkoli – mogoče skoraj vse, odvisno je le od raztegljivosti naše/ustvarjalne domišljije. Sočasno pa je prav figura lutke tista, ki v primerjavi z igralko zaradi svoje nenavezanosti na človeško telo razpira prostor potencialnosti za rekonfiguracijo in preobrazbo mizogino in seksistično obarvane zgodovine nastanka in razvoja lutkarstva.

Sledi eksponentnega in bliskovitega razvoja tehnologije niso zaznavne le v umetnosti ali pa v njihovem prodoru v naše vsakdanje življenje; v odziv na spremembe se je v drugi polovici 20. stoletja in v prvih dveh desetletjih 21. stoletja razvilo kup smeri, ki v nasprotju s humanističnim poveličevanjem človeka in človeškega razuma razširjajo polje našega razumevanja živega. Avtorice, kot so Donna Haraway, Karen Barad in Rosi Braidotti, inkluzivnejše definicije živega, ki ni omejeno le na človeška, živalska in rastlinska bitja, povežejo s feminističnimi prizadevanji za enakopravnost, kar je ideja, ki jo želim v nadaljevanju besedila povezati s podobnimi prizadevanji v kontekstu lutkovnih praks. Če posthumanistični feminizem redefinicijo živega uporabi za inkluzivnejše razumevanje sveta, ali lahko redefinicija lutke in lutkovnega prispeva k izločitvi v formo in vsebino vtkanega seksizma?

Dve glavni perspektivi, skozi kateri so napisani tudi prispevki v knjigi *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations*,[2] ki poskuša kot prva podati večplasten pregled odnosa med ženskim (družbenim) spolom in lutkarstvom, sta tudi sociološko-teatrološki perspektivi, ki sta nasploh najpogostejši pri analiziranju gledaliških umetnostih skozi feministično prakso. Ena poskuša z analizo samega uprizoritvenega dogodka in njegovih elementov v njem najti problematične ali pa pozitivne načine reprezentacije, kjer se ali prikažejo ali demantirajo stereotipne podobe žensk in ženskosti. Druga, makroperspektiva, se posveča družbeni in ekonomski poziciji žensk znotraj lutkovnega gledališča ter opazuje, kako družbene silnice oblikujejo njeno delovanje. A ker je družba prekompleksen fenomen, ki bi ga lahko razdelili le na dve ravni, na mikro- in makrodelovanje, ju nikakor ne moremo dojemati ločeno. Vsaka akcija ali dogodek neizbežno odmeva tako na eni kot na drugi ravni, zaradi česar tudi ta premislek o redefiniciji lutke potencialnost takšnega premika išče v obeh sferah.

1 | Van Kerkhoven, Marianne. *Van het kijken en van het schrijven: teksten over theater.* Van Halewyck, 2002, str. 197–203.

2 | Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A., uredniki. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475.

Ženske in uprizoritvena raven

»Nevtralnost« lutkovne forme

Lutka kot za uprizoritev sestavljen objekt, ki mu pred nastankom ni inherentna in lastna nobena oblika, temveč obstaja le kot skupek začrtanih možnosti, je v primerjavi z igralskim in animatorskim telesom osvobojena diskurza o biološkem in družbenem spolu. Njena ničnost, iz katere se šele rodi in kjer jo v procesu postajanja omejujejo le finančne in tehnične zmožnosti ter domišljija njenega snovalca_ke, nasprotno od človeškega telesa ni pogojena s kompleksnim skupkom evolucijske zgodovine celic, ki bi genetsko in fizično določale njeno pojavnost. A lutka kljub tej svoji neomejeni potencialnosti ni element, ki bi obstajal v nevtralnem vakuumu, saj je prav zaradi pogojevanja z imaginarnim in imaginativnim svetom njenih kreatork_jev, ki so vedno tudi akterji določenega družbenega sveta, odrezana od popolne svobode pri svoji manifestaciji. Odrska pojavnost lutke je, tako kot prav vsak drug element kulture – kot je razkrila feministična teorija v prejšnjem stoletju –, oblikovana pod vplivom družbenih prepričanj in idealov o kategoriji, ki jo označujemo kot družbeni spol. Njene poteze so torej zastavljene skladno s stereotipnimi označevalci, ki v tistem času veljajo za idealno in splošno sprejemljivo podobo moškega ali ženske. A ker je lutka na odru kot produkt različnih silnic, med katerimi že vsaka izmed njih sproža svojo vejo debate, si reprezentacijo lutke na odru skozi kritično perspektivo najprej oglejmo kot njihov kompleksen produkt. Ne glede na njegovo percipirano podobo, ki je lahko antropomorfna ali pa ne, lutkovni objekt v trenutku svoje animacije kot lik pri občinstvu sproži (podzavestno) kategoriziranje njegovega spola.[3] Upodabljanje spola lutkovnega telesa tako temelji na razmerju med njegovo vizualno pojavnostjo in družbenimi znaki, ki splošno razumljeno implicirajo določen spol. Pri dekonstrukciji takšnih označevalskih povezav potencialno nišo ponujata pojav in porast gledališča animiranih form, kjer se reliefna figura lutkovnega objekta odmakne od imitacije človeškosti in nas izzove, da prevprašamo, kaj in kako opredeljujemo živost.

Tako imenovanega nevtralnega telesa ni. Ne le v zastarelih konceptualizacijah biološkega in družbenega spola, kjer je žensko telo zreducirano na »dopolnitev« ali pa znotraj razlikovanja od moškega, temveč tudi drugje. Kot zahodna družba v celoti (izvzemši manjše mehurčke) še nismo sposobni neopredeljevanja spola, ko na nekem telesu identificiramo vizualne markerje in jih interpretiramo v skladu s privzgojenimi družbenimi idejami. Če humanoidno lutko,

ki se pojavlja v različnih lutkovnih tehnikah – od marionetnega gledališča do ročnih in namiznih lutk –, le za hip za potrebe miselnega eksperimenta prestavimo v svet otroških igrač, kjer je princip igranja podoben principu animacije, tam najdemo intrigantno in ilustrativno situacijo. Razlika med figurami, ki naj bi reprezentirale in diferenciirale moške in ženske like (za primer analizirajmo dva izmed najpopularnejših predstavnikov, Barbie in Kena), je predvsem v njihovem reliefu, pri čemer sta njuni mednožji identični, Barbie pa ima v primerjavi s Kenom povečane prsi. Ta vzporedni svet lutkovnega in animiranega, v katerem se otroci srečujejo s spolom in ga skozi igro animiranja nato tudi performirajo, ponuja enega izmed vzročnih indikatorjev za odsotnost nevtralnega lutkovnega telesa. V prvem poglavju omenjenega zbornika *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations* z naslovom »The Monster and the Corpse: Puppetry and the Uncanniness of Gender Performance« lutkarica Laura Purcell-Gates sprva dekonstruira domnevno nevtralnost, da lahko v teh ruševinah nato najde možnost za produkcijo nelagodja, ki pri občinstvu vzbudi napor reimaginacije, kako se družbeni spol lahko (vizualno) uprizarja. Na temeljih prvoosebne izkušnje demonstrira prav tisto, kar se je zarisalo pri naši analizi Barbie in Kena – da telo brez vidnih spolnih markerjev nikakor ni neospoljeno, temveč mu praviloma vedno pripisujemo moški družbeni/biološki spol.[4] A avtorica članka opozori še na drugo plat te ospoljenosti »nevtralne« lutke; ko ta želi na odru reprezentirati ženski družbeni spol, povzroči odzive nelagodja in zmede, saj naseli tisti medprostor, v katerem je občinstvo izzvano, da preseže svojo zmogljivost mišljenja spola.[5]

Značilnosti odnosa med lutko in animatorko

Že sama beseda lutka v angleščini in tudi v slovenščini nosi dvojni pomen – uporabljena je bodisi za opis ženske subordinativne pozicije v družbi bodisi opisuje otroško igračo, katere glavna funkcije je njena manipulacija po vzgibih in željah otroka.[6] Alissa Mello in Claudia Orenstein v uvodnem besedilu[7] razčlenita etimologijo besede, v katero so vpeti prav feminizacija in drugi derogativni stereotipi, saj njeno

---

3 | To je toliko bolj prezentno, ko/če lik spregovori, še posebej v jezikih, kjer slovnični in biološki spol vplivata na obliko glagola.

4 | Purcell-Gates, Laura. »The Monster and the Corpse: Puppetry and the Uncanniness of Gender Performance«, uredila Alissa Mello. *Women and Puppetry*. Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475.

5 | Ibid.

6 | Ne pozabimo, da otroci prav pri tem igranju pogosto preizkušajo meje nasilja.

7 | Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A., uredniki. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations*. Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475.

poimenovanje implicira podrejenost, zato se že sam termin »lutka« vedno pojavi skupaj s kupom prikrite ideološke prtljage. Če je v umetniškem kontekstu lutka uprizoritveni element, historično povezan z animacijo in manipulacijo, se uporaba iste besede v vsakdanjem govoru (kjer se najpogosteje nanaša na opis ženske) opre prav na kup konotacij, povezanih z odsotnostjo avtonomije. Lutka in njeno poimenovanje nikakor nista naključna, saj sta manipulativno ravnanje z njo in njena podrejenost drugemu (kar je skozi zgodovinsko perspektivo pozicija, pripisana ženski) konstitutiven par družbenega razumevanja lutke. Na tej točki pa se srečamo s paradoksom. Iz ene perspektive je v lutko in lutkarstvo vpleten skupek družbenih hierarhij, iz druge pa je, kot smo razpravljali že prej, lutkovno telo še danes primarno brano kot moško. Ne gre torej za to, da bi lutka sama izvirno želela prikazovati podrejeno žensko podobo in bila zato kot umetniška forma rangirana nižje; nasprotno, lutkovna umetnost je v nekaterih zgodovinskih kontekstih zasedala visok položaj in upodabljala zgodbe herojev,[8] a je ne zaradi svoje vsebine, temveč zaradi svoje tehnike – manipulacije z namenom oživljanja – vseeno ohranila feminiziran termin. Sodobni premiki lutkovne umetnosti, med katerimi sta »pomembnejša mejnika odklon od klasičnega iluzoričnega lutkarstva in pojav vidnega animatorja, ki ni več skrit za paravanom«,[9] ponujajo prostor redefinicije tega konstitutivnega odnosa med lutko in animatorjem_ko, ali kot zapiše Tjaša Bertoncelj v spremljevalnem besedilu k razstavi *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*, na novo opredeljen odnos med lutko in animatorjem »nastopi kot pomemben predmet refleksije in eden od poglavitnih konceptualnih nastavkov«.[10] Da se na odru odvije ta refleksija in se spremeni odnos med lutko in animatorjem, je pomemben konceptualni premik, ne le sama redefinicija animacije in manipulacije, ključno je predvsem dojemanje vloge in avtonomije lutke.

Že leta 2007 je v slovenščini Rok Vevar v poročilu o selekciji lutkovnega bienala izraz lutka razloči in definiral kot manjšo podmnožico gledališča animiranih form, kjer »prevladujejo mimetične upodobitve živali, ljudi ali prepoznavnih fantastičnih bitij«,[11] skratka, kjer na odru oživijo bitja, ki jih že sama po sebi doživljamo kot živa, njihova lutkovna forma pa s pomočjo animatorja le prevzame mimetične poteze. V nasprotju z vnašanjem življenja bitjem, kot so živali, ljudje

ali pa recimo pošasti, ki so v splošnem imaginariju že razumljena kot živa, pa se koncept animiranih form osredotoča na objekte, ki jih primarno v vsakdanjem življenju (in torej ne filozofski misli) ne interpretiramo kot živa bitja, ki jim ne pripisujemo potez živosti (ilustrativen primer tega je kamen). Da bi vanje vnesli življenje, animacija takšnih animiranih form poseže po antropomorfizaciji, kjer jih z govorom in/ali kretnjami poskuša počlovečiti, da v njih uzremo poteze živosti. A tudi ta premik od lutke, ki je izredno blizu človeku, do objekta, ki to podobnost izgublja, v odnosu med animatorjem in objektom animacije implicira pasivnost in manipulacijo. Ne nazadnje že sama fraza gledališča animiranih form sugerira, da se z objektom nekaj zgodi – se animira – četudi ta odnos s pojavom vidnega animatorja in dekonstrukcijo iluzije zamaje klasično oživljanje lutkovnega objekta.

Posthumanistični feminizem in lutka

Če lutkovna umetnost ne glede na spremembe, ki jih je prineslo sodobno lutkarstvo, še vedno ne ubeži različnim relacijam in reprezentacijam, ki perpetuirajo seksistične, mizogine in druge problematične ideološke principe, lahko potencial, ki to preseže, najdemo v potezah sodobnega lutkarstva, ki ne poskušajo redefinirati in apropriirati obstoječih razmerij in likov/lutk. Vstop sodobne tehnologije, ki se intenzivno dogaja v zadnjih desetletjih, vzporedno z novimi teorijami posthumanizma, ki se odmikajo od ideala racionalnosti, saj ga prepoznavajo kot neustreznega, je zaradi svoje novosti veliko bolj nepopisan list in prostor za redefinicijo/izumljanje kot pa pokrajina tradicionalnega lutkarstva. To prepozna že smer posthumanističnega feminizma, ki opresijo moškocentričnega sistema prepozna ne le pri ženskem spolu, temveč v odnosu do Drugega, ki je tudi naravni in nečloveški svet. Ena izmed najprepoznavnejših predstavnic tega teoretskega toka je Donna Haraway, ki, kot piše Rosi Braidotti v *Four* »Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism«, že v svojem »Manifestu za kiborge«[12] vzpostavi feministično misel, ki antropocentrizem zamenja s setom relacijskih (*relational*) povezav med človeškimi in nečloveškimi (*human and non human*) bitji, med katere uvrsti tudi tehnološke artefakte.[13] Donna Haraway s predlogom figuracij, kot so kiborgi, companion-species in druge hibri-

---

8 | Uporaba moškega spola tu ni generična.

9 | Bertoncelj, Tjaša. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.

10 | Ibid.

11 | Vevar, Rok. *Poročilo Selektorja 4. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije.* ULU, 2007, http://ulu.si/4-bienale/.

12 | Haraway, Donna. »A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century«, uredil Joel Weiss. *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments*. Springer Netherlands, 2006, str. 117–58, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3803-7_4.

13 | Braidotti, Rosi. »Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism«, uredil Richard A. Grusin. *Anthropocene Feminism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017, str. 21–48.

dne figure radikalne medvrstne relacionalnosti, zabriše kategorične distinkcije, kot so človek-nečlovek, moški-ženska. Če predloge Donne Haraway in posthumanističnega feminizma prenesemo v lutkovno umetnost, hibridni prostori sodobne umetnosti in sodobne lutkovne tehnologije lahko ponujajo tisti vidik lutkarstva, ki se izmika binarnim kategorizacijam animator-lutka, moško-žensko lutkovno telo. Če namreč sledimo misli francoskega filozofa Michela Foucaulta, tudi upor ali poskus reapropriacije teh binarizmov, ki so, kot smo pokazali prej, zaviti v zgodovino družbenih hierarhij, pravzaprav reproducira in opolnomoči normo. Ali kot v članku »The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology« trdi Cariad Astles: lutka, ki na odru odigra upor proti svojemu animatorju, tako da se upre in izzove njegov nadzor, s tem le poudari, da izvirno ne more obstajati brez njega in tako nikoli ne more biti popolnoma samostojna, temveč le obstaja v svoji soodvisnosti. Ta je pri takšni lutki vpeta v njen dizajn in zasnovo, da bi lahko na odru gledali zares osvobojeno lutko, pa pomeni, da mora biti ustvarjena z mislijo na neodvisnost od animatorja.[14]

Presežek antropomorfnosti kot potencial feministične emancipacije

Kljub pojavu objektnega gledališča ali pa gledališča animiranih form v (lutkovnem) gledališču v lutki in animaciji še vedno iščemo vsaj trohico zrcalne slike sebe, četudi smo se sposobni odmakniti od izključno človeških podob. Premikanje animiranega objekta mora biti podobno nam znanim gestam iz vokabularja premikanja človeškega ali živalskega telesa, da »oživi«, tako moramo to zaznati tudi v drugih animiranih objektih, kot so roboti, luči ipd. In če torej na odru uprizarjamo antropomorfizirane podobe samih sebe in je hkrati univerzalna podoba sodobnega humanizma še vedno Človek (beri moški, bele rase), potem je eden izmed potencialov feministične emancipacije lahko radikalen odmik od antropomorfizirane lutke v hibridna bitja, o katerih na primer govori že Donna Haraway. Lutke, ki torej niso klasične lutke (niso mimetične upodobitve živali, ljudi ali prepoznavnih fantastičnih bitij), a presegajo tudi meje živosti, ki jo pripisujemo animiranim objektom, so neraziskan prostor, kjer binarizmi (še) ne obstajajo in lahko zato ob usmerjenem snovanju ostanejo lutkovni objekti, kjer reprezentacija spola ni prisotna, saj gre za lutkovne objekte, ki so tako tuji, da

jim težko pripišemo kakršnekoli značilnosti družbenega ali biološkega spola. Nika Arhar v »Razmislekih o sodobnem lutkarstvu« zapiše, da »ni pomembno, da 'lutka' zaživi kot fiktivno živo bitje, temveč da 'oživi' v svoji specifiki (kot lahko 'oživi' tudi domišljija); morda odpre tudi vprašanja o naravi svoje ali/in naše resničnosti«.[15] In prav to oživetje v svoji specifiki je tisto, ki lutko popelje stran od vsega človeškega, kajti »oživi« lahko tudi reflektor ali lučni park določene dvorane,[16] skupina objektov, ki nima nikakršnih človeških lastnosti.

Kompleksen položaj žensk v lutkarstvu nikakor ni unikaten le v tem (umetniškem) polju, temveč odseva probleme sodobnega sveta in obdobja četrtega vala feminizma, ki ga zaznamuje občutek razočaranja in streznitve, da pridobljene pravice niso dokončne in da pot k enakopravnosti nikakor ni končana; ne le to, napredek ni linearen in družbe lahko hitro zdrsnejo nazaj v regresijo in neokonservatizem. Hipernapredek tehnološkega sveta sodobnemu feminizmu ponuja hkrati nov izziv in novo možnost; četudi je optimizma polna era *dot com booma* z začetka dvatisočih, ko se je svetovni splet zdel popoln prostor svobode in ustvarjanja progresivnih mest za emancipacijo žensk, že mimo in trenutni trendi Silikonske doline ponovno utrjujejo moško dominanco (ni nepomemben podatek, da najuspešnejša podjetja vodijo beli moški: Mark Zuckerberg, Jack Dorsey, Adam Neumann). V svetu sodobnega lutkarstva lahko tehnologijo prav zaradi svoje novitete in ahistoričnosti, saj v nasprotju s tradicionalnimi formami obstaja šele nekaj desetletij, vidimo kot prostor, kjer se ponuja potencial ne le za negacijo binarizmov reprezentacije, ampak tudi za nišo, kjer interni družbeni hierarhični red na podlagi spola še ni vzpostavljen. Tradicionalno lutkarstvo, predvsem v tistih vejah, ki veljajo za visoko cenjeno in posvečeno umetnost, se po besedah Cariad Astles[17] umešča v kanon Zahodnega moško dominiranega gledališča na podlagi izkazovanja tehnike, veščin in moči, torej sestavin manipulacije lutke. Namesto da bi ženske lutkarice za dosego enakopravnosti in konca diskriminacije morale vedno znova dokazovati in primerjati svoje tehnične in obrtniške sposobnosti z moškimi kolegi in bi bile tako ujete v konstantnem procesu dokazovanja in legitimiranja, sodobno (neantropomorfno) in/ali tehnološko lutkarstvo, kjer lutkovni objekt niti ni več nujno animirana

---

14 | Astles, Cariad. »The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology«, uredili Burgholzer, L., Hochholdinger--Reiterer, B. Itw : *Im Dialog: Uneins – Désuni – At Odds. Identitätsentwürfe Im Figurentheater*. Alexander, 2021, str. 206–215.

15 | Arhar, Nika. »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, uredila Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.
16 | Glej: https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/news-ip/the-unbearable-freedom-of-associative-thinking/.
17 | Astles, Cariad. »The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology«, uredili Burgholzer, L., Hochholdinger-Reiterer, B. Itw : *Im Dialog: Uneins – Désuni – At Odds. Identitätsentwürfe Im Figurentheater*. Alexander, 2021, str. 206–215.

forma, temveč »oživljen« predmet v vsem razponu te besede, odpira prostor potenciala, ki je že a priori izvzet iz historičnih in tako tudi trdovratnih seksističnih in mizoginih vzorcev. Sodobno hibridno/tehnološko vodeno lutkarstvo za seboj nima tisočletne tradicije, v kateri bi bila participacija v lutkovni umetnosti za ženske prepovedana, a vseeno v sebi skriva past. Še danes namreč spolno segregirana izobrazba kljub sistemom javnega šolstva v ukvarjanje s tehnologijo bolj intenzivno spodbuja moški družbeni spol kot pa ženskega, kar lahko posledično povzroči manjšo seznanjenost s tehnološkimi rešitvami za lutkarice, sploh v okoljih, kjer ni sistematiziranega izobraževanja ali pa to temelji predvsem na klasičnih lutkah. Poleg tega obdobja finančnih kriz (ki so mogoča tudi v postcovidnem hiperinflacijskem okrevanju) z manj denarja in manj ugleda za lutkovno umetnost – takrat ko je ženskam vstop lažji v primerjavi z obdobji »posvečenosti« takšne umetnosti – prinašajo tudi manj prostora za »sodobnost« in investicije v raziskovanje in razvijanje tehnoloških rešitev in izumov.

A, malo klišejsko, uspeh feminizma na splošno in preboj žensk v lutkarstvu se ne bi zgodil brez neomajnega, a realističnega optimizma vseh predhodnih generacij. Njihova želja po poskušanju, po tveganju in po iskanju novih polj možnega znotraj opresivnih okolij, je tisto, kar nam je prineslo trenutek, v katerem lahko sploh nastajajo knjige, kot je *Women and Puppetry*. Tradicija sklepanja zavezništev, ki so v vsaki etapi feministične zgodovine pripomogla k širitvi nabora pridobljenih pravic in k vedno večji intersekcionalnosti in diverziteti, nas lahko v kontekstu tega trenutka navdihne za rušenje seksističnih in mizoginih temeljev lutkarstva, ki izvirajo iz obdobja njegovega prvotnega razvoja. Sicer pogosto citirana fraza pesnice in aktivistke Audre Lorde,[18] da mojstrovo orodje nikoli ne bo razstavilo/uničilo mojstrove hiše, je prav zaradi svoje nedvoumne univerzalnosti in pronicljivosti aplikabilna tudi pri debati o sodobnem lutkarstvu in njegovem feminističnem potencialu. Ohranjanje antropomorfne lutkovne figure, ki je za animacijo odvisna od volje človeške animatorke, še vedno implicira kategorijo spola, četudi jo poskuša redefinirati, medtem ko se lutkovni objekti, ki potiskajo meje »živega«, že na začetku osvobodijo takšnih konotacij.

POVZETEK

Posthumanistično-feministična intervencija je razmislek o potencialnosti sodobnega lutkarstva pri preseganju spolno zaznamovanih podob telesnosti. Figura lutke je tista, ki v primerjavi z igralko zaradi svoje nenavezanosti na človeško telo razpira prostor potencialnosti za rekonfiguracijo in preobrazbo mizogino in seksistično obarvane zgodovine nastanka in razvoja lutkarstva. Potencial, ki to preseže, najdemo v sodobni tehnologiji, ki jo povežemo z novimi teorijami posthumanizma. S to idejo zasnovani lutkovni objekti, ki niso mimetične upodobitve živali, ljudi ali prepoznavnih fantastičnih bitij, so neraziskan prostor, kjer binarizmi (še) ne obstajajo in lahko zato ob usmerjenem snovanju ohranijo odsotnost reprezentacije spolov, saj gre za podobe telesnosti, ki jim težko pripišemo kakršnekoli značilnosti družbenega ali biološkega spola.

O AVTORICI

Maša Radi Buh, kritičarka, teatrologinja in sociologinja kulture. Na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani je diplomirala iz sociologije kulture, magistrski študij teorije in dramaturgije sodobnih uprizoritvenih umetnosti pa je zaključila na Univerzi v Utrechtu na Nizozemskem. Sodeluje s spletnim portalom Neodvisni – teritorij sodobnih scenskih umetnosti, s Kritiško platformo sodobnega lutkarstva EU in je sourednica portala Kritika. V sodelovanju z Varjo Hrvatin in Jakobom Ribičem soustvarjajo radijsko oddajo Teritorij teatra na Radiu Študent ter raziskujejo strategije kolektivnega teoretskega mišljenja.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

posthumanistični feminizem, družbeni spol, lutkovno telo, gledališče animiranih form, lutka

18 | Lorde, Audre. *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*. Penguin, 2018.

Literatura

Arhar, Nika. »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, uredila Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. │ **Astles, Cariad.** »The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology«, uredili Burgholzer, L., Hochholdinger-Reiterer, B. *Itw : Im Dialog: Uneins – Désuni – At Odds. Identitätsentwürfe Im Figurentheater.* Alexander, 2021. │ **Bertoncelj, Tjaša.** *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. │ **Braidotti, Rosi.** »Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism«, uredil Richard A. Grusin. *Anthropocene Feminism.* University of Minnesota Press, 2017. │ **Haraway, Donna.** »A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century«, uredil Joel Weiss. *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments.* Springer Netherlands, 2006, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3803-7_4. │ **Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A.,** uredniki. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475. │ **Lorde, Audre.** *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.* Penguin, 2018. │ **Purcell-Gates, Laura.** »The Monster and the Corpse: Puppetry and the Uncanniness of Gender Performance«, uredila Alissa Mello. *Women and Puppetry.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475. │ **Van Kerkhoven, Marianne.** *Van het kijken en van het schrijven: teksten over theater.* Van Halewyck, 2002. │ **Vevar, Rok.** *Poročilo selektorja 4. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije.* ULU, 2007, http://ulu.si/4-bienale/.

POLITIČNO IN RADIKALNO SKOZI OČI LUTKE

V javnem prostoru vedno prevladuje tisti, ki ponudi največ, in vsi, ki so pod njim, nenehno iščejo nove oblike upora, da bi se ohranila možnost demokracije. Lutkarstvo je zagotovo ena od takšnih tradicij. Je umetnost, ki se tako ali drugače ukvarja s politiko v javni sferi. V lutko kot del materialne kulture družbe so zato vpisane politične razsežnosti zgodovinskega trenutka, v katerem je bila ustvarjena, pa ne le zaradi tega, kar govori, ampak (predvsem) zato, kako to govori. Poleg tega pa je s političnim prežeta tudi bolj neposredno, saj je bila v preteklosti večkrat (simbolna) nosilka protestov, različnih narodnih pomladi in protioblastnih akcij. Da pa se je lahko razvila v enega ključnih političnih medijev, gre pripisati domnevni trivialnosti, s katero se na lutko gleda in zaradi katere je bila lahko vedno znova prenašalka subverzivnih in eksplicitnih političnih misli. Kot ključna se izkaže predvsem v trenutkih svoje političnosti, ko so bile druge umetnosti omejevane (cenzura).

Pri dodajanju prilastka »politično« umetniškim delom pa je treba biti previden. Kaj hitro se nam lahko zgodi, da zabredemo v misel, da je vsa umetnost *a priori* in *de facto* politična. Kar je v nekem izrazito ohlapnem pomenu sicer res, saj se umetnost (razen ko gre za čisti larpurlartizem) tako ali drugače vpenja v čas in kontekst. Ko pridemo do termina »politično gledališče«, je zato ključno, da ga nekako opredelimo, saj se nam drugače lahko zgodi, da v svojih pregledih in analizah zaobjemamo celotno gledališko zgodovino. Zato v tem pregledu pomembnih političnih tradicij lutke mislim le na lutkovne uprizoritve, pojave in manifestacije, ki se aktivno ukvarjajo s političnimi koncepti, v želji, da jih ali podprejo ali napadejo. Gre torej za dogodke, ki se ekspli-

citno naslanjajo na politične probleme svojega časa. Ali kot je politično gledališče opredelil Michael Kirby v članku »On Political Theatre«: »[...] gre za uprizoritev, ki se namerno ukvarja z vlado in ki je namerno vpletena v politiko ali se do nje opredeljuje«.[1] Na tej točki je vredno poudariti tudi, da se v članku zavestno osredotočam na politično lutkarstvo v službi upora proti obstoječim konvencijam in sistemom, zato nizam primere, ki so bližje protestu, in ne primerov, ki so namenjeni propagandi, čeprav tudi te lahko umeščamo v področje političnega lutkarstva.

O začetkih političnega lutkarstva v sodobnem pomenu lahko govorimo šele po 60. letih prejšnjega stoletja, najprej pa naj navedemo nekatere starejše primere političnega angažmaja lutke, ki pomenijo ključne referenčne točke, na katere se kasnejše politično lutkarstvo naslanja. Politična vloga lutk se je dejansko začela že v revolucionarni Angliji 17. stoletja z njenim najslavnejšim lutkovnim likom Punchem. Gre za izpeljanko italijanskega lika Pulcinella iz commedie dell'arte in je v Angliji veljal za kralja lutk 17. in 18. stoletja. Predstave *Punch in Judy* so poudarjale prostaški humor, satirizirale lokalne dogodke, širile govorice in delovale kot nekakšna poročevalska služba za ljudstvo. Punch je junak preprostega človeka, ki je s pomočjo satire kršil vsa pravila v času, ko je bil konformizem vsiljen na vsa področja življenja. Kot pravi Henryk Jurkowski v pregledu zgodovine evropskega lutkarstva, je Punch »predstavljal anarhista, ki je pobijal oblastnike in predstavnike družbenih ustanov.

1 | Kirby, Michael. »On Political Theatre«, uredil Michael Kirby. *The Drama Review,* let. 19, št. 2, 1975, str. 130.

Tako je omogočil posebno katarzo vsem nesrečnežem, ki so trpeli pod jarmom zatiralskega režima viktorijanske dobe.«[2] Punch v 17. stoletju postane antologijski politični lutkovni junak. To mu omogoča predvsem dejstvo, da prepovedi obratovanj gledališč pogosto niso vključevale lutkarstva, saj se to oblastem ni zdelo pomembno (na primer prepoved delovanja londonskih gledališč leta 1642). Podobno se je razvila tudi lutka Gayant (velikan) iz mesta Douai. Ta lutka se prvič pojavi že leta 1530, ko je takratno špansko mesto Douai organiziralo festival v počastitev poraza francoskih sil. Več takratnih cehov je izdelalo lutko velikanko iz protja, ki predstavlja varuha oziroma zaščitnika mesta. Gayant je zelo hitro dobil družino in julijski festival njemu na čast je postal ključna tradicionalna prireditev v tem mestu. A ko je bil Douai leta 1667 priključen Franciji, je bilo praznovanje prepovedano. Gayant in njegova družina sta bila do konca druge svetovne vojne večkrat ponovno obnovljena in prepovedana, nacisti so lutke celo zažgali, ob koncu vojne pa so bile trajno obnovljene in so še danes simbol mesta. Čeprav ta primer ni političen v sodobnem smislu antiavtoritarnosti, je kot zagovornik cehov pomenil vzpon novega »srednjega« razreda in s tem močno politično akcijo v času redefinicije socialnih struktur.

V tem vidiku je zanimivo omeniti tudi legendarnega poljskega berača Baranija Kożuszeka iz 18. stoletja, ki se je na varšavskih ulicah s svojimi močnimi lutkovnimi razgrajaškimi akcijami redno politično udejstoval. Najbolj je zaslovel z miniaturkami med Kościuszkovo vstajo (1794), kjer je lutke, ki so upodabljale izdajalce domovine, obglavljal z majhno giljotino. Gre za preprost primer, ki pa morda najbolj jasno nakaže temeljno politično lastnost lutke: sposobnost, da nadomešča nedosegljivo telo javne osebnosti s svojo materialno upodobitvijo.

Ko govorimo o ključnih primerih politične tradicije lutke, je treba omeniti nesporne voditelje lutkarstva v Evropi: Čehe. Vloga lutke v češki narodni pomladi se kaže kot ključna predvsem v 18. in 19. stoletju, ko so se Čehi poskušali uveljaviti kot avtonomen narod, osamosvojen Avstro-Ogrske. V tem času je večina državljanov menila, da nemščina ne bi smela več biti državni jezik in da bi morale biti dejavnosti, kot je gledališče, izvajane v češčini. Tu so v ospredje stopile lutkovne predstave, ki so jih (potujoči) lutkarji vedno igrali v svojem maternem jeziku. Podobno kot Punch v Angliji je češki Kašpárek v svojem jeziku znal povedati tisto, česar si ljudje niso upali, in pozival k revoluciji, uporu. S tem so lutkarji postali nekakšni nosilci češke narodne po-

mladi, kulturne ikone in pomemben del češkega izročila. Po ustanovitvi prve republike leta 1918 se je lutkarstvo močno razmahnilo in postalo eden najpomembnejših stebrov češke kulture. Zgleden primer tega je ustanovitev praškega lutkovnega gledališča Říše Loutek leta 1920, ki je sledilo vodilu, da je treba vzgajati svoje otroke z lutkami in ne v lutke.[3] Eden najvplivnejših lutkarjev tega obdobja je bil Josef Skupa, ustanovitelj Divadla Spejbl a Hurvínek v Pragi, ki velja za enega najbolj znanih čeških lutkovnih gledališč. Prav Skupa je tisti, ki se je v času druge svetovne vojne izkazal kot izrazito politično angažiran lutkar. V predstave je začel vključevati subtilno satiro in kritiko nacističnega režima in jih igral po vsej okupirani Češkoslovaški. Nacisti so ga leta 1944 aretirali in zaprli v Dresdnu, a mu je ob zavezniškem bombardiranju zapora uspelo pobegniti. Številni drugi češki lutkarji so umrli v koncentracijskih taboriščih ali v petdnevnih uličnih spopadih pred osvoboditvijo Prage (maj 1945). Jasno je, da so se nacisti zavedali moči tradicionalne kulture, ki lahko ljudstvo združuje v kriznih časih, in so jo zato na vse pretege poskušali neusmiljeno zatreti.

Skoraj sočasno se je oblikovalo tudi partizansko lutkovno gledališče, ki ga je na osvobojenem ozemlju Bele krajine leta 1944 udejanjil avtor lutk in kipar Lojze Lavrič. Prva lutkovna predstava *Jurček in trije razbojniki* je bila uprizorjena na silvestrski večer 1944, lutke pa so bile izdelane iz med vojno dostopnih materialov. S svojimi predstavami je gledališče smešilo sovražnike in se medsebojno bodrilo, z gostovanji po celotnem osvobojenem ozemlju pa jasno kazalo na stališča, ki so jih kot borci za ta narod zavzemali.

V času vojne in po njej sta lutkarstvo dodatno spolitizirala gospodarstvo in svetovna politika. Nova gledališka gibanja je navdihnil občutek, da je gledališče, raje kot sredstvo zabave, sodobna umetnost, polna aktivistične vneme, ki so jo navdihovale marksistične ideje. V tej vnemi so imele lutke in procesijske podobe pomembno vlogo pri javnem izražanju levičarskih političnih stališč. S tem se je začel razmah protestnih lutk, ki so se v karakternih nazorih zgledovale po likih, kot sta Punch in Gayant. Potreba po gospodarskem preživetju po drugi svetovni vojni in vsesplošno vzdušje hladne vojne pa sta za nekaj časa utišala politični izraz lutke. V 40. in 50. letih je lutkovno gledališče stopalo po poti otroškega gledališča in zabave, dokler ga niso ponovno prebudili družbeni pretresi v 60. letih, ko se je začelo gibanje političnega lutkarstva, kot si ga predstavljamo danes. Takrat začne delovati ključni predstavnik radikalnega

2 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva.* Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998, str. 285–286.

3 | McPharlin, Paul, urednik. *Puppetry: A Yearbook of Puppetry and Marionettes.* Puppetry Imprints, 1933, str. 63.

in političnega lutkarstva Peter Schumann. Po rodu Nemec, ki se je leta 1961 preselil v ZDA, je leta 1963 v newyorškem Lower East Sidu ustanovil temeljno gledališče Bread and Puppet Theater. V svojih začetkih se je gledališče ukvarjalo z vprašanji policijskega nadzora in naraščajočih cen najemnin. Svoje predstave so odpeljali na ulice New Yorka in tako v jedru problema ozaveščali lokalno skupščino. Schumann je prve predstave ustvarjal z najpreprostejšimi sredstvi, ki so omogočala sodelovanje vsakogar, ne glede na njegove sposobnosti. S tem je dosegel, da so občutljiva vprašanja postala vabljiva za občinstvo, ki jim je prisluhnilo. Kot za *The New York Times* zapiše Holland Cotter, je Schumann ustvaril gledališče, ki »živi ideal umetnosti kot kolektivni obrat, brezplačni ali cenejši alternativni glas zunaj dobičkarskega sistema«.[4] Ključna dela tega gledališča pa so njihove protivojne predstave, s katerimi so protestirali proti vietnamski vojni (mednje sodi tudi predstava *Ogenj* / Fire iz leta 1968). Te predstave, ki bi jih lahko označili za čiste protestne akcije, so Bread and Puppet Theater uvrstile na kulturni zemljevid sveta. Leta 1975 se je skupina preselila na kmetijo v Vermont, kjer še danes prirejajo vsakoletni angažirani festival *Our Domestic Resurrection Circus*, zmes duhovitosti, politike in spektakla, ki je vzgojila generacijo lutkarjev in še danes močno vpliva na svet političnega lutkarstva.

Podobno se je na vzhodni obali ZDA razvila skupina San Francisco Mime Troupe, ki je spodbudila začetke tako imenovanega gverilskega gledališča. Skupino je leta 1959 ustanovil Ronald G. Davis, leta 1961 pa so začeli izvajati ulične predstave po zgledu commedie dell'arte, ki so se odzivale na žgočo politično represijo, ameriško gibanje za državljanske pravice ter vojaško in tajno posredovanje v tujini. Med 60. in 90. leti prejšnjega stoletja se je v ZDA po zgledu Schumanna in Davisa razvilo pravo gibanje politično obarvanih lutkovnih skupin, med najudarnejše zagotovo sodijo In the Heart of the Beast, Arm-of-the-Sea in Wise Fool Puppet. Te, še vedno žive gledališke družine se aktivno ukvarjajo z obravnavo lokalnih in tudi svetovnih problematik, večinoma gre za protivojno naravnanosti in spodbujanje bolj trajnostnega življenja.

V podobni maniri je leta 1981 južnoafriški lutkar Gary Friedman ustvaril predstavo z ročnimi lutkami *Puns in Dodie* (Puns en Dodie, Gary Friedman Productions). Gre za družbenopolitično satiro, usmerjeno proti apartheidu. Po principu uličnega lutkarstva je s predstavo pet let potoval po Južni Afriki in osnovno temo prilagajal žgočim aktualnim

problemom. Tako se poleg protagonistov Puns in Dodie v več različicah pojavijo tudi lutke predsednika P. W. Botha, nadškofa Desmonda Tutuja, Ronalda Reagana in Margaret Thatcher. Leta 1987 je pomagal ustanoviti AREPP (Afriški raziskovalni in izobraževalni lutkovni program), ki ulično lutkovno umetnost uporabi kot neogrožajoč medij za obravnavo občutljivih vprašanj. Na svetovni dan boja proti aidsu so leta 1988 pripravili potujočo predstavo *Lutke proti aidsu* (Puppets Against AIDS), s katero so ljudi ozaveščali o tej bolezni. Predstava je začetek pomembne zvrsti njihovega ustvarjanja, ki se še danes ukvarja z dopolnilnim socialnim in zdravstvenim izobraževanjem ter spodbujanjem življenjske samoučinkovitosti na območjih z omejenimi možnostmi.

Novo prelomnico politično in protestno lutkarstvo doživi v izteku 20. stoletja na protestih leta 1999 v Seattlu. Zgodil se je pravi karneval upora, poln lutk, mask, plesalcev, ustvarjalnih blokad cest, transparentov in glasbe. Člani skupin Art & Revolution, Bread and Puppet Theater, Wise Fool Puppet in številni drugi so se zbrali in s svojimi lutkami velikankami sodelovali v protestih. Skupaj so ustvarjali lutke, ki so bile osrednji motiv shodov, fotografij in posledično tudi nastalega medijskega pompa. Udeležba na protestu je bila tudi izhodišče za zasnovo izraza (in gibanja) *puppetista* (sestavljenka iz angleške besede »puppet« in Zapatista). Skovanka označuje lutke in lutkovne skupine, ki delujejo ter se osredotočajo na proteste in demonstracije. Skupina Itinerant Garbage Theatre for Cultural Insurrection v manifestu puppetiste zapiše:

> Z osvoboditvijo lutkovnega gledališča iz bleščečih črnih škatel, z vrnitvijo k njegovim koreninam kot gledališča akcije, si lahko ponovno predstavljamo možnost življenja in ne zgolj preživetja znotraj sistema. Organi medijske in policijske države so imeli pri prikazovanju lutke kot orožja nenavadno prav, saj je lutka res močno orodje za preoblikovanje misli posameznikov in posledično celotne družbe.[5]

Lahko bi rekli, da ta dogodek pomeni nekakšno utemeljitev protestnega lutkarstva kot enega od žanrov v lutkovni umetnosti. V drugi polovici 20. stoletja so lutke sledile zgledu Bread and Puppet Theatra, a se vseeno umeščale znotraj nekaterih gledaliških konvencij, protestne lutke 21. stoletja pa se izrazito usmerijo v politični izraz na ulicah. Danes kratki lutkovni skeči znotraj samih protestnih shodov ustvarjajo nove, ločene prostore. Ulica se spremeni v igralni prostor, kjer lutke in lutkarji za trenutek nadzorujejo cesto, medtem

---

4 | Cotter, H. *Spectacle for the Heart and Soul.* The New York Times, avgust 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/theater/05cott.html.

5 | Winslow, Lulu. »Puppets and Protest: Street Theater, Art, and Vigil in the 21st Century«, uredil Michael K. Stone. *Whole Earth*, št. 109, jesen 2002, str. 54.

ko se gledalci zbirajo in opazujejo dogajanje. Na ta preprosti, a močni način lutkovna igra ruši omejitve dovoljenega pohoda in ustvarja napetost med tem, kar je dovoljeno (od policije, lokalnih oblasti, konvencije), in tem, kar je zunaj pričakovanj. Tako lutke krepijo tisto, kar je bistvo protestov: spor med konvencionalnim *statusom quo* in tem, kako si protestniki predstavljajo prihodnost. V Sloveniji lutkovni medij na takšen način uporabi lutkar Brane Solce, ki na skoraj vsak ljubljanski protest pripelje lutke velikanke (te vlečejo estetske in vsebinske vzporednice z Bread and Puppet Theater).

Z začetkom prejšnjega desetletja pa smo lahko zasledili tudi povečan razvoj lutkovnih uprizoritev, ki jih umetniki zasnujejo okoli svoje izkušnje vojne. Takšen primer je uprizoritev *In tukaj sem* (And Here I Am, r. Zoe Lafferty, 2017), ki je nastala v koprodukciji britanskega Developing Artists in palestinskega Freedom Theatre. Palestinski igralec Ahmed Tobasi na odru z različnimi predmeti in materiali prikaže svojo zgodbo, ki jo je za oder spisal iraško-britanski pisatelj Hassan Abdulrazzak. Zgodba se osredotoča na Tobasijevo pot od pripadnika islamskega džihada do igralca. Boleča avtobiografska izkušnja postane politična prav v svojem izobraževalnem pomenu, ko nosilna misel postane razmislek o posledicah vojne. S podobno mislijo je nastala tudi uprizoritev *Lahkotno življenje* (Snadný život), ki jo je za češki DAMU leta 2015 ustvaril palestinski gledališki ustvarjalec Husam Abed. Gre za dokumentarno lutkovno uprizoritev, ki v zgodbi o odraščanju v jordanskem begunskem taborišču orisuje širšo sliko političnih dogodkov te države v zadnjih 30 letih.

Ključen in še razmeroma svež primer takšnega udejstvovanja lutke je tudi projekt *Hoja* (The Walk, 2021) gledaliških producentov The Walk Productions, Handspring Puppet Company in Good Chance. Gre za politično gesto, v kateri so se trije animatorji s skoraj štiri metre visoko lutko po imenu Mala Amal odpravili na petmesečno pot od sirsko--turške meje prek Evrope do Združenega kraljestva, da bi opozorili na problematiko človeških migracij. Megalomanska odisejada je med julijem in novembrom 2021 na dobrih 8000 kilometrov dolgi poti v več kot 65 mestih pozivala in nagovarjala ljudi na ulicah, naj podprejo in zahtevajo pomoč svojih držav v vse večji begunski krizi.

Za konec pa je zagotovo treba omeniti tudi politične lutkovne satire, ki se redno predvajajo na zaslonih. Oddaja *XYZ* (The XYZ Show) je kenijska satirična lutkovna oddaja, ki jo je leta 2009 zasnoval Godfrey Mwampembwa po zgledu podobne francoske oddaje *Lutkovne novice* (Les Guignols de l'Info). Tedensko satirično oddajo vodijo lutke iz lateksa, ki z ostrim humorjem obravnavajo žgoča politična vprašanja, od revšči-

ne na ulicah Nairobija do kenijskih politikov, ki jih je obtožilo Mednarodno kazensko sodišče. Skoraj sočasno in po istem zgledu je v Južni Afriki zaživela oddaja *Zanews*, ki snuje satirično kroniko južnoafriškega političnega vsakdana z lutkami nekaterih najvidnejših osebnosti v državi (lutka Nelsona Mandele je bila prva v oddaji). Takšne lutkovne oddaje so pomemben ventil, skozi katerega lahko ljudstvo na satirično-grotesken, pa vendar še vedno miren način izrazi svojo jezo in kolektivno travmo. Skoraj deset let kasneje je v Sudanu nastala *Bisha TV*, ki je z lutkovnimi igrami na prostem in posnetimi lutkovnimi oddajami satirizirala, zasmehovala in kritizirala vladajoče politične stranke svoje države. *Bisha TV* se je zgledovala po prej omenjenih oddajah, in čeprav sta obe še živeči predhodnici podobno uporniški, je bila *Bisha TV* v tem smislu veliko bolj radikalna, prodorna in neposredna. Njeni »protagonisti« so namreč kar takrat še vladajoči sudanski predsednik Omar al Bašir in njegovi pajdaši. V času njegovega predsedovanja je takšna poteza pomenila pomembno obliko upora proti cenzuri in kršenju človekovih pravic, saj je v svet prinašala informacije, ki iz Sudana drugače niso prišle, prav tako pa je njihovim prebivalcem ponudila možnost (umetniškega) udejstvovanja proti režimu. Anarhistični podton, ki ga nosijo te oddaje, tako predstavlja najgloblje raven ponovnega pridobivanja lastne svobode.

Zgodovina političnega lutkarstva nam pokaže, da je to izrazito bogato in raznoliko polje umetnosti, ki pa je takšno lahko postalo predvsem zaradi dejstva, da dolgo ni bilo razumljeno kot resna umetnost. Tako je v svoji zgodovini včasih potihem, včasih naglas spremljalo velike družbene spremembe, ljudstvu omogočalo vedenje o aktualnih dogodkih in sodelovalo v boju za boljšo družbo. Lutkarstvo je tako v svojem bistvu postalo simbol solidarnosti med izvajalci in lutkami, s tem pa tudi simbol solidarnosti z lutkarskim občinstvom. Lutke so postale sredstvo za doživljanje kolektivizma in družbenih sprememb, zato pa tudi mehanizem, s katerim lahko ljudje sodelujejo pri doseganju skupnega cilja. Treba je tudi poudariti, da prav humorni vidik lutke zareže v mrtvo telo družbenega diskurza in prek vizualne podobe terja vnovični premislek danega, samoumevnega. Humor kot telesni občutek ima moč neposredno angažirati politično telo, kar se še posebej kaže v 21. stoletju, ko sta ironija in umetniški izraz pogosta spremljevalca malomeščanskega upiranja proti neslutenim strukturam globalizacije.

POVZETEK

Članek »Politično in radikalno skozi oči lutke« je zgodovinski pregled ključnih političnih, protestnih, uporniških in radikalnih akcij, ki so se zgodile v različnih delih sveta. Gre za raznoliko polje, ki že od 17. stoletja včasih potihem, včasih naglas spremlja velike družbene spremembe in sodeluje v boju za boljšo družbo. Lutka je tako v svoji zgodovini postala nekakšna simbolna nosilka protestov, narodnih pomladi in protioblastnih akcij. Prispevek se dotika tako tradicionalnih lutkovnih junakov, kot je angleški Punch, skupin iz razburkanih 60. let prejšnjega stoletja in tudi sodobnejših primerov angažiranega lutkarstva.

O AVTORJU

Benjamin Zajc je dramaturg, dramski pisec, kritik in performer. Leta 2022 je zaključil magistrski program dramaturgije in scenskih umetnosti na UL AGRFT. Praktično dramaturško udejstvovanje usmerja predvsem v lutkovno produkcijo in avtorske performanse. Razmišljanja o scenski umetnosti objavlja v različnih strokovnih revijah, zbornikih in gledaliških listih, kritike je objavljal tudi na različnih spletnih portalih, trenutno pa so objavljene v dnevnem časopisu Delo. Njegova dramska besedila so bila večkrat nagrajena, leta 2021 pa je pri založbi MC Kotlovnica v knjižni izdaji izšel njegov dramski triptih *Poslednji let čebel*.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

gledališče, lutka, lutkarstvo, politično gledališče, radikalno lutkarstvo

Literatura

Cotter, H. *Spectacle for the Heart and Soul*. The New York Times, avgust 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/theater/05cott.html. | **Jurkowski, Henryk**. *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva*. Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998. | **Kirby, Michael.** »On Political Theatre«, uredil Michael Kirby. *The Drama Review*, l. 19, št. 2, 1975. | **McPharlin, Paul**, urednik. *Puppetry: A Yearbook of Puppetry and Marionettes*. Puppetry Imprints, 1933. | **Schumann, Peter.** *The Radicality of the Puppet Theatre*. Routledge, 2003. | **Winslow, Lulu.** »Puppets and Protest: Street Theater, Art, and Vigil in the 21st Century«, uredil Michael K. Stone. *Whole Earth*, št. 109, jesen 2002.

PARTIZANSKO LUTKOVNO GLEDALIŠČE. LOJZE LAVRIČ **JURČEK IN TRIJE RAZBOJNIKI (1944)** | FOTO **ARHIV LUTKOVNEGA GLEDALIŠČA LJUBLJANA**

ZALA DOBOVŠEK

TRI VERZIJE ANGAŽIRANE PRAKSE: KOLEKTIVNO, LUDISTIČNO, PROTESTNO

Prelomne točke razvoja na nekem uprizoritvenem segmentu lahko najdemo v treh temeljnih predpostavkah, ki spodbudijo (estetski) zasuk znotraj obstoječih praks, velikokrat izhajajočih iz oprijemljive tradicije, preverjenih vsebin in pričakovanj občinstva. Vzpostavitev presežnega avtorskega jezika se pojavi vsaj z eno od treh bistvenih predispozicij: afirmacijo odrinjenih tematik, inovativno reprezentacijo in posegom v javni prostor. »Odrinjene tematike« so vsebine, ki so v javnem in tudi umetniškem diskurzu zatirane, stereotipizirane in nezaželene, obenem pa tudi še analitično neraziskane, s čimer postanejo nereflektirane. Ob morebitni odrski interpretaciji so zato, če že se uprizarjajo, največkrat posplošene, idealizirane in všečne. »Inovativna reprezentacija« je širok pojem, a jo nekako lahko vedno prepoznamo, saj gre za primere režijskega in animatorskega/performerskega uprizarjanja, ki izstopa iz zakoreninjenih vzorcev metodologij, in sicer iz dveh namenov: eden je vzpostavitev nove politike scenskih praks, drugi pa kritična refleksija nekdanje. Prav tako pojem »posega v javni prostor« oziroma v javnost kot tako zajema širok spekter vključenih dejavnikov, a se osredotočamo na tiste umetniške estetike, ki vzporedno s kritičnim raziskovanjem primarnega področja (scenske umetnosti) že komentirajo in nagovarjajo tudi politiko družbe, torej svet onstran »uprizoritvene fikcije«. V kritiko so všteti izobraževalni/šolski koncepti in tudi ponotranjeni vedenjski mehanizmi do splošne prevzete regulacije normativnega. Da bi se, zgoraj omenjene, prelomne točke razvoja lahko uresničile, pa je znova odvisno od avtonomnih idej avtorjev in avtoric, njihovega vztrajanja, načelnosti in integritete ter navsezadnje zaupanja delodajalskih institucij, te so pogoj za dolgoročni vpliv angažiranega napredka. Umetniška angažiranost se v tem kontekstu ne navezuje le na svojo politično vlogo družbene kritike, pač pa vsakršne kritike, ki seveda ni kritika v ozkem pomenu te besede, ampak je lahko lucidna prekinitev z obstoječim, eksperimentiranje, subverzivna igrivost, refleksija ali prevetritev dotedanjega vrednostnega sistema na vseh možnih ravneh (ustvarjalnih postopkov, performativnih vlog, repertoarja, hierarhije …).

V pričujočem prispevku bo družbeno angažirano lutkovno/animirano gledališče zajeto skozi optiko delovanja treh domačih lutkovnih ustvarjalcev: **Tina Grabnarja**, **Matije**

Solceta in **Braneta Solceta**. Tri ključne akterje na področju prakse animiranih form zaznamujejo tri popolnoma raznolike in avtonomne avtorske estetike, ki pa jih notranje poganjajo sorodni atributi izjavljanja, in sicer redefinicija pomenov, uporabe in učinkov lutkovnih materialov; vanje so vštete tradicionalne lutke, objekti, materiali, svetloba, zvok in transparenti, ki so vselej vpeti v močne avtorske poetike, podčrtane z angažiranostjo, detabuiziranjem, nenormativnostjo in raznolikimi oblikami (kritičnega) odzivanja. Analize njihovih umetniških izrazov ne bodo brane v luči generacijskega razpona, saj označevanje generacij prepogosto zdrsne v posploševanje, pri tem pa so individualna izstopanja posameznikov in posameznic lahko popolnoma spregledana. Bolj kot kontekst generacij je vsekakor pomemben indikator njihovih okolij, v katerih so se izobraževali ter najprej neformalno (»neprofesionalno«) in nato profesionalno delovali. Domicil Braneta Solceta je neodvisna scena (s priložnostnimi skoki v institucije), Matija Solce začne in se vrsto let razvija v neinstitucionalni sferi, nato pa kot večstranski ustvarjalec vstopi tudi v poklicna lutkovna gledališča in tam redno deluje, Tin Grabnar pa se v razmerju s predhodnikoma kot režiser že zelo zgodaj infiltrira v institucionalna lutkovna gledališča, kjer iz leta v leto brusi potencial samosvojega mišljenja lutkovnega/animiranega medija.

Že vsaj zadnje desetletje je na domači uprizoritveni sceni prisotna močna tendenca prelivanja neinstitucionalnih estetik z institucionalnimi, med njimi je najbolj prepoznaven in očiten format »avtorskega projekta«, ki je v času avantgarde in postdramskega po raznolikih principih nastajal predvsem v nevladnih produkcijah. Ta režijski postopek je med drugim pogojeval močno noto kolektivnosti, kar je bilo vsaj v večini poklicnih gledališčih takrat neprisoten umetniški postopek. S tem ko so avtorski projekti enakovredno vstopili tudi v repertoarne sheme, se je prestrukturirala tudi miselnost sodelujočih avtorskih ekip, saj je zasedba, ki je prej delovala po jasno začrtani poti in vlogah, razširila prostor dinamike so-delovanja. V tradicionalne okove se je vrinila politika prevrednotenja funkcije avtorstva (predvsem izvirnega), ki je nenadoma dopuščala neskončno svobodo v prirejanju in reinterpretiranju originalnih besedil, dram in zgodb. Snovalno gledališče zajema širok krovni pojem, ki

označuje različne žanre ali sloge uprizarjanja, opredeljuje pa ga končni rezultat, ki je produkt celotne ustvarjalne ekipe. Gre za vzpostavitev novega dela, kjer se sprotno prirejajo, raziskujejo in izumljajo ustvarjalni postopki. Tako obliko gledališča nujno definirajo »proces (iskanja poti in sredstev umetniškega podjetja), sodelovanje (z drugimi), multivizija (vključevanje različnih občutij, izkušenj in stališč do sveta) in stvaritev novega gledališkega dela. Poudarek je na eklektičnem procesu, ki zahteva inovacijo, domišljijo, tveganje in predvsem skupinsko predanost delu, ki nastaja.«[1]

Princip snovalnega gledališča se zdi ključno stičišče inovativnosti in angažirane kreativnosti, ki sta v zadnjem desetletju izrazito značilni za ustvarjanje Matije Solceta in Tina Grabnarja, a seveda v popolnoma raznolikih obrisih izrekanja. Angažirano gledališče, kot se zrcali v njunih projektih, ne sloni le na podlagi spreobračanja tradicionalnih oziroma ustaljenih metod ustvarjanja (potekov študijskih procesov), temveč tudi v prenovljeni preslikavi in kritičnem odnosu do izbrane tematike, iz katere so pogosto izčiščeno in senzibilno izpostavljeni poudarki izrekanja. Njuna angažiranost je torej vedno (najmanj) dvojna, saj ena poteka na ravni renovacije splošnih obstoječih režijskih postopkov, druga v »radikalni« reinterpretaciji neke znane, včasih celo zelo klasične predloge. Ker v pričujočem prispevku ne gre za celosten pregled, temveč za refleksijo najbolj izstopajočih segmentov avtorskih poetik omenjenih ustvarjalcev, bo pristop analize izhajal iz subjektivnega nabora posameznih del iz njihovih opusov, ki pa bodo hkrati že poskušali oblikovati nekakšen reprezentativen vzorec celote.

Tin Grabnar: Detabuizacija in kolektivnost v institucijah

Animirane prakse režiserja Tina Grabnarja zaznamujeta dva temeljna pristopa k ustvarjalnosti, in sicer gesta detabuiziranja in vzpostavitev kolektivnosti. Obe komponenti, četudi se lahko na prvi pogled slišita kot (že) samoumevni in usvojeni v kontekstu institucionalnih oziroma repertoarnih (lutkovnih) gledališč, sta še v fazi razvoja in (samo)refleksije, vsekakor pa sta bili še v precejšnjih povojih takrat, ko je Grabnar z njima vstopil v institucionalno polje. Izrazito nagnjenje h kolektivnemu ustvarjalnemu procesu je Grabnar vnesel v nastajanje uprizoritev Lutkovnega gledališča Ljubljana *Nekje drugje* (2017) in *Tihožitje* (2020), v morda malo bolj

specifičnem smislu pa tudi v *Martina Krpana* (2018), *Snežno kraljico* (Lutkovno gledališče Maribor, 2018) in *Tihega dečka* (Pozorište za decu Kragujevac, 2019). Spekter kolektivnosti je vselej večplastna kategorija, zato je ta v prvih treh omenjenih uprizoritvah tako na ravni nastanka besedila kot tudi naknadnega študijskega procesa, v ostalih dveh pa se pojavi predvsem v obliki skupinske odrske dinamike.

Osrednja družbeno angažirana gesta pri uprizoritvah *Nekje drugje* in *Tihožitje* je v kritični refleksiji nekaterih dominantnih struktur, ki se kažejo v človekovem odnosu do ontoloških vprašanj o bivanju in razmerju do *drugih*. V animirani pripovedi s kredno risbo *Nekje drugje* je ta relacija vzpostavljena v odnosu do drugih narodnosti, v *Tihožitju* pa do živali kot do družbeno drugih (oziroma celo drugorazrednih) bitij. Skozi kulturološko perspektivo nas obličje *drugega* vedno ogroža in v nas vzbudi občutek šibkosti, ki nas nezavedno lahko »poziva k nasilju, k nadvladi, k političnemu diskurzu mi-oni, k sovražnemu pogledu na polje izven sebe, na boj za prevlado. Prebudi se drugi del našega jaza, ki hoče zagospodariti in škodovati.«[2] Obe uprizoritvi v tematiziranju ne posegata po neposredni obravnavi in enoplastnem upodabljanju, temveč prek parafraze – na novo izumljene fabule oziroma koncepta. *Nekje drugje* tako tematizira vojno, *Tihožitje* pa taksidermijo. Oba projekta v občutljivost, še bolj pa v kompleksnost motivov vstopata skozi koncizen koncept režijskega postopka in tematske predloge. Odpirata temeljna etična vprašanja o zakoreninjenih družbenih in političnih hierarhijah, kategoriji večvrednosti, antropocentrizmu, (samo)dekonstrukciji in učinkih dokumentarnosti v umetnosti. Uprizoritev *Nekje drugje* pojav vojne reprezentira skozi otroške oči, s čimer namnoži sloje njene absurdnosti, hkrati pa jo zaradi nevtralnosti otroka ustvari kot univerzalni pogled na vojno, ki je neodvisna od geografskih, političnih in kulturnih prvin. Uprizoritev kot družbeni komentar se s tem izogne noti moraliziranja, s svojo sporočilno silo pa stališče usmerja v prvenstveno ciljno občinstvo (7+) in tudi odraslo populacijo. Zgodba, ki je dokumentarno fiktivna, s sabo obenem nosi tudi močno komponento metaforičnosti in fleksibilnosti na konkretni in tudi asociativni ravni. Večplastnost uprizarjanja je vpisana tudi v uprizoritev *Tihožitje*, podnaslovljeno z »devet poskusov, kako ohraniti življenje«, v kateri nastopajo oziroma so animirani nagačeni zajci. Angažirana ideja, ki poskuša znova »oživiti nekoč živo« skozi estetizacijo lutkovne forme, v svojem konceptu sočasno razpira niz iztočnic ne le o vprašljivih načelih

---

1 | Oddey, Alison. *Devising theatre: a practical and theoretical handbook*. Routledge, 2007, str. 1–3.

2 | Grošelj, Jon. Levinas. *Od obličja do odgovornosti*. Društvo psihologov Slovenije, 2014, str. 245.

biopolitike, reciklaže in ekosistema, temveč tudi prezentaci-je živalskega biotopa v siceršnji lutkovni produkciji, kjer so živali seveda vselej počlovečene, pogosto tipizirane in obli-kovane izključne iz človeške perspektive razumevanja. *Tiho-žitje* učinkuje kot kontemplacija, a z mentalnim nabojem, in se slogovno uvršča nekam med gledališče in vizualnost, med predstavo in instalacijo, med dogodek in razstavo. Prav zaradi žanrske neulovljivosti in večdisciplinarnosti morda podaja eno temeljnih stališč, ki jih aktualni čas potrebuje: kaj vse in do kam vse lahko sežejo forme animiranih praks.

Izrazito avtorsko stališče do obravnavanega materiala Grabnar vnese tudi v uprizoritev *Martin Krpan*, kjer se odločno izmakne tradicionalni interpretaciji narodnega junaka, ter v projekta *Snežna kraljica* in *Tihi deček*, ki sta nastala na podlagi inovativnih scensko-režijskih pristopov. Grabnarjeva prepoznavna avtorska se vsakič kaže v teme-ljitem razmisleku o pristopu do tako imenovanih klasičnih besedil oziroma vseh tistih del, kjer preži nevarnost njene predvidljive, še bolj pa pričakovane interpretacije. Zasuk v razumevanju tovrstnih predlog je ne le v spreobrnitvi običajne interpretacije, pač pa predvsem v izjemno oseb-nem odnosu do obravnavane teme. Kljub jasnim avtorskim stališčem pa Grabnar dogodkom premišljeno spodmakne potencial teznosti, do neke mere jih vzpostavi kot razmero-ma »izobraževalne« projekte, a nič manj tudi angažirane, predvsem pa zazrte v pozno sedanjost oziroma prihodnost in le redko v varno, nostalgično preteklost. Političnost po-stavitve *Martina Krpana* je bila v subverziji inscenacije na ravni metod animacije in tudi izvajalske konstelacije; dogajanje so animirale tri igralke/animatorke, ki so indi-vidualno in kolektivno zavzele kritično distanco do te slo-vite slovenske pripovedke. Uprizoritev je s preigravanjem lutkovnih tehnik, spolnih premestitev, premikov izvirnih poudarkov zgodbe in razbremenjenosti vplivne tradicije so-časno sprožala niz pomenljivih in ostrih podtekstov, ki niso nagovarjali le slovenske literarne zgodovine kot take, am-pak tudi odnos slovenskega lutkovnega gledališča do nje.

Priredba oziroma rekontekstualizacija *Snežne kraljice* in iz-virna avtorska fabula *Tihega dečka* sta kljub zelo raznolikim dogodkovnim in tematskim parametrom na uprizoritveni ravni vzpostavili svojevrstno različico »kolektivne igre«. Tehnološko in domišljijsko dovršena zamisel reinterpreta-cije *Snežne kraljice* je v zgodbo, polno magičnega realizma, vnesla še dodatne metafizične razsežnosti zgodbe in globoko prodrla v psihološke arhetipe, obenem pa kot visok scenski potencial prikazala rabo povsem običajnih, vsakdanjih predmetov. Glavna komponenta dramatičnosti je bila zvoč-na dramaturgija oziroma dramaturgija sprotno ustvarjenih

in posnetih zvočnih učinkov, proizvedenih s pomočjo ele-mentarnih materialov (voda, les, kovina ...). V *Tihem dečku* je premisa uporabe vsakdanjosti, ki preide v presežen odrski pomen, še dodatno prosperirala, saj se je narativ animaci-je radikalno skrčil izključno na en material uprizarjanja – telo. Prsti, dlani in roke so se v seriji številnih kombinacij vzpostavili kot centralni izvedbeni kod, ki je vzporedno po-dajal komentar o človekovem telesu kot izvirnem lutkovnem materialu, sočasno pa že vstopal v sodobni princip režije, kjer so govorico z matematično natančnostjo in razčlenje-nim trajektorijem pomenov oblikovali gestikulacija, koreo-grafija, gibalne kompozicije in telesna kolektivnost.

Skupinska odrska dinamika izvajalske zasedbe in njeno znakovno plastenje sta pravzaprav del vseh Grabnarjevih projektov, v katerih nastopajoči izmenjaje pripovedujejo, animirajo, igrajo in infiltrirano z gibom menjavajo tudi sce-nografijo. Nedvomno se morda še bolj kot na vsebinski rav-ni kaže političnost Grabnarjevih režij prav v transformaciji in redefiniciji sodobne funkcije animatork in animatorjev, ki se ne omeji le na uresničevanje vloge lutkovne metodo-logije, temveč se razcvetijo v multidisciplinarnosti odrske prezence. To na eni strani bogato razpira izvajalske poten-cialne nastopajočih, na drugi pa širi semiotični pomen s perspektive občinstva. Prav tu se kaže temeljna inovativno-st Grabnarjevega mišljenja (lutkovnega) gledališča, saj so-časno redefinira njegovo vlogo na izobraževalni, umetniški, zgodovinski in tudi angažirani ravni.

Matija Solce: eksperimentalni ludizem je/kot kritika sistema

Tudi pri impozantnem opusu Matije Solceta selekcija ani-miranih uprizoritev izhaja iz ideje reprezentativnih projek-tov, ki ponujajo vpogled v njegovo izjemno razslojeno, pa vendar koherentno avtorsko poetiko. Solcetova umetniška identiteta v veliki meri pripada glasbi, kar se poleg samo-stojnega delovanja na tem področju tako rekoč vedno zrcali tudi v njegovih lutkovnih in animiranih projektih. Prav vse njegove inscenacije zaznamuje svojevrstna »zvočna drama-turgija«, v katero se zliva konglomerat zvočnih postopkov – od inštrumentalne glasbe, petja, polifonije, kakofonije in ritmizacije zvokov (pokov, treskov, piskov, bobnenja ...) do glasovnih/govornih nanosov v modificirani obliki. Ma-tija Solce je – seveda tudi pod vplivom češke kulture – v slovenski prostor vnesel politiko lutkovnega gledališča, ki se napaja iz »ideologije vsakdanjosti« in kritičnega uvi-da v podtekste kanonskih besedil ali zgodb. Z animaci-jo predmetov za vsakdanjo rabo, komornim formatom in

neposrednim stikom z občinstvom je v domačem okolju vplivno spreobrnil perspektivo razumevanja lutk ter njihove uprizoritvene in tudi politične moči. Brez dvoma pa mu lahko pripišemo izjemen vpliv pri redefiniranju in predvsem razširjenem, liberalnem razumevanju vloge, namena in semiotike animatorjev in animatork. Izvedbena esenca v njegovih konceptih in nastopanju je v estetski fuziji simbolnih pomenov odrskih izraznih sredstev, med katerimi izvajalke in izvajalci predstavljajo točko večplastnih pomenov in multidisciplinarnih veščin. Vršljivost lutkovne animacije v njenem osnovnem pomenu je le ena izmed uprizoritvenih podkategorij, včasih podstat vsemu ostalemu, ponekod pa tudi dopolnilo ali zaključek neki drugi prioritetni odrski akciji. Performerska večopravilnost je nujna razsežnost, saj z njo sproža lucidno kompleksnost izvedbe kot tudi zaznave, sočasno pa s prepletom igranega, animiranega, pripovednega in improviziranega v dogodke vnaša nepredvidljivost, živost, znakovno eksplozijo pomenov, s tem pa tudi ranljivost in dejavnik tveganja pri vzpostavljanju vsakokratne atmosfere. Prav zato je Solcetove uprizoritve bolj kot predstave smiselno razumeti kot dogodke, ki glede na dano lokacijo, občinstvo in sorodno okoliščine vzpostavijo svojo trenutno in avtonomno dramaturgijo odnosa z občinstvom oziroma javnostjo. Ena izmed prvih je bila solo predstava *Vesele kosti* (Happy Bones, Teatro Matita, 2011), pri kateri je animiral kosti z različnih koncev sveta, njegov alter ego pa je predstavljala plišasta panda. Metafizičnost in absolutna preprostost, spojeni v dogodek, obe poudarjeni z močno noto multikulturnosti, ki je vselej eksplicitno ali implicitno vpisana v Solcetove uprizoritve. Ne le zaradi vnosa preigravanja raznolikih jezikov, temveč zaradi ponotranjenega čuta za univerzalnost scenskega jezika, ki zmore premešati in obenem preseči vse kulturne ovire.

Poiskati univerzalno v tistem, kar se na prvi pogled zdi skrajno specifično, se je ponujalo tudi kot interpretativni potencial slovite Kafkove zgodbe *Proces*. Uprizoritev z naslovom *Proces ali Žalostna zgodba Josefa K.* Lutkovnega gledališča Maribor (2012) je bila zasnovana na izjemno razdrobljenem strukturnem formatu in retrospektivno, kar je v času premiere v kontekstu lutkovne scene delovalo precej nenormativno. Hektično kopičenje različnih odrskih estetik – od lutkovne animacije, igre in branja do glasbenega eksperimentiranja, glasovnega preigravanja, večjezičnosti in spolnih preobratov – je na videz nenadzorovano nanašalo različne izvedbene plasti, kjer se je končni učinek zaokrožil v kompleksno atmosfero *nerazložljivosti*. Nekakšna obsesivna in manična uprizoritev si je za svoj teritorij izbrala skromno scensko orodje (naprstne lutke, svetlobna/senčna animacija) in konstruktivistično dramsko struk-

turo. Stalna navzočnost repeticij, hipnih prekinitev misli, stavčnih preigravanj (ludizma), vdorov grobih nemških frazemov, vprašanj v prazno, mimogovorov in akuzmatičnih glasov je vzpostavila »verbalni teror«, ki je učinkoval kot metaforični preris protagonistovega psihičnega stanja. Kakovost avtorskega razpona se pozneje izkaže v uprizoritvi *Turlututu* (Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, 2013), ki je izhajala iz slikanice Hervéja Tulleta, a se odrsko utelesila v že skoraj ekscentrično govorico podajanja zgodbe, saj je bil celotni govorni asortiman v dogajanju sestavljen izključno iz kratkih enozložnic (tu-rlu-tu-tu), obenem pa namenjen populaciji 2+. Brez dvoma je tovrsten princip komunikacije z najmlajšimi v sebi nosil noto lingvistične političnosti, saj je utečeno zaznavo in opazovanje, največkrat temelječi na bogatem opisovanju, pretiranem ilustriranju in klasični fabulativni strukturi, mojstrsko zamenjal izmišljeni jezik, ki je hkrati moduliral po principu nekakšne primarne komunikacije. Svojo notranjo logiko je našel in se sproti (samo)realiziral z ironičnim argumentom, da so za smisel lahko dovolj tudi »nesmiselne« besede oziroma njihovi okruški.

V Lutkovnem gledališču Maribor je Solce režiral predstavo *Časoskop* (2014), podnaslovljeno kot »dinamičen poklon mestu ob častitljivi 850-letnici«. Z vidika uporabe vsebinskih in uprizoritvenih postopkov je bil v Solcetovem opusu to zagotovo projekt, ki je izstopal zaradi dokumentarnega žanra in pa tudi nekakšne nuje po zavezanosti obeleženja obletnice. Ne glede na dane usmeritve in pogoje/pričakovanja je Solce dokumentaristične razsežnosti in vnos realne zgodovine spretno infiltriral v lastno poetiko in tako sinhroniziral kolektivno z individualnim. Predstava se je igrala v oglednem depoju Pokrajinskega muzeja Maribor in jo je zaznamoval močen »site-specific« učinek. Prostorska specifičnost je prav tako povzročila temeljni zasuk v percepciji tudi v velikopoteznem projektu *Vražji triptih* (v sklopu *Mojstra in Margarete*, 2018), v katerem je, tako se zdi, kulminirala Solcetova poetika v vseh njenih niansah in potencialu nenormativnega. Koncept, zasnovan kot ambientalno popotovanje po Lutkovnem gledališču Ljubljana, je inovativno in v ironičnem tonu avtorja razpiral intrigantna vprašanja o performativnosti »civilnih« prostorov gledališkega poslopja, sočasno pa dramatičnost iskal na največkrat tranzitnih lokacijah in v prostorih zaodrja, na – za javnost – obskurnih in nevid(e)nih prostorih, za povrh pa je Solce igralsko angažiral tudi tamkaj zaposlene. Brez dvoma se je projekt že nagibal v smer spektakla, ne le zaradi obširnega in multidisciplinarnega formata, navsezadnje tudi zaradi dejstva, da je bil zaradi zahtevnih produkcijskih pogojev in priprav v celoti odigran le nekajkrat. Njegov sklepni del *Seansa Bulgakov* (izvirno je potekal v Tunelu
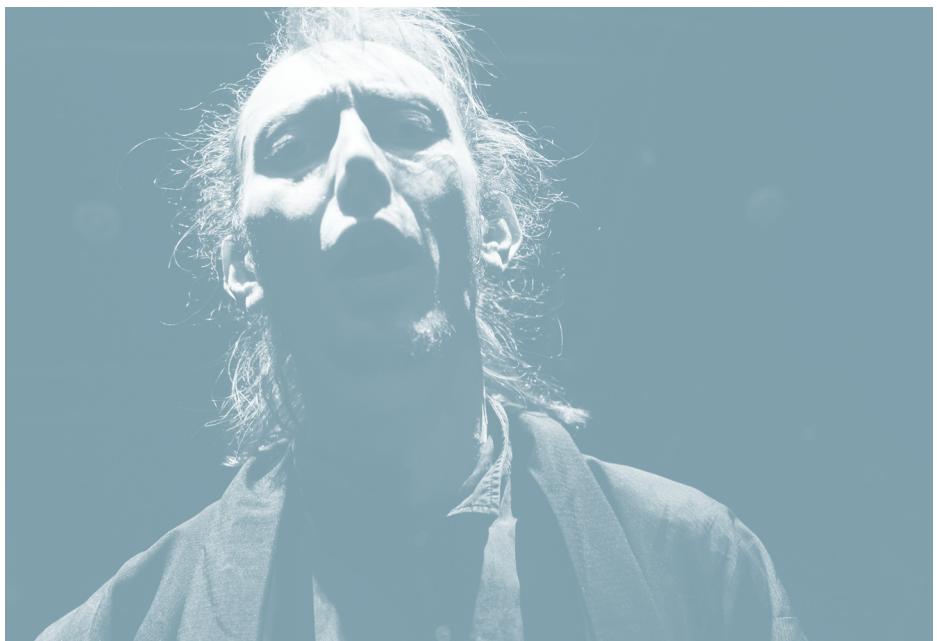
TEATRO MATITA IN MEDNARODNI CENTER LUTKOVNE UMETNOSTI KOPER, MATIJA SOLCE **BITI DON KIHOT (2019)** | FOTO **TEATRO MATITA**

LGL), tako imenovani predmetno-lutkovni brainstorming po motivih *Mojstra in Margarete*, pa se je kasneje oblikoval v samostojno predstavo in nadaljeval s ponovitvami. Tako kot v *Procesu* ali *Žalostni zgodbi Josefa K.* je tudi tu koncept temeljil na satirični dekonstrukciji kanonske predloge, iz katere je Solce posrkal ključne filozofske in fantazijske poudarke in polarizacijo dobro-zlo oplemenitil z bogato vizualno, ludistično, glasbeno, zvočno in performersko veščino.

Aktualne dileme o pomenu umetnosti v sodobnem času je Solce vpeljal v reinterpretacijo Cervantesovega romana, in sicer v uprizoritvi *Biti Don Kihot* (Teatro Matita in Mednarodni center lutkovne umetnosti Koper, 2019), ki jo je v dobršni meri (sledeč izvirnemu avtorju) zasnoval kot avtobiografski projekt. Distopičnost donkihotovstva je nenehno prestreljena s širokim spektrom izraznih sredstev in subverzivnimi vsebinsko-izvajalskimi »konflikti«, ki v slogu ironije in parodije parafrazirajo dialog, ali pa raje nesporazum, med različnimi binarnimi odnosi znotraj umetniških žanrov, med razumevanjem animacije in materiala, med tradicijo in njeno dekonstrukcijo. Uprizoritev se je, tako kot mnogo drugih, izmikala poenoteni žanrski definiciji. Permanentna fluidnost v videnju umetnosti, sveta in navsezadnje samega sebe je brez dvoma jedrna Solcetova avtorska komponenta, ki se nenehno (samo)reflektira, uničuje in znova obnavlja, sesuva lastna prepričanja in pušča dvom o vsem na videz stabilnem. Tudi oziroma predvsem o umetnosti, družbi, javnosti in politiki.[3] Pravzaprav je dimenzija distopičnosti navzoča v večini Solcetovih uprizoritev za odrasle, čeprav se ta teza na prvi pogled zdi paradoksalna, saj njegove projekte pogosto zaznamujejo ostre geste parodije, (avto)cinizma in kariranja, obložene s kompaktnimi plastmi lucidnega humorja in komičnih zapletov. A pod to prepoznavno naracijo je nemalokrat globlja kritika sveta, ki družbene ustroje uvidi v vsej njihovi destruktivnosti in toksičnosti. Tovrstni poetski pristop je razločno opažen tudi v nedavni uprizoritvi Lutkovnega gledališča Ljubljana *Temnica* (2022), ki se žanrsko umešča v formo predmetno-glasbenega kabareta, motive pa črpa iz *Stanovitnega kositrnega vojaka* Hansa Christiana Andersena. Dogajalna struktura *Temnice* je izjemno eklektična in nepredvidljiva v dinamiki scenosleda,

poleg dramaturške razgibanosti pa je vanjo vgrajena tudi nenehna fluidnost med raznolikimi izraznimi sredstvi; živa glasba, improvizacija, interakcija z občinstvom, eksperimentiranje z objekti, svojevrstna svetlobno-zvočna dramaturgija, orkestracija, vztrajanje v repeticijah posamičnih ključnih replik iz izvirne pravljice in virtuozna koreografija materialov. Vsi ti scenski elementi in njihovo kolobarjenje iz perspektive sprotnega učinka vzpostavljajo prepoznaven Solcetov režijsko-izvedbeni ludens, ki svojo logiko pogosto gradi na principu prostih asociacij, hipnih domislic in raztrganega naracijskega loka. V tem je prisotno občutje nekakšne absolutne (umetniške in animacijske) svobode, že skoraj anarhije, ki sicer blagodejno učinkuje kot atrakcija, a pogled z distance (tako percepcijske kot časovne) v tem kaosu razkriva veliko bolj temačne in boleče sloje vsebine in pomenov. Kaotična reprezentacija v *Temnici* se zaradi trenutne aktualne in dejanske surove realnosti vojne v neposredni bližini vsekakor dojema in bere drugače (k temu pripomore tudi vnos ukrajinske ljudske pesmi v odrsko dogajanje), saj militantna tematika in številne personifikacije vojakov kot tudi odjeki preskokov in krikov tokrat ne delujejo več kot osvobojen in poljuben prostor izraznosti in bivanja, temveč kot teritorij nenehne negotovosti, posekov, nedokončanosti, hrupa, nestabilnosti in agresije. Prav ta znakovna/simbolna polarizacija *Temnico* ustvari specifično in ranljivo, saj s tem kaže njeno globoko dovzetnost za kompleksnost nekega družbenega stanja, ki se poetično vpisuje v uprizoritev. Odsotnost ujemljive logike vsakdana se posledično zazrcali tudi v uprizoritvi.

Brane Solce: Lutkovna karnevalizacija protestov (Protestival)

Braneta Solceta, ustanovitelja avtorskega lutkovnega gledališča Papelito (1982) in priznanega filmskega animatorja, scenografa, glasbenika in lutkarja, ves čas spremlja in zaznamuje en material – papir. To vseprisotno snov je že od samih začetkov nekako ustvaril »politično«, saj ji je nanašal številne nove pomene, skrite potenciale, spregledane vrednote in domišljijsko, ne le stvarno vrednost. Njegovi projekti so bili pogosto brez besed, s čimer je posamičnim papirnatim artefaktom zagotovil še večjo simbolno moč in spekter interpretacij. To razmerje med neverbalnim in sporočilno silo je pomembno brati in uvideti tudi v luči njegovega aktivističnega udejstvovanja na vseslovenskih demonstracijah. Njegove megalomanske papirnate lutke, materialno krhke, a pomensko monstruozne, so izrazito zaznamovale podobo mobilizacij ljudi na javnih demonstracijah in vanje vključile estetiko aktivizma onstran zgolj besed in gesel. Ko se je

---

3 | To osebno izrekanje pa v veliki meri dopolnjuje tudi njegova angažiranost v ustanovitvi festivalov (nekdanjega) *HISTeRIA* in (še vedno aktualnega) *Plavajoči grad*, ki sta v skladu s kolektivno poletno razpoloženostjo vselej zasnovana kot ustvarjalna dislocirana enota, kjer se na novo oblikujejo pravila bivanja, in sicer z namenom, da se čim bolj izmaknejo uteče nim vzorcem našega siceršnjega življenjskega tempa. Ideja festivalov neagresivno stremi k čim manjši uporabi komfortnih, tehnoloških in olajševalnih vsakdanjih pripomočkov ter nas poziva, da se temeljito zlijemo z zakonitostmi narave, a pri tem tudi premeteno prehajamo med uživanjem in sproščenostjo, pa spet težavnostjo in včasih fizičnim naporom.

leta 2013 začela vseslovenska vstaja, je skupaj s Sanjo Fidler (poimenovala sta se Protestival) na protestne shode prvič uvedel svojo avtorsko poetiko v obliki velikanskih papirnatih lutk, ki so svojo parodično demoničnost kakopak črpale iz politične realnosti same. Njegova protestna scenografija igra ključno politično vlogo prav s tem, da razpira in predvsem reaktualizira obstoječo komunikacijo med ljudstvom in oblastjo, zlasti pa na ravni fenomenološke zaznave seže še globlje, saj vizualno sporočilo v zavesti lahko ostane veliko dlje in nezavedno. S tovrstnim pristopom je Brane Solce vzpostavil karnevalizacijo dogodkov, ki med drugim služijo tudi za tako imenovani mentalni ventil in odpor proti represiji vsakdana, ki jo lahko povzroča splošna družba, sistem ali prevladujoča ideologija. A obenem za javnost nosi potencial obnovitvene funkcije in prerojenosti, ki ju sugerira tudi umetnost kot taka, transparentni pa so tudi jasni nagibi k formatu (popularnega) spektakla, obloženega z estetiko commedie dell'arte, paradnostjo in sejmov.

Ena prvih inspiracij pri oblikovanju protestnih lutk in scenografije je bila za skupino Protestival izjava tedanjega premiera Janeza Janše, ki je proteste označil za »vstajo zombijev«. Podoba zombija kot bitja, liminalno ujetega med življenje in smrt, med tukaj in tam, med človekom in prikaznijo, je kot estetski vzgib postala osrednja podoba protestov, saj je Protestival to zaničljivo izjavo predsednika vlade »performativno apropriiral«.[4] Tema živih mrtvecev je tako spodbudila formacije kolektivne koreografije in protestno lutkovno animacijo predimenzioniranih živih mrtvecev. Četudi se je prav zaradi vizualne hudomušnosti, ki pa ni bila zato nič manj neposredna in politična, v demonstracije naselil tudi segment zabave in karnevala, so bile te kljub temu še vedno »pomembne politične manifestacije, na katerih je ljudstvo demonstriralo svojo odločenost, da zahteva spremembe in si jih izbojuje, ter hkrati povsem spontane erupcije 'ljudske kulture'«.[5] Tendenco po javnem izpostavljanju, ki pa hkrati izvira iz modela umetniške geste, sta v 60. letih prejšnjega stoletja predstavljala že nemški »figurentheater« in ameriška gledališka skupina Bread and Puppet Theater (pa tudi Living Theatre, Diggers, Art Workers' Coalition, Guerrilla Art Action, San Francisco Mime Troupe idr.), ki sta za številne še vedno močna referenca za hibridne forme političnega in pouličnega gledališča s podtoni sardoničnega, satiričnega in trpkega.

Tovrstne javne performanse lahko definiramo kot »zavestno, stilizirano taktiko uprizarjanja petja, igre, parad, protestov in drugih spektaklov na javnih prostorih, kjer ni zaračunana vstopnina, gledalci pa so pogosto povabljeni k sodelovanju. Prinaša tudi simbolna sporočila o političnih in socialnih zadevah občinstvu, do katerega to, po bolj tradicionalnih kanalih, ne bi prišlo.«[6] Protestivalske akcije scenske elemente (scenografijo in lutke) v veliki meri ironično uporabljajo kot simbolno sredstvo propagande in agitacije. Kot takega ga lahko štejemo v gverilsko gledališče, torej »gledališče, ki hoče biti militantno in angažirano v političnem življenju ali v boju za osvoboditev kakega ljudstva ali skupine«.[7] Zato akcije Protestivala komentirajo aktualne razmere pravzaprav dvosmerno, saj s tem, ko komentirajo politično realnost s pomočjo scenskih praks v javnem prostoru, nagovarjajo tudi (im)potenco političnega v scenskih praksah, saj ta lahko omogoči večsmerni pretok angažiranost in aktivizma s pravim učinkom in dolgotrajnim vplivom.

Jedrnati sklep

Ker je pojem angažiranega gledališča že skoraj tesnobno širok in kompleksen, bi bilo nehvaležno v izbranih ustvarjalcih domače lutkovne scene na silo iskati skupni imenovalec. S tem, ko gojijo avtonomne retorike angažiranja na strokovni in družbeni ravni, pravzaprav najučinkoviteje potrjujejo idejo o tem, da vsaka kompetentna družbena angažiranost črpa bistvo in glavno ost iz lastnega odnosa in pogleda na svet in se šele nato prestrukturira v umetniški akt. A brez dvoma je očitno, da vse tri obravnavane akterje animiranih praks povezuje nujnost vzpostavitve pojma skupnosti, ki pa se pri vseh treh kaže v raznolikih estetskih oblikah in praktičnih pristopih. Toda vodila rdeča nit je ne glede na divergentnost njihovih poetik razločna in berljiva: povezati, opolnomočiti, vztrajati.

4 | Milohnić, Aldo. *Gledališče Upora*. FF UL in AGRFT UL, 2021, str. 9. »Improvizirano 'ulično gledališče' vstajniških zombijev je hibridna oblika performativnih dogodkov, ki so izrazito politični, estetska razsežnost pa je v funkciji krepitve komunikacijskega kanala, skozi katerega protestniki pošiljajo kritična sporočila oblastnikom.« (ibid.).
5 | Ibid.

6 | Bradford, D. Martin. *The theater is in the street. Politics and public performance in sixties in America*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2004, str. 4.
7 | Pavis, Patrice. *Gledališki slovar*. Knjižnica MGL, 2007, str. 323.

POVZETEK

V pričujočem prispevku je družbeno angažirano lutkovno/animirano gledališče zajeto skozi optiko delovanja treh domačih lutkovnih ustvarjalcev: Tina Grabnarja, Matije Solceta in Braneta Solceta. Tri ključne akterje na področju prakse animiranih form zaznamujejo tri popolnoma raznolike in avtonomne avtorske estetike, ki pa jih notranje poganjajo sorodni atributi izjavljanja, in sicer redefinicija pomenov, uporabe in učinkov lutkovnih materialov. Analize njihovih umetniških izrazov ne bodo brane v luči generacijskega razpona, pomembnejši je indikator njihovih okolij, v katerih so se izobraževali in najprej neformalno (»neprofesionalno«) ter nato profesionalno delovali. Animirane prakse režiserja Tina Grabnarja zaznamujeta dva temeljna pristopa k ustvarjalnosti, in sicer gesta detabuiziranja in vzpostavitev kolektivnosti. Inscenacije Matije Solceta vselej poganja svojevrstna »zvočna dramaturgija«, v katero se zliva konglomerat zvočnih postopkov – od inštrumentalne glasbe, petja, polifonije, kakofonije in ritmizacije zvokov do glasovnih/govornih nanosov v modificirani obliki. Megalomanske papirnate lutke in protestna scenografija Braneta Solceta pa igrajo ključno politično vlogo prav s tem, da razpirajo in predvsem reaktualizirajo obstoječo komunikacijo med ljudstvom in oblastjo – ta na ravni fenomenološke zaznave seže še globlje, saj vizualno sporočilo v zavesti lahko ostane veliko dlje in nezavedno.

O AVTORICI

Zala Dobovšek je dramaturginja, gledališka kritičarka, teatrologinja in docentka za področje dramaturgije in študijev scenskih umetnosti na Akademiji za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo. Na AGRFT je diplomirala iz dramaturgije in se v času študija izobraževala na gledališki akademiji DAMU v Pragi (Divadelní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze). Leta 2019 je doktorirala na AGRFT (smer Študiji scenskih umetnosti) z disertacijo *Gledališče in vojna: temeljna razmerja med uprizoritveno umetnostjo in vojnami na območju nekdanje Jugoslavije v 90. letih 20. stoletja*. Zdaj je predsednica Društva gledaliških kritikov in teatrologov Slovenije. V obdobju 2016–2021 je bila mentorica celoletnega seminarja Mala šola kritike. Deluje kot praktična dramaturginja, recenzentka, mentorica kritiškega pisanja in pedagoginja.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

angažirano gledališče, animirane forme, skupnost, javni prostor, eksperiment, Matija Solce, Tin Grabnar, Brane Solce

Literatura

Bradford, D. Martin. *The theater is in the street. Politics and public performance in sixties in America.* University of Massachusetts Press, 2004. │ **Grošelj, Jon.** *Levinas*: *Od obličja do odgovornosti.* Društvo psihologov Slovenije, 2014. │ **Milohnić, Aldo.** *Gledališče upora.* FF UL in AGRFT UL, 2021. │ **Oddey, Alison.** *Devising theatre: a practical and theoretical handbook.* Routledge, 2007. │ **Pavis, Patrice.** *Gledališki slovar.* Knjižnica MGL, 2007.

ČETRTA, NENOSILNA STENA

Četrta stena je v gledališču novejša kot njeno podiranje, v dramskem in tudi v lutkovnem. Kot avtorja koncepta ali vsaj avtorja termina praviloma navajamo razsvetljenca Denisa Diderota, ki je kot kritik, dramatik in filozof deloval skoraj celotno 18. stoletje. Pred tem, sploh v antiki, pa so ustvarjalci večinoma posegali po praksah, ki so danes ponovno prevladujoče, gre za postopke naracije oziroma *storytelling*.[1] Največja imena gledališkega sveta zadnjih nekaj let v gledališču spet ustvarjajo z zavedanjem, da skupnost soustvarja občinstvo, zato ga ne skrivajo v temo, tudi ne nujno v avditorij, ampak vedno bolj aktivno vključujejo v uprizoritve. Tega sicer ne gre mešati ali enačiti z interaktivnimi ali participatornimi gledališkimi praksami, saj prepoznavanje sogovornika ali naslovnika (*storytelling*) ni isto kot odvisnost od njegovih odločitev (participatornost). Sploh pa je sodelovanje občinstva velikokrat (ne pa vedno) tako zmanipulirano, da je popolnoma vseeno, kaj občinstvo počne, saj so ustvarjalci pred njegovimi »napačnimi« odločitvami že vnaprej zavarovani. Že samo, če pogledamo nekaj najvidnejših predstav na slovenskem gledališkem področju zadnjih let, vidimo, da je *storytelling* trenutno »tisto pravo«, to pa velja tudi za tujino. Govorimo o predstavah, ki prejemajo največ nagrad, kritiške prepoznavnosti in v končni fazi tudi interesa občinstva.

Ko govorimo o rušenje četrte stene, velikokrat govorimo o zavedanju, da se uprizoritev dogaja v gledališču pred živimi in odzivnimi ljudmi, šteje praktično vsak monolog na rampi, tudi če niso izrečene besede »občinstvo, to je za vas« (ali katerakoli formulacija s tem sporočilom). Kar je sploh ironično v lutkovnem gledališču, saj izhaja iz potujočih predstav, ki so se napajale prav z odzivom občinstva, kasneje pa je kot medij za otroke to v celoti ponotranjilo, saj predvideva, da je neposredno nagovarjanje ključno za spremljanje dogodka in izkustva v njegovi polnosti. Osrednji problem lutkovnega gledališča je namreč, da ga večinoma obravnavajo kot medij za otroke, ta pa je močno nagnjen k pokroviteljskemu odnosu do občinstva. Ogromen delež

produkcije sloni na konceptu zgodbe v zgodbi, ko animator pride na oder in napove, da nam bo povedal pravljico, ali pa vpelje lik pripovedovalca, ki nas vodi od prizora do prizora. Že samo s tem je igre konec, četrta stena je porušena in pregled produkcije, ki četrto steno ruši tudi na tak način, bi prej spominjal na seznam kot pa na analizo.

Prav zaradi tega bi težko rekli, da je italijanska škatla v lutkovnem gledališču za otroke kdaj v celoti prevzela sceno, če drugega ne, se predstave praviloma končajo s petjem o srečnem življenju lutkovnih junakov. Skupaj s premiki na področju uprizoritvenih postopkov, struktur in rekontekstualiziranja lutkovnega gledališča v gledališče animiranih objektov, preizpraševanja pojma lutka in brisanja meja med *ready-made* objekti in tistimi, izdelanimi za potrebe predstave, je naše dojemanje lutkovnega gledališča kot gledališča za otroke vsaj nekoliko preseglo te okvire in vedno manj enačilo ciljno občinstvo z identiteto medija. Sočasno s temi spremembami so sledila tudi izginjanja paravanov, črnih kostumov, ki za potrebe intenzivnega skrivanja vključujejo še rokavice in gumijaste copate. Vse to pa seveda ne bi bilo mogoče brez ključnih premikov na področju razumevanja lutkarja oziroma animatorja kot igralca ter vključevanja lutkovnih elementov v dramsko gledališče, kar se je začelo dogajati (vsaj na evropskih tleh) v prvi polovici 20. stoletja (če odmislimo antično deus *ex-machino*), v delih Bertolta Brechta in z vpeljavo potujitvenega efekta, s Craigovo nadmarioneto in Kantorjevim eksperimentiranjem odnosa med živimi in neživimi igralci, torej igralci in lutkami.

Za potrebe analitičnega branja odsotnosti četrte stene v sodobnem lutkovnem gledališču je treba tudi razjasniti pojme, saj četrta stena v lutkovnem gledališču ni doživela tako ekstremnih rošad kot v dramskem, in so kanonske predstave, ki lahko služijo kot primer raziskave, večinoma klasificirane kot dramske predstave z lutkovnimi elementi, sočasno pa lutkovna produkcija tudi ni tako bogato, redno in dosledno strokovno popisana ali analizirana. Če pa vsako predstavo z lutkovnimi elementi (dasiravno priložnostnimi) štejemo med lutkovne predstave, je zgodba popolnoma drugačna in kar naenkrat vidimo številne pri-

---

1 | op. l. Zgodbarjenje.

DAMU, HUSAM ABED **LAHKOTNO ŽIVLJENJE (SNADNÝ ŽIVOT, 2015)** | FOTO **IRENA VODÁKOVÁ**
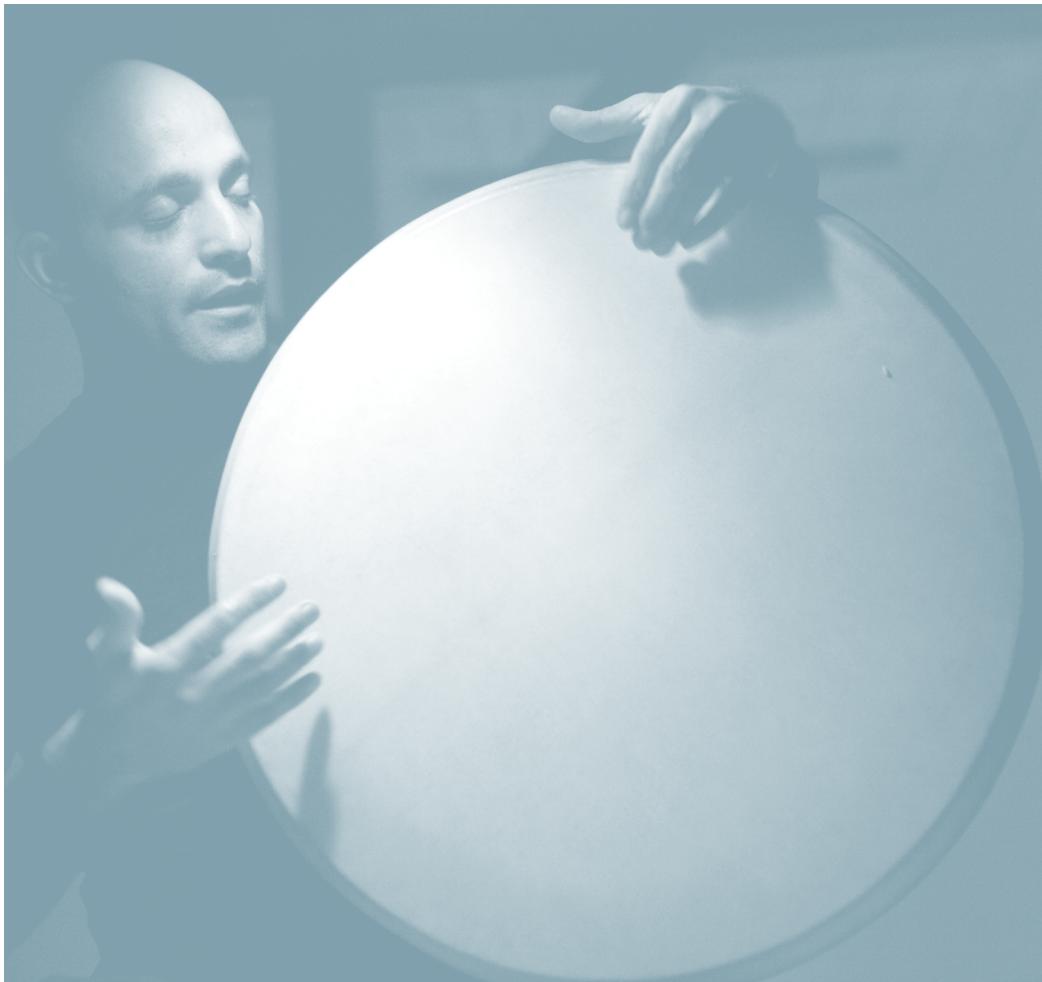
mere progesivnejših lutkovnih oziroma animatorskih praks v zadnjih sto letih na področju uprizoritvenih praks. Še vedno pa ostaja vprašanje, kako razumemo izraz sodobno. Ali gre za uprizoritve, nastale v sedanjosti, torej sodobnem času, ali za uprizoritve, nastale v sodobnem času, ki NUJNO vključujejo tudi posodobljene postopke in tehnologijo? Sledili bomo razumevanju sodobnega lutkovnega gledališča, ki mora nujno upoštevati in vključevati sodobnost kot čas, v katerem živimo (in ne nekega univerzalnega pravljičnega časa, v katerem živijo medvedki v gozdu), sodobnost kot progresivno, nekonvencionalno umetniško obdobje in sodobnost, ki ne ignorira ali zanika družbenih sprememb in tehnološkega napredka. V luči tega torej v tej analizi ni predstav, ki se ukvarjajo z univerzalnimi temami, kot so sovraštvo, ljubezen in prijateljstvo, in nikakor ne vključujejo primerov iz sedanjosti, ki ne eksperimentirajo z lutkovnim medijem, ali tistih, ki četrto steno prebijajo izključno na najbolj konvencionalen lutkovni način, že večkrat omenjenim sklepnim napevom. V pregledu bomo videli različne načine podiranja četrte stene – skozi grajenje skupnosti z občinstvom, razkrivanje skritega in njeno neposredno nagovarjanje skozi *storytelling*.

Husam Abed: *Lahkotno življenje* (Snadný život)

Husam Abed, lutkovni ustvarjalec, se je leta 2014 v svoji magistrski predstavi na praški DAMU v koprodukciji z lutkovnim gledališčem Dafa razbijanja četrte stene tako lotil z ustvarjanjem manjše skupnosti z občinstvom. Že sama vsebina je izjemno politično motivirana in tematizirana, saj predstavlja avtorjevo izkušnjo begunstva na Bližnjem vzhodu ter odraščanje v taborišču za begunce. Predstava je narejena za skupino približno desetih ljudi, ki skupaj z avtorjem simbolično sedijo za mizo. Četrte stene torej nikoli ni, toda Abed gre še dlje. Med pripovedovanjem zgodbe, v katerem z uporabo postopkov *storytellinga* pove zgodbo o svojem življenju, pri čemer uporabi animacijo različnih objektov, videoprojekcije ter številne rekvizite, mu pri izvedbi pomaga tudi občinstvo. Z napotki o uporabi nekaterih animiranih objektov občinstvo po Abedovih navodilih soizvaja predstavo, Abed pa jo med tem zvočno animira (na primer ob vožnji lokomotive nekdo iz občinstva premika lutko, Abed pa z zvokom oponaša lokomotivo). Na koncu avtor občinstvu postreže še obrok, ki ga je kuhal med predstavo in ki ga zaužijejo skupaj ob pogovoru o predstavi, hrani, avtorjevem delu ali čem drugem – na katerokoli temo pač nanese pogovor. Četrto steno tako poruši že v sami strukturi, in to ne enkrat, niti dvakrat, ampak trikrat, hkrati s tem pa ustvari

skupnost (in premišljeno izbere obvladljivo število, da imajo vsi enakopravno možnost vključitve) z zabrisanimi hierarhičnimi pozicijami.

Manual Cinema: *Konec televizije* (The End of TV)

Eden od načinov razbijanja četrte stene je tudi razkrivanje skritega, kot so na primer še vedno skriti tehnični delavci, ki so v tehnični kabini za občinstvo, ali pa ko se menjava scene na primer zgodi v temi med odmorom. S prikazovanjem dela vseh vpletenih ali vsaj večine elementov uprizoritve razbijemo iluzijo, da ima gledališka svetloba elemente sonca ter vzhaja in zahaja sama od sebe, ter poudarjamo dejstvo, da tudi posnet in predvajan zvok v gledališču proizvajajo ljudje (pred predstavo ali med njo).

Kolektiv Manual Cinema je nastal leta 2010 in je usmerjen v modernizacijo senčnega gledališča. V predstavi *Konec televizije*, premierno uprizorjeni junija 2017, ki je bila uvrščena na lanski škotski festival *Manipulate*, v poskusu *gesamtkunstwerka* sopostavi dramsko igro, lutkovno animacijo, filmsko kamero in glasbeni orkester. Sama zgodba se predvsem osredotoča na intimne zgodbe dveh žensk, starejše in mlajše, Kavkazke in Afroameričanke, stranke in uslužbenke, ki se srečata po naključju in spleteta prijateljsko vez. Sam naslov simbolizira neko spremembo v času, generacijski preskok, saj televizija v gospodinjstvih mladih nima več enake vloge, kot jo je imela pred nekaj desetletji. In enako, kot se spreminja pomen televizije oziroma njen položaj v družbi, velja za vse spremembe, saj se kot medij namreč venomer sproti razvija tudi gledališče, tako kot tudi dojemanje animiranih objektov. Prizori so presekani s predvajanjem oglasnih sporočil po televiziji (ta so prav tako ostanek prejšnjih generacij), ki jih soustvarjajo orkester, lutkovni animatorji in igralci. Ti so sočasno na odru in občinstvu na očeh, v končni produkt pa vse skupaj prevede kamera, ki elemente na neki način združuje in predvaja na zaslon, prav tako postavljen na oder. Z izmenjavanjem fokusa med temi elementi ustvarjalci in izvajalci neposredno komunicirajo z občinstvom, čeprav ne z besedami, ampak s postopki, ki si želijo uprizoritev narediti dostopno občinstvu v najširšem možnem pomenu. Zanimivo je tudi, da kljub množtvu soustvarjalcev govorjene besede pripadajo le senčnima lutkama – preostali se sporazumevajo s kretnjami in manj artikuliranimi zvoki. S prikazovanjem nastanka različnih uprizoritvenih elementov občinstvo dobi vpogled, ki ga sicer nima. Bolj je vključeno, saj se ustvarjalci ne ukvarjajo le z vprašanjem, kaj delamo, temveč tudi kako to počnemo.

Amit Drori: Gulliver – *Pot v Liliput* (Gulliver – The Journey to Lilliput)

Amit Drori, režiser, avtor adaptacij in performer, se v svojem opusu redno ukvarja in preizprašuje vlogo animatorja, lutke oziroma animiranega objekta ter Drugega z uporabo različnih gledaliških postopkov. V svoji adaptaciji in uprizoritvi *Gulliver – Pot v Liliput*, nastale v produkciji The Train Theater leta 2011 in ustvarjeni po kultni predlogi Jonathana Swifta o spoznavanju Drugega, četrto steno poruši že v sami adaptaciji, ki je zasnovana kot potovanje po spominih in njihovem odkrivanju oziroma razkrivanju, ter predvidi samo enega igralca. Zanimiva odločitev je, da na potovanju občinstvo ne prevzame oziroma ne pridobi vloge prebivalcev otoka Liliput, temveč so kot Guliverjevi nadrejeni financerji njegove odprave ali pa bralci njegovega dnevnika, saj jim s postopki *storytellinga* poroča o dogodkih, doživetjih in napredkih svoje odprave. Gledalci imajo možnost oziroma je zaželeno, da skupaj z animatorjem oziroma pripovedovalcem hodijo od postojanke do postojanke, vsaka od njih pa predstavlja novo zgodbo na otoku Liliput. Nekatere so zasnovane kot lutkovni avtomati, ki jih animator najde v kubusih, zasnovanih kot škatle spominov, spet druge pa animira animator sam med pripovedovanjem, tako kot sproti gradi oziroma postavlja tudi scenografijo. Interdisciplinarno in interaktivno predstavo bi lahko opisali tudi kot nekakšen literariziran vodeni ogled razstave, saj predstava ponuja zanimiv kontrast med večjimi, abstraktnejšimi objekti (kubusi, ki opravljajo več funkcij) ter manjšimi, natančno izdelanimi in specifično uporabljenimi lutkami.

Jaha Koo: *Kukavica – Zgodba o severno-korejskem gledališču* (Cuckoo, The History of Western Korean Theatre)

Drugi in tretji del Koojeve trilogije *Hamartia*, premierno uprizorjena leta 2017 (*Kukavica*) in 2020 (*Zgodba o severnokorejskem gledališču*) v produkciji gentskega neodvisnega producenta Campo, doživita zanimiv preobrat pri izmenjavi vlog avtorja, pripovedovalca in naslovnega lika oziroma osrednjega motiva. Trilogija preizprašuje in predstavlja (polpreteklo) zgodovino Južne Koreje, njene zahodizacije in lastne kulturne zapuščine. Z belskega zornega kota je Južna Koreja predvsem dislocirana enota Japonske, torej sodobna država, ki je tehnološko nadpovprečno razvita, njeni prebivalci pa imajo čudovito polt, z Japonsko se primerja tudi Južna Koreja sama. *Hamartia* je po Aristotelu usodna napaka, ki vodi v propad lika, v Koojevi trilogiji pa

v propad Južne Koreje. Cuckoo je znamka najbolj prodajanega kuhalnika za riž, deluje pod visokim tlakom in pri visoki temperaturi ter je metafora za sodobno kapitalistično družbo. Sočasno pa Cuckoo, južnokorejski izdelek, deluje kot simbol ponotranjenega neokolonializma ali ponotranjenega kolonializma, saj gre za izboljšan kuhalnik riža, kot so ga Južnokorejci v osemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja uvažali iz Japonske. Koo kot glasbenik in interdisciplinarni umetnik se tako začne poigravati s tehnologijo ne samo na simbolični ravni, temveč tudi kot z nastavkom za umetno inteligenco, skoraj robota, podobno, kot uporabljamo digitalni asistentki Siri in Alexo. Cuckoo kasneje in tudi na račun uspeha istoimenske predstave postane najslavnejši kuhalnik za riž (vsaj na področju uprizoritvenih umetnosti), sprva dobi vlogo simbola sodobne korejske družbe, je pripovedovalec zgodbe o svojem pomenu za Južnokorejce ter o podobnostih med povprečnim prebivalcem in kuhalnikom riža, saj sta oba nagnjena k izjemni učinkovitosti pod izjemnim pritiskom. Po večletni svetovni turneji je Cuckoo kot soigralec ponovno angažiran v zaključno predstavo trilogije, v kateri si ponovno deli pripovedovalsko funkcijo s svojim uporabnikom/režiserjem/soigralcem Koojem, s tem da tokrat svojo pozicijo tudi nagovori, najprej z razlogi za vnovičen angažma (prej omenjeni izjemen in deloma nepričakovan uspeh), kasneje pa še s svojo vlogo pripovedovalca/soigralca/animiranega objekta. V vsakem primeru pa je zanimiva odločitev za vpeljavo hibrida med objektom, ki dejansko spušča zvoke in je torej do neke mere že živ, ni pa še robot ali humanoid (čeprav govori). Obe predstavi sta sicer dokumentarni in narativni, tako da se kljub deloma zaprti formi še vedno zavedata prisotnosti in pomena občinstva ter rušita oviro med njo in igralcema, sočasno pa se odzivata na svet okoli sebe in zavedata zmožnosti in percepcije svojega, uprizoritvenega, medija.

Iz zgornjih primerov je torej vidno, da obstajajo in se tudi uporabljajo številne metode za prebijanje četrte stene in vključevanje občinstva v lutkovno gledališče, nedvomno je še ogromno takih primerov, ki pa jih ne poznamo, saj gledališča delujejo v različnih finančnih razmerah in okoljih, imajo posledično različne možnosti za gostovanja v tujini ter s tem za mednarodne kritiške zapise in podobne privilegije, ki jih povprečni evropski producent razume kot svojo temeljno pravico. Prav tako zaradi deloma še vedno marginaliziranega položaja lutkovnega gledališča oziroma gledališča animiranih objektov v praksi povečini še vedno videvamo najbolj konvencionalne postopke, čeprav se za mednarodno, festivalsko in kritiško uspešne izkažejo tiste, ki v postopke vložijo več premisleka in kreativnosti. Opozoriti je treba tudi na dejstvo, da je znotraj skupnosti ustvarjalcev sodobnih upri-

zoritvenih umetnosti mogoče zaznati vedno več fluidnosti pri uporabljenih postopkih ter funkcijah ustvarjalcev, ki niso več razdeljene na teoretske in praktične, dramske in lutkovne, temveč so vedno bolj združene in prepletene, zato se že v sami osnovi zdi izraz sodobno lutkovno gledališče nekoliko neumesten. Tudi zato je primerov razkrivanja zaodrja, *storytellinga* in grajenja skupnosti še več, kot je videti na prvi pogled. Veliko tovrstnih postopkov se dogaja tudi na področju rabe in vključevanja tehnologije, robotike in mehatronike v uprizoritvenih umetnostih. Novo raven prebijanja četrte stene smo lahko spremljali tudi v pandemični produkciji, ki se je večinoma preselila v filmski medij, kar je marsikateri ustvarjalec izkoristil za poigravanje s konvencijami, zakonitostmi in prepletom slednjih med obema medijema. *Konec televizije* je oboje, je izvedba v živo in televizijski prenos, je gledališka predstava, ki je film. Na odru so orkester, ki v živo izvaja glasbo, animatorji in končni produkt obojega, osrednje odrsko dogajanje, ki se upodablja na osrednjem scenografskem elementu, televiziji. Tudi Koojevi predstavi bi lahko delovali kot kombinacija uprizoritvenega in filmskega medija, saj je velik in pomemben del njegovih predstav video. Prav tako je znotraj koncepta *storytellinga* mogočih več ravni ali načinov pristopa in uporabe. Seveda pa je marsikaj odvisno od samega koncepta uprizoritve, vsebine in znanja oziroma dojemanja ustvarjalcev, kakšno občinstvo si želijo in pričakujejo ali kako ga vključiti oziroma nagovoriti. Sama odločitev za *storytelling* ni vedno politična v smislu preseganja gledaliških konvencij – na tej točki je *storytelling* dogovor. Kar je bila pred nekaj desetletji italijanska škatla, sta sedaj pripovedovanje in preskakovanje med vlogo pripovedovalca in vlogo igralca ter vlogo dramskega lika. Veliko drznejše in bolj progresivne so odločitve za dejansko vzpostavljanje skupnosti, kjer se pozicije moči vsaj deloma premešajo, predvsem pa se zavemo pomena kolektivnosti, vpliva naših odločitev na druge ter obratno, kar je še posebej nujno v individualistično nastrojenem kapitalizmu, prav tako pa v balončkih ustvarjalcev, ki so zavoljo svoje narave v trenutnem sistemu še posebej konkurenčno naravnani. S tovrstnimi postopki pa nas umetnost vsaj deloma opismenjuje za življenje in delovanje v skupnostih, ki jim vsak človek pripada. Žal pa so te manj dobičkonosne in so priložnosti za ogled redke, dasiravno prinašajo dragocene izkušnje.

POVZETEK

Četrta stena v gledališču, dramskem in tudi lutkovnem, je razsvetljenski izum in je v uprizoritvenih umetnosti prisotna bistveno manj časa, kot je odsotna. V prispevku avtorica predstavi avtorje in njihova dela, v katerih se razbijanja četrte stene oziroma stika z občinstvom lotevajo na različne načine, išče vzporednice in razlike med njimi, kakšen vpliv imajo na občinstvo in kako vplivajo na sporočilnost oziroma vsebino predstave.

O AVTORICI

Nika Švab je literarna komparativistka in dramaturginja, izobraževala se ja na Univerzi v Ljubljani in DAMU v Pragi. Je samozaposlena v kulturi in deluje kot dramaturginja, dramatičarka in kritičarka. Večinoma piše – kritike, refleksije, dramska besedila, analize, članke za gledališke liste in pedagoška gradiva –, občasno tudi performira, moderira, urednikuje in izvršno producira festivale. Je soavtorica projektov *S*S*, *Ljubo doma, kdor ga ima* in *TRANS-plant*. Lutkovno produkcijo redno spremlja in popisuje od leta 2014. Leta 2017 je na Tednu slovenske drame prejela nagrado za mladega dramatika, leta 2021 pa je bila nominirana za nagrado Slavka Gruma.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

četrta stena, italijanska škatla, skupnost, animirani objekti, občinstvo

Literatura

Levitan, Olga. »The Puppet as an Instrument of Thought«, uredila Jurkowski, H., Radonjić, M. *Theatre for children : artistic phenomenon*. Theatre Museum of Vojvodina, International Festival of Children's Theatres, 2015. | **Schumann, Peter.** *The Radicality of Puppet Theatre*. The Drama Review, 1990.

YNGVILD ASPELI

»LUTKARSTVO JE ZAME NAČIN GLEDANJA NA SVET«
RAZŠIRJENA GOVORICA IN NJENE MEJE

Tako imenovana »razširjena govorica« je temeljni princip dela francosko-norveške režiserke, performerke in lutkarke Yngvild Aspeli, ki je z mednarodno skupino igralcev, lutkarjev in glasbenikov Plexus Polaire kot režiserka in umetniška vodja od leta 2008 uprizorila šest del, in sicer *Signale* (Signaux, 2011), *Neprosojno opero* (Opéra opaque, 2013), *Pepel* (Cendres, 2014), *Črno sobo* (Chambre noire, 2017), *Mobyja Dicka* (2020) in *Drakulo* (2022).

Umetniško usmeritev skupine Plexus Polaire je Aspelijeva zanamovala z uporabo lutk človeških velikosti, gledališke govorice, ki se zgodi na presečišču različnih uprizoritvenih elementov, ki se enakovredni stekajo v multisenzorično lutkovno uprizoritev, ter tem, ki obravnavajo mejnost – mejnost resničnosti in iluzije, norosti in razsodnosti, mejnost med življenjem in smrtjo. Ime skupine pri tem deluje kot prvi označevalec tovrstne umetniške usmeritve: *plexus* je prostor, kjer prebivajo čustva, *polaire* pa polarnost, ki jo ta v sebi vedno nosijo. Lutke pa imajo pri tem po mnenju Yngvild Aspeli čudovito lastnost, saj lahko prodrejo ter vedno znova in znova vznemirjajo razmerja in mejnosti tovrstne bipolarnosti.

V govorici, ki se razširja, se kot temeljna postulata pojavljata lutka in animator, natančneje njuna dvojna prisotnost, ki razpira številne semiotske in alegorične pomene, lutka pa kot stilizirana upodobitev človeka obenem ponuja možnost introspekcije z distance, sočasno pa namesto besed deluje kot medij za stvari, ki jih ne moremo nujno videti ali racionalizirati, vendar jih lahko vseeno občutimo do popolnosti.

Po mnenju Aspelijeve je tako lutkarstvo premični center, pogled, način gledanja na svet. Je nekaj, kar se z vsako zgodbo (z vsakim novim, individualnim pogledom) utemeljuje na novo. Nekaj, kar lahko posega onkraj fiksiranih žanrskih in slogovnih predpostavk in brez strahu prestopa meje drugih umetniških izrazov.

V tovrstni vertikalni dramaturgiji razširjanja govorice se pri Yngvild Aspeli kot enakovredna sredstva izraza znajdejo lutka, igralec, animator, prostor, luč in zvok ter celostna iluzija, ki pa ni brezkompromisni cilj, temveč je lahko prav tako uporabljena kot sredstvo, orodje, ki dopušča tudi samoprekinitev ali samozanikanje.

Modernistična paradigma, da mora umetnik za svoje umetniško delo iznajti tudi novo formo glede na vsebino, je zaznamovala večino umetniške produkcije 20. stoletja. Razmerje med formo in vsebino pa je še toliko bolj poudarjeno pri lutkovni umetnosti. Kako sami raziskujete to razmerje? Forma je pri meni zelo tesno povezana z vsebino. Raba lutk zame ni samo estetska izbira, temveč je resnično intimno povezana z dramaturškimi odločitvami, zato je odnos med lutkami ter animatorjem in vsem, kar je vmes, v resnici odvisen od teme oziroma je v službi upodobitve te teme. Nekatere predstave govorijo o temah, ki jih je težko ubesediti ali vizualno prikazati, in mislim, da je mogoče lutke – če jih umestimo na pravo mesto – uporabiti kot orodje za vizualizacijo abstraktnejših tem.

Kako je šolanje na ESNAM (École nationale supérieure des arts de la marionnette) v Charleville-Mézièresu, ki je zelo usmerjeno v izvirne in avtorske forme ter raziskovanje razsežnosti lutkarstva, vplivalo na vaša umetniška izhodišča? Charleville-Mézières je zame pomembno obdobje razvoja lastnega jezika. Dobra stran te šole je, da lahko preizkusiš veliko različnih načinov ustvarjanja, nikoli nisi omejen samo z enim načinom ali eno tehniko. Deležen si širokega prikaza tega, kar delajo različni ustvarjalci, nato pa te spodbujajo, da najdeš svojo pot v razvoju jezika. Moj jezik je denimo vizualen. Vizualno pripovedništvo, v katerem so aktivirani vsi čuti in vsi prispevajo h komuniciranju zgodbe. Vsi impulzi in vse drugo, kar sporoča besedilo ali igra igralcev, se močno čutijo tudi v atmosferi ali glasbi, lučeh, prostoru – kot da bi z vizualnim prevodom zgodbe hotel ustvariti fizično izkušnjo. Kot da bi hotel ujeti vse tisto, česar morda ne znaš ubesediti, vendar na neki globlji ravni vseeno razumeš.

Kako pri ustvarjanju konkretizirate te elemente, ki so sicer v bistvu zelo abstraktni? Atmosfera in čustva so nekaj abstraktnega, a obenem tudi zelo konkretnega. Vsi jih prepoznamo – ni jih mogoče ubesediti, treba jih je občutiti. Tukaj pridejo prav lutke, ki so edinstvene v sposobnosti preobrazbe nečesa, kar je težko pojasniti ali ubesediti – kajti tukaj ne gre za besede, temveč za občutek, ki ga vsi prepoznamo in razumemo. To je pravzaprav še bolj konkretno od besed. Je kot telo ali srce. Zame je pomembna tudi literatura, zgodba. Cilj je povedati zgodbo, obenem pa komunicirati z občinstvom. To je bilo zame vedno pomembno – tudi če izberem drugačen način pripovedovanja, je cilj še vedno povedati zgodbo in obenem komunicirati z občinstvom. Nimam nadzora nad tem, kako zgodba komunicira oziroma ali ima občinstvo svoje mnenje, a zame je gledalčevo dojemanje zelo pomembno. To pomeni, da se med ustvarjanjem predstave moram zavedati, da tega ne delam zase, temveč je končni cilj srečanje z gledalcem.

V intervjuju za podkast Some Small Magic[1] ste dejali, da v predstavah po premierah radi nekatere stvari spreminjate glede na odzive občinstva. Ali to kako vpliva tudi na vaš nadaljnji način ustvarjanja predstav? Vedno se trudiš, da bi bila vsaka nova predstava malenkost boljša, in z vsako novo predstavo nekoliko bolje razumeš, kaj je treba storiti, da se na neki točki zgosti v trdno obliko. A še tedaj, se mi zdi, z vsakim novim prostorom ali novo kulturo nastanejo razlike. Mislim, da je v tem lepota našega načina izraza in žive umetnosti – to je nekaj, kar se spreminja in prilagaja realnosti, v kateri se pojavi. *Moby Dick* denimo govori o monomaničnem človeku, ki vodi svojo posadko v pogubo, in podobnosti s tem je mogoče najti marsikje. Najbrž je zgodba prav zato po toliko letih še vedno živa. Nagovarja veliko različnih ravni. Roman *Moby Dick* ni postal klasika brez razloga, dotakne se nečesa, kar vsi prepoznamo, četudi živimo v povsem drugačnem času in kulturnem kontekstu.

V omenjenem intervjuju ste dejali tudi, da literarnega dela ne jemljete kot osnovo za adaptacijo, temveč da literarno delo izberete kot strukturo za temo, ki jo želite obdelati. Kako torej izbirate teme, ki jih želite predstaviti občinstvu, in kako se nazadnje odločite za literarno delo? Sprva sem mislila, da se v vsaki predstavi ukvarjam z drugo temo, a sem zdaj ugotovila, da je tema vselej ista, le da dobiva različne oblike in jo obravnavam z različnih zornih kotov – zelo očitno gre za notranji boj in kompleksnost tega, kaj pomeni biti človek. To me zanima v najrazličnejših oblikah: kako se spopadamo z odločitvami med dobrim in slabim ter s svojimi temnimi platmi, kako je ta ranljivost človekovega stanja obenem tudi vir moči. Zanima me, kako nam uspeva ves čas ohranjati ravnovesje med nadzorom in nadzorovanostjo s strani sil, ki nas obdajajo ali delujejo znotraj nas. In če dobro pomislimo, je to osnova tega, kaj pomeni biti človek, s tem pa se odpirajo možnosti vpogleda v konkretnejše zgodbe, ki iz tega izhajajo.

Veliko vaših del – na primer *Moby Dick, Pepel, Črna soba*, obravnava temo blaznosti ali katerih drugih mejnih psiholoških stanj. Kako nekoga, ki je demoniziran (na primer manični kitolovec, požigalec ali atentatorka), prikazati v globino, ne enoznačno, temveč kot človeka z lastnimi strahovi, frustracijami? V takih primerih me najbolj zanima, zakaj se je pri kom razvilo to skrajno stanje, saj imamo tako predispozicijo vsi. Rada raziskujem, kaj koga prižene do tega, da prestopi mejo, in zakaj se komu drugemu uspe temu izogniti. Take zgodbe jasno nastavljajo ogledalo prav vsakemu od nas. Bolj me zanima, kako se

1 | *2.5 Yngvild Aspeli.* Some Small Magic/Fletcher Pierson, 2017.

vsak posameznik bojuje za svoje življenje in mesto v družbi ali kako mu njegova identiteta daje podlago za to, ne da bi pri tem izgubila izpred oči dejstvo, da vse, kar storimo kot posamezniki, nujno vpliva na družbo ali na ljudi, s katerimi se obkrožimo. Lahko, da gre za odločitev enega človeka, a lahko ta vpliva na mnogo ljudi – rada raziskujem to večno vzpostavljanje ravnovesja med posameznikom in družbo.

Mislim, da to lahko deluje tudi v nasprotni smeri: družbene razmere lahko izzovejo (skrajne) individualne odločitve, kot na primer v predstavi *Črna soba*, ki govori o Valerie Jean Solanas (1936–1988), severnoameriški pisateljici, obetavni študentki psihologije in radikalni feministki, ki je znana po manifestu *SCUM* (Society for Cutting Up Men) in atentatu na Andyja Warhola. Ja, mislim, da sta *Črna soba* in *Moby Dick* v tem smislu nasprotji. V predstavi *Črna soba* imamo posameznico, ki gre v svojem ravnanju do skrajnosti, vendar vidimo, da jo je táko ustvarila družba, ki ni poskrbela zanjo, ki jo je zapustila kot otroka. V predstavi *Moby Dick* pa imamo drugo skrajnost, Ahaba, ki svojo mikrodružbo vodi v pogubo. Razmerja med posameznikom in skupino rada preučujem na različne načine.

Svetovni literarni klasiki, ki jih pogosto izbirate kot izhodišče svojih uprizoritev, imajo običajno zelo distinktiven in unikaten slog pisanja – tudi sami izbirajo svoji vsebini primerno formo. Pri *Mobyju Dicku*, na primer, je prav Melvillov slog tisto, kar je roman utrdilo kot kanonsko klasiko ameriške literature. Če vam literarno delo torej pomeni strukturo za izbrano temo, kako prevajate slog pisanja, pisateljevo formo, v svojo formo, torej v vizualno? Zelo pozorna sem na rabo jezika. Ta se me dotakne, zato je moja naloga, da ujamem slog pisanja in ga prevedem v svoj jezik, ki je odrski. Za tak prevod je treba vedeti, kako je literarno delo zgrajeno. Če pogledamo denimo predstavo *Črna soba*, Sara Stridsberg[2] pri pisanju premešča drobce v času sem in tja, zato se mi je pri prevajanju v odrski jezik zdelo naravno, da bo predstava strukturirana kot nekakšna halucinacija. Pri *Mobyju Dicku*, ki je epska zgodba, pa je bilo treba ustvariti formo take zgodbe. Herman Melville v pisanju poleg tega združuje številne različne sloge in načine pisanja in to je vse nekako našlo pot v predstavo. Poskušam upoštevati to, kako je zgodba izpovedana, a jo hkrati predelati v svoj jezik.

Velikokrat poudarjate, da vas pri ustvarjanju zanima dvojna prisotnost animatorja in lutke. Če predpostavimo, da sta ti dve prisotnosti nekaj ločenega, me zanima, po čem se ločujeta? Animator ni nikoli nevtralen in to omogoča poigravanje z različnimi možnostmi odnosa med lutko in animatorjem. Včasih sta kot eden – čeprav sta fizično ločeni entiteti, animator služi lutki, predstavljata eno in isto. S tem se lahko poigravamo – kaj se zgodi, na primer, kadar ne vidimo animatorjev, ki ustvarjajo iluzijo, in kaj se zgodi, kadar jih in predpostavljamo, da nekdo upravlja drugo osebo ali lik. V tem gremo lahko še dlje, lutka in animator lahko postaneta lika, med katerima se razvije interakcija. So torej trije različni pogledi ali ravni, ki jih lahko aktivno izkoristimo v dramaturgiji predstave.

V sodobnem lutkarstvu so prijemi, ki želijo iluzijo razkrinkati, zelo pogosti. Razkriti postopke izdelave pravzaprav velikokrat postane celotna uprizoritvena strategija. Sami pa v svojih predstavah gradite na »popolni« iluziji do mere, ko ne razločimo več med lutkami in animatorji. Ne gre mi toliko za to, da bi zgradila popolno ali trdno iluzijo, temveč da bi ustvarila iluzijo, s katero se lahko nato poigram in jo zavrnem. Včasih, na primer, animatorjev ne vidimo, in ko jih končno zagledamo, ima to drugačen, močnejši učinek, kot če bi jih videli že od začetka. Rada uporabljam tako rušenje iluzije kot del pripovedi.

Obenem pa se vaša dela sklicujejo tudi na lutkarsko tradicijo. Odnos do tradicije pa je dandanes v umetnosti ambivalenten. Nove forme nastajajo v opoziciji do nje, v tem je včasih lahko čutiti antagonistično držo, a obenem je tradicija prvi pogoj za sodobno. Kako sami doživljate razmerje med tradicijo in sodobnostjo, konvencijo in alternativo v lutkarstvu? Mislim, da je prav v tem smislu lutkarstvo zanimivo, saj ima zelo močno tradicijo in tehnike, ki so zares dragocene. Zame je pomembno, da so performerji dobri animatorji. Lutkarstvo je nekaj tradicionalnega – gre za tehniko in obrt, ki se je izučiš. Nekaj, na čemer lahko gradiš, saj gradiš na že obstoječih tehnikah. Sama se, na primer, ne ukvarjam s klasičnimi marionetnimi lutkami, a me izjemno navdušujejo in v predstavo vedno vključim vsaj neko obliko tradicionalne marionete – to je specifična tehnika, vendar jo sama uporabljam drugače, saj se ukvarjam predvsem z odnosom med lutkarjem in lutko in so druge tehnike pri prevpraševanju tega odnosa učinkovitejše. Zato torej ne bi govorila o sodobnosti v nasprotju s tradicijo, mislim, da gre bolj za vprašanje razvoja, prilagajanja nečesa času, ki se spreminja. Mislim, da je velika prednost imeti tradicijo in uveljavljene tehnike, na katerih lahko gradiš in raziskuješ nove poti naprej.

Tema tokratne številke revije *Lutka* je »na meji«. Ali menite, da lahko »odprtost pogleda« pri iskanju primerne forme glede na vsebino oddalji lutkarstvo od tega, kar

---

2 | Predstava *Črna soba* je nastala po navdihu romana Sare Stridsberg *Drömfakulteten* (2006).

pravzaprav je (in se sprevrže v neartikulirano zmes »vsega po malem«)? Vprašanje je, kaj vse razumete kot lutkarstvo. Mislim, da je lutkarstvo več kot samo lutka. Lahko se uporabi kot tehnika; zame je lutkarstvo pogled na svet. Je način gledanja ali pripovedovanja zgodbe, ki lahko privzame številne različne oblike. Vsem oblikam lutkarstva pa je po mojem mnenju skupno to, da je središče nekje zunaj človeka. V središču je nekaj drugega ali neka tretja entiteta, zato se namesto dveh strani vzpostavi tristranska komunikacija, s tem pa vse služi nečemu drugemu kot sebi. Če je to prisotno, je to zame lutkarstvo, oblike pa so lahko zelo različne.

Bi lahko navedli primere umetnikov, ki s svojim delom širijo razumevanje lutkarstva? Ja, naj omenim francosko ustvarjalko Alice Laloy. V svoji najnovejši predstavi, ki se nanaša na *Ostržka*, je na nekakšen strašljiv, presunljiv, a čudovit način spremenila otroke v žive lutke. Élise Vigneron veliko ustvarja z različnimi materiali, kot je led, in se ukvarja s tem, kako jih uporabiti kot pripovedno orodje. Renaud Herbin uporablja vsakdanje predmete, lahko povsem preproste, v interakciji s človeškim telesom, pri čemer ga zanima, kako z načinom njihove rabe ustvarjamo različne dimenzije. Tudi Agnès Limbos se ukvarja z gledališčem predmetov in ima prav tako zelo drugačen način pripovedovanja zgodbe in podajanja alternativnega pogleda na stvari. Vsak na zelo samosvoj način ustvarja zanimiva, močna dela.

Vaše hiperrealistične lutke naravnih velikosti so pogosto opisane kot grozljive, srhljive, *uncanny*. Kaj menite, kaj botruje takšnemu doživljanju? Lutke imam med drugim rada zato, ker lahko učinkujejo kot medij med življenjem in smrtjo, in mislim, da mi to daje možnost komunikacije med tema dvema svetovoma. To je za lutke nekaj naravnega, saj oba svetova že tako ali tako nosijo v sebi, v svoji formi. Lutka je predmet, ki oživi, ker verjamemo vanjo oziroma jo oživimo. Mislim, da je lutkarstvo podobno tisti duhovni seansi, na kateri vsi držijo prst na kozarcu, pod katerim so črke, in se kozarec nekako poveže z duhovi – in premakne. Vsi vemo, da kozarec premika nekdo od nas, ampak ne vemo, kdo. Vseeno ostane drobec dvoma ali vere, da je mogoče vse res, da kozarec premika »nekaj drugega«. Skupinska animacija lutk, ki jo pogosto uporabljam, je skrajna oblika tega mita – kako verjamemo v nekaj, kar ni resnično. Lutke torej že v svoji naravni formi ponujajo možnost razmisleka o bivanjskih vprašanjih, in kadar govorimo o bivanjskih vprašanjih, ne moremo mimo življenja in smrti. Vsi imamo odnos do tega – morda nas je strah ali nas ta vprašanja preganjajo, lutke pa imajo to sposobnost, da jih zastavijo, četudi ne na konkreten način, temveč samo s svojo formo ali fantomsko navzočnostjo.

V svoji zadnji predstavi *Drakula* (premiera decembra leta 2021), ki prav tako tematizira mejnost življenja in smrti, ste se usmerili v nekoliko bolj feministično interpretacijo starodavne zgodbe in motiva vampirja. Nam lahko poveste več o tem? *Drakulo* je kot knjigo (ali kot lik) nemogoče uprizoriti. Drakula je mit, skriva se v sencah – to je njegova poglavitna prednost. To je težko upodobiti, saj ga žene prav dvom drugih o njegovem obstoju. Ko sem razvijala predstavo, se mi je zdelo pomembno, da ne naredim kakšne sodobne različice, saj verjamem, da morajo biti stvari umeščene v čas, iz katerega izvirajo – da ima to svojo moč in smisel. Če zgodbo povemo danes, ustvarimo nekakšno ogledalo med obema obdobjema. Precej hitro mi je postalo jasno, da hočem pozornost usmeriti v Lucy, eno od prvih žrtev Drakule. Njena zgodba se me je dotaknila, ker pogosto ostane na površju, jaz pa sem hotela obrniti stvari na glavo, povedati zgodbo, vendar z ženske perspektive, da bi videla, katere druge teme bi lahko pri tem prišle na dan – teme, ki so danes bolj samoumevne, vendar je o njih vedno pomembno govoriti.

Kakšne teme vam je razkrila zgodba, interpretirana z ženske perspektive? Pri *Drakuli* se veliko vrti okoli seksualnosti, nedolžnosti, poželenja in nedovoljenega osvobajanja od predpisanih vlog, ki jih moraš igrati kot ženska – biti moraš lepa, seksi, privlačna in emancipirana, vendar hkrati nedolžna in ne preveč emancipirana, saj v tem primeru postaneš preveč svobodna in nisi več spoštovana. Meje so za ženske zelo zabrisane, to je pravo minsko polje. Veliko je govora tudi o zlorabi in o želji po nečem, česar se obenem bojiš. To se v knjigi pogosto pojavi, in to ne samo v povezavi z ženskami, temveč kot splošna želja ali poželenje, ki je hkrati strašljivo. Mislim, da gre pri vampirju prav za to. Spet gre za notranji boj med tem, kaj je prav in kaj narobe, kako naj bi ravnal in kako ne, ter za vsa ta kompleksna vprašanja, povezana s seksualnostjo, telesom, podobo, močjo in zlorabo te moči.

Za konec pa vprašanje o vaši nadaljnji poti – z jesenjo postajate umetniška vodja gledališča Vizualnega gledališča Nordland v norveškem Stamsundu. Kaj to pomeni za vaše umetniško vodenje skupine Plexus Polaire ter avtorsko ustvarjanje kot performerka? Opravljala bom dve vlogi – delo v skupini Plexus Polaire se bo nadaljevalo, obenem pa bom umetniška direktorica Vizualnega gledališča Nordland. To je zelo posebno in vznemirljivo, pa tudi nenavadno gledališče na severu Norveške, ki se je usmerilo v to, da k produkciji svojih predstav privablja različne mednarodne gledališke skupine. Kot umetniška direktorica si bom prizadevala za razširjeno razumevanje in dojemanje lutkovnega gledališča in njegovih možnosti; tega, da gre za zares izjemen način izraza, čeprav ga poznajo le redki. Vzporedno pa bom še naprej ustvarjala s Plexus Polaire. Skupina bo ostala na turneji in po *Drakuli* bom pripravila novo predstavo, v kateri bom spet nastopila na odru. To bo ponovno solo predstava, ki se bo lotila norveške klasike – *Hiše lutk* Henrika Ibsena.

MOJCA REDJKO

KOT PECIVO, POMOČENO V čAJ

O SNOVNEM GLEDALIŠČU

Snovno gledališče (tudi tvarno, materialno, gledališče materiala) je sodobna lutkovna praksa, ki postavlja snov z zanjo značilnimi fizičnimi lastnostmi pred obliko. Material spregovori kot abstrakten znak, poln pomenskih plasti, povezanih z osebno izkušnjo ustvarjalcev in gledalcev.

Pomen snovi

Sodobna lutkovna umetnost je avtonomen pojav na presečišču različnih umetniških praks, preizprašuje lastni medij ter išče nove estetske in pomenske plasti znotraj dejanja animacije. Animacija ni (več) samo oživljanje neživega, temveč iskanje odnosnih možnosti in akterjev znotraj tega dejanja. Perspektive vstopanja v te umetniške procese temeljijo na razumevanju znaka v smislu materiala (snovi), ne samo v pomenu oblike. Lutka kot tehnološko zapleten izdelek, ki zahteva obrtniško izurjenega animatorja, ni več zanimiva. Na njeno mesto stopajo predmeti, prostori, telesa, zvoki, toni, glasovi, sence, projekcije, svetloba ipd., dejanje animiranja pa vključuje elemente različnih uprizoritvenih praks, giba, plesa, klovnovstva, akrobatike, muziciranja, petja ipd.[1] Metode animacije niso določene vnaprej, zapisane so v značaju snovi – lahko v povsem fizikalnih in kemijskih lastnostih, lahko v prvotnem stvarnem sobesedilu –, ki prek metafore, metonimije, humorja, poetičnosti ipd. narekuje pomenski prenos na abstraktno raven, gledalca pa potegne iz položaja pasivnega opazovalca – z asociiranjem, razbiranjem, povezovanjem, *dopisovanjem* razpolaga s celoto svojih vitalnih energij in v enakovrednem dialogu aktivno soustvarja (lastno) predstavo.[2]

Oblika snovi

V odnosu (in pristopu) do materiala sta si blizu predmetno in snovno gledališče – za obe velja neka stopnja abstrakcije. V predmetnem gledališču material znotraj predstave povečini (še) nosi stalno obliko. Ta oblika z odmikanjem od tradicionalne *tehnološke* lutkovne logike in s približevanjem sporočilnosti *narave* snovi postaja spremenljiva, zaradi zaznavne minljivosti pa uprizoritveno *naključna*. Najkonkretneje se lahko predmet uporablja kot *že izdelana* lutka, na primer igrača Barbie sama po sebi nosi pomen novodobnih estetskih idealov in družbeno-ekonomskih vrednot, ki jih scela prenese v umetniški koncept, kot v predstavi *Viktorija 2.0* (Moment, r. Zoran Petrovič, 2016); nagačeni zajci v predstavi *Tihožitje* (Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, r. Tin Grabnar, 2020) so animirani in se gibajo *kot živi*, povsem *tradicionalno* oživijo kot izdelane lutke v živalski podobi, gledalci pa spremljajo predstavo s hkratnim neizpodbitnim zavedanjem njihove stvarne in dejanske *mrtvosti*.

Predmet lahko kot jasen znak metonimično zastopa širše pomensko polje (*celoto*), na primer srajca s kravato na obešalniku postane odvetnik, poosebitev pravosodnega sistema (*Proces ali Žalostna zgodba Josefa K.*, Lutkovno gledališče Maribor, r. Matija Solce, 2012), posamezne kosti v predstavi *Vesele kosti* (MCLU Koper, Teatro Matita, r. Matija Solce, 2012) pa doživljajo v istem prizoru različne vrste animacije v dialogu z animatorjevo roko in zato lahko odigrajo dve (celi) odrski osebi v kontinuiteti enega samega animatorjevega giba.[3]

Predmeti so lahko uporabljeni povsem asociativno, gibajo se *sebi lastno* in s pomočjo gledalčeve investicije prevzemajo sekundarne pomene, na primer otroška vrtavka v *Temnici* (Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, r. Matija Solce, 2022) v različnih svetlobah postane balerina.[4] Asociativna raba izhaja iz neločljive celovitosti odrske iluzije, ki jo gradijo

1 | Obenem se uprizoritveni postopek animacije vnaša v *nelutkovne* gledališke žanre, na primer v senzorično, potopitveno, vizualno gledališče idr.
2 | Rancière, Jacques. *Emancipirani gledalec.* Maska, 2010, str. 13–14.

3 | Sitar Cvetko, Jelena. *Iluzije po točkah.* Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva EU, marec 2022, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/iluzije-po-tockah/.
4 | Ibid.

plasti uprizoritvenih elementov, ostaja na abstraktni ravni in ne teži h konkretnosti. Obrat k prepuščanju materialu, da se *naravno* razraste v umetniško dejanje, ga povsem suvereno narekuje in mu pripisuje enkratno naravo, pa spominja na otroško igro ustvarjanja (in rušenja), globoko zapisano v mitih in pravljicah o stvarjenju človeka in sveta.

Možnost snovi

Ali je imel Bog možnost ustvariti drugačen svet, kot ga je, se sprašuje Daniel Blanga-Gubbay.[5] Navaja razmislek o stvarjenju v delu *De Potentia* Tomaža Akvinskega (1265), ki prikazuje, kako je Bog najprej izbral snov, iz katere bo naredil svet, potem pa zgradil najboljši svet, ki ga je bilo mogoče iz te snovi zgraditi. V snovi, iz katere je narejen svet, so imeli enako možnost stvarjenja vsi potencialni svetovi. Redek primer upodobitve sveta tik pred stvarjenjem ponuja tudi slika iz rokopisa *Biblije* Maciejowskega (1240): Bog v desni roki drži brezobličen oblak snovi, na levi pa je popolna oblika, ki bo znotraj snovi vidna šele od drugega dne. Podobno stvarjenje ubesedi Giordano Bruno leta 1582 kot »veliki kaos, ki se ne vede drugače kot oblak, ki ga oblikujejo vetrovi od zunaj, in ki lahko zaradi razlik in lastnosti impulzov prevzame vse mogoče oblike«.[6] Bog, ki izhaja iz edinstvenosti brezoblične snovi, ustvari eno samo površino resničnosti. V trenutku, ko je izbran en sam resnični svet (podoba), so vsi drugi morebitni svetovi označeni kot mogoči, kot nekaj, kar bi lahko bilo, a ni, in kot nekaj, kar je hkrati še vedno navzoče pod površino, v sami snovi sveta. V nadaljevanju prispevka Blanga-Gubbay razpravlja o naravi snovi in oblike v modernem in postmodernem svetu, ohranja misel, da snov nima ene same usode, prej razkriva negotovost in vabi k raziskovanju v sedanjosti; pojavlja se kot možnost, da postane katerakoli oblika. Vzpostavljena je kot nečloveški izvajalec stvaritve.

Narava snovi

Snovno gledališče temelji na uporabi materiala na način, ki ključno upošteva njegove fizikalne, kemijske, tehnološke in sorodne lastnosti. Snov (v času predstave) ves čas spreminja oblike in animatorju neusmiljeno narekuje ritem, tempo, dinamiko *gibanja*, izhajajoče iz lastnosti snovi. Nastajajo podobe z močno asociativno in simbolno vrednostjo, ki se krepi

s sopostavljanjem – iz razmerij med njimi vznikata praznina in stvariteljska kontingenca. Animator je hkrati stvaritelj: oživlja neživo snov in sproti določa njene *oblike*. Je pa tudi raziskovalec: odkriti mora gibanje, ki je lastno uporabljeni snovi. Tako snov postane medij, ne samo vir oblike, postane simbolni in praktični znak hkrati.

To je na primer izhodišče predstave *Janček ježek* (Lutkovno gledališče Maribor, r. Margrit Gysin, 2012). Na majhni okrogli mizi, aluziji na lončarsko vreteno, se iz gmote gline – snovi s pomensko vrednostjo starodavnosti, zdravilne in gradilne moči, seveda tudi z določeno težo – prebudi glineni deček, se spremeni v ježka in preseli v glineni gozd, brlog se pretegne v medveda, zraste v grad, vmes kot pisalo skicira pot iz gozda, na koncu pa postane gradivo srečnega doma. Glini pomagajo preprosti *vsakdanji* predmeti (vejice, paličke, zobotrebci, deli igrač, rojstnodnevne svečke, iskrice ipd.), načelo uprizarjanja pa poleg izumljanja podob in njihovega rušenja ob pripovedovanju vključuje še igranje vlog (Elena Volpi je Mama, Janček, Medved, Kralj, Petelin, Princeska in drugi) in petje, kar celoto postavi v okvir vesele otroške igre, ki vabi k posnemanju. Tak nagovor je za snovno gledališče običajen – znani materiali so dostopni, otroška igra pa v učno-vzgojnem okviru z vnosom zgodbe lahko preraste v ustvarjalno dejanje z elementi umetnosti.[7]

Ustvarjalno igrišče

Koncept otroških igrišč kot ustvarjalnih poligonov v povezavi z raziskavo materiala v predstavah za otroke zadnja leta razvija režiser Miha Golob. Začel je z *malim modrim in malim rumenim* Lea Lionnija (Lutkovno gledališče Maribor, 2015), nadaljeval pa z avtorskima projektoma *Akvarij* (Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, 2017) in *Peskovnik* (Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana, 2022).

[…] V njej (*mali modri in mali rumeni*, op. a.) sem začel razmišljati o otroških igriščih kot o prostoru prvih otroških odkritij in fascinacij, svojevrstnih otroških laboratorijih, mestih, kjer otroci raziskujejo in spoznavajo določene zakonitosti tega sveta in ob tem hkrati spoznavajo sebe, lastno domišljijo, ustvarjalnost, logiko. Ugotovil sem, da je tudi prazen list papirja otroško igrišče. Še več, navdušen sem bil nad tem, kako je prazen list papirja otroku zanimiv. Močno si ga želi zapolniti, pobarvati,

5 | Blanga-Gubbay, Daniel. »Kot oblak, ki ga oblikujejo svetovi.«, uredili Kraigher A., Rooss A. *Gledališče animiranih form*. Maska št. 179–180/Lutka št. 59, 2016, str. 25–28.
6 | Ibid.

7 | Volpi, Elena. *Loutkové divadlo jako cesta do dětské duše – Setkání umění a výchovy*. Doktorska naloga. Akademija lepih umetnosti v Pragi, Gledališka fakulteta, Alternativna in lutkovna tvorba in njena teorija, 2019, str. 36–49.

zviti, raztrgati, zmečkati ... V [...] *Akvariju* sem naredil korak naprej v raziskovanju analognih otroških igrišč, ki jih danes vse bolj nadomeščajo digitalni svetovi igre. Akvarij je imel funkcijo kopalne kadi, ki je eden prvih otroških prostorov za igro. *Peskovnik* je bil v tem procesu naslednji logičen korak. Gre za enega od osnovnih prostorov otroške igre, kjer pa lahko otroke videvamo vse redkeje – bodisi jih mačke uporabljajo za malo in veliko potrebo bodisi se otroci v njih umažejo ...[8]

Vse tri predstave ne vztrajajo pri neposredni interaktivnosti, temveč načela dialoške igrivosti v določenem igrišču podobnem prostoru z igranju podobnimi prijemi dramaturško prelijejo v inovativno animacijo predmetov in snovi. Otroško igrišče v *malem modrem in malem rumenem* je povečan list papirja, animirani material barva (v različnih pojavnih oblikah), v *Akvariju* se iluzija vzpostavlja v animacijskih razmerjih predmetov in vode, v *Peskovnik* pa kot lutka vstopi pesek, »material, ki je v nasprotju z vsem, kar lutka v klasičnem smislu predstavlja«.[9]

Barva

Uprizoritvena predloga predstave *mali modri in mali rumeni* je izrazito večpomenska in naslovniško odprta slikanica Lea Lionnija. Zgodbo prikaže z iztrganimi barvnimi ploskvami na *prazni* podlagi. Besedilo je zelo kratko in večinoma postavljeno v spodnji del strani. Mali modri je upodobljen kot mala modra oblika, iztrgana iz papirja. Njegovi starši so oblikovani kot dve večji modri obliki (ki se med seboj razlikujeta). Dom je rjava oblika, na katero je postavljena družina, park je oblikovan z večjimi zelenimi ploskvami. Gibanje je v slikanici prikazano s smiselnim postavljanjem oblik v kompozicijo, poudarjeno je gibanje naprej, proti desni. Ko se prijatelja srečata, postaneta zelena. Prizor mešanja barv nosi vprašanje medosebnih odnosov, identitete, sprejemanja itd.[10]

Lionni je za pripovedovanje zgodbe izkoristil bogato pripovedno moč barve, oblike in kompozicijskih elementov, tej metodi pa je sledil tudi režiser uprizoritve, ki je na oder postavil veliko belo platno.[11] Barva se najprej pojavi kot tekočina, ki jo igralca-animatorja igrivo nanašata s prsti, čopiči, pršili, bar-

va pa na navpični površini prevzema nedoločne (naključne!) oblike. Nenadzorovano polzeči, z besedno igro poimenovani packi na platnu postajata individuuma. S pomočjo čarovniškega trika se vsak na svojo packo umestita *naključna* predmeta – rumeno plastično jedro kinderjajčka in prazen modri balon.[12] Po platnu se premikata v jasno določenih linijah, ob premikanju pa se samosvoje gibata in skozi sebi lasten gib (in zvok) oživita: ob hitrejšem premikanju izvajata drugačne gibe kot ob počasnem ali vsebinsko – žalostna drugače kot vesela. V temnih prizorih je označevalec likov (živahna) barvna lučka, oblikovan svetlobni snop označuje tudi prostor (dom in cesto). Konkretna realizacija barve se razume kot aktualna nosilka pojavnosti, gledalci pa precej abstrakten kod aktivno razbirajo z lastno domišljijsko investicijo.[13]

Posebnost, ki predvsem mlade gledalce močno pritegne, je vtis nekakšne *samostojnosti* dogajanja, ki ni povsem pod nadzorom animatorjev (odraslih). V tem razmerju se razrašča prostor za (dobrodošlo) *napako*, ki dogajanje na odru bistveno približa stvarnosti. »Spremenljivost gledališke umetnosti – ko nič ne more biti narejeno dvakrat isto, ampak je vsak dogodek unikaten, izvenserijski – vzpostavlja podobnost z življenjem, v katerem je logika enaka.«[14] Toliko laže se gledalci zato poistovetijo z malimi barvnimi junaki – verjetnost uprizoritvenega dejanja raste iz moči čustvene iluzije, ki jo krepi čudenje, ne iz nazornega poustvarjanja (ene same) zgodbe.

Voda

V vodni pustolovščini *Akvarij*[15] je zgodba nakazana, skicirana je v slikah, vsak gledalec pa sooblikuje svojo/osebno zgodbo. Zakaj je tako? Prizore gradijo elementi s subjektivno čustveno vrednostjo, identificirano v snovalnem ustvarjalnem procesu: voda (v več pojavnih oblikah), jajce, posode, predmeti, druge tekočine in barvila. Zvok predstave ne vključi besed (te *nadomešča* glasba), uprizoritveno izhodišče so poskusi z vodo:[16]

8 | Tretinjak, Igor. *Miha Golob: »Za otroke je svet kot lunapark, ki ga opazujejo in nad katerim se navdušujejo brez preračunljivosti«.* Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva EU, oktober, 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/miha-golob-za-otroke-je-svet-kot-lunapark-ki-ga-opazujejo-in-nad-katerim-se-navdusujejo-brez-preracunljivosti/.
9 | Ibid.
10 | Haramija, D., Batič, J.. *Teorija slikanice.* Otrok in knjiga št. 89, 2014, str. 5–19.

11 | Napovednik predstave *mali modri in mali rumeni*: https://youtu.be/4Qfe21bOYms.
12 | Izbor predmetov je posledica raziskovalne delavnice s kopico raznovrstnih predmetov iz vsakdanje stvarnosti ter magnetov različnih oblik in velikosti.
13 | Trefalt, Uroš. *Doživljajsko gledališče.* Poročilo selektorja 8. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije, 2015, http://ulu.si/8-bienale/.
14 | Andres, Rok. *Živimo v trdem svetu – nekaj misli h komediji Iluzije.* Gledališki list Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega, let. 66, št. 11 (sezona 2015/2016), str. 13–15, https://www.mgl.si/assets/Uploads/GL-Iluzije-Andres-Zivimo-v-trdem-svetu.pdf.
15 | Napovednik predstave *Akvarij*: https://vimeo.com/207000601.
16 | *Gledališče in znanost – proces nastajanja*, https://vimeo.com/204527808.

Vodo spoznamo v vseh treh agregatnih stanjih: kot paro, v kateri se znajde jajček, ko poči njegov balon, kot tekočino, v kateri se da prijetno čofotati, in kot led, ki zaradi nižje gostote plava na vodi. Zanimivo vlogo gostote tekočin in njihove različne polarnosti (olje, voda) opazimo tudi v valjih, kjer se obarvane tekočine ne premešajo. Zgodi se tudi čisto prava kemijska reakcija: dve trdni snovi, hidrogen karbonat in citronska kislina, raztopljeni v vodi, zreagirata v plinasti ogljikov dioksid, ki z vso hitrostjo zbeži navzgor, v zrak, kjer se pridruži svojima prijateljema kisiku in dušiku. Ogljikov dioksid pa se v akvariju znajde tudi v manj znani obliki: kot suhi led zaradi hitre sublimacije plina.

Milni mehurčki na začetku predstave ilustrirajo moč površinske napetosti, zaradi katere je stena mehurčka debela le nekaj nanometrov, interferenca svetlobe v njej pa ustvarja čudovite mavrične vzorce. Svetloba je močan element v akvariju. Ko se vanj potopi ogledalo, se zaradi odboja svetlobe v njem ne znajde le odsev ladjice, ampak za hip tudi gledalci.

Z različnimi predmeti v vodi se poigravata sili težnosti in vzgona, zaradi česar nekateri plavajo na vrhu, lebdijo ali pa potonejo. Nenavadno majhna sila trenja jajčku pomaga, da z lahkoto potiska veliko ledeno kepo po tankem sloju vode, kepa pa se nato še dolgo na mestu vrti okoli svoje osi. V akvariju je prostor tudi za mogočno stojno valovanje, ki grozi, da bo preplavilo gledalce.[17]

Material narekuje velikost in obliko uprizoritvenega prostora, število izvajalcev, tempo, trajanje, vzdušje in – zgodbo. Spomin na vodne površine v naravi se veže na hrepenenje, razdalje, oddaljena obzorja, potovanja; kozmogonični miti vodi pripisujejo ločevanje in očiščenje; v preteklosti je (prometno) povezovala; biološko brez vode ni življenja. Zanimivo srečanje vode s tematiko se zgodi (tudi) v eni izmed priporočilnih slikanic za branje otrokom z ločitveno stisko,[18] pustolovska zgodba se s svojim tematskim razponom zlahka naseli v uprizoritveni prostor vode. Voda pa: upočasnjuje gibanje, otežuje in onemogoča vodenje *lutke*, zmanjšuje vidljivost in se *monotono* giba (v valovih). Raziskava animacijskih nalog v procesu nedvoumno pove, da je mogoče (še to ne povsem nadzorovano) usmerjati samo majhne količine vode, objektov v vodi pa (brez dotikanja) ne. Uprizoritev je zato vključila dve metodi: igriv dialog med predmeti (jajcem, lončkom-bazenčkom, listjem ipd.) in majhnimi količinami vode (kapljicami, curki, lužami, kosi ledu ipd.) ter poln tank vode s (*počasno*) težo, maso in gostoto kot prostor, animator, animirani in motiv. Za poglobljeno do-

živetje obeh perspektiv, za celovit odziv na *razliko* pa se zdi nujno zavedanje prisotnosti (in odsotnosti) zraka, sploh ko se umika s prizorišča, ki se do vrha polni z vodo. S tem se *dviga* uprizoritveni prostor – kot bi v gledališču dvignili odrske prekate – in pod njim se odpre pogled v *brezzračno* globino. Plutje na površini dobi povsem drugačen značaj od prejšnje vesele pljuskajoče pustolovščine – postane neobvladljivo in nevarno, junak se zazdi nemočen in krhek.

Še en dogovor namreč stoji v izhodišču animacijske metode: animatorja do zadnjega prizora, v katerem kot čistilca priskočita na pomoč ob ekološki katastrofi v tanku, nikoli ne segata vanj. Pravila so izziv za razigran ustvarjalni proces; kot raziskovalna otroška igra se včasih sprehaja po robu in tudi v predstavi animatorja nista povsem prepričana, ali jima bo naloga uspela. Ko jajce potone, dejansko potone do dna; ko voda valovi, neustavljivo valovi; ko se voda umaže, se nepopravljivo umaže ipd. Ob spremljanju prepoznavne (umetniške) igre snovi je vseskozi močno prisoten občutek neponovljivosti trenutka, ki krepi avtentično doživetje kot proces prevajanja umetniškega sporočila v osebno izkušnjo gledalca, sili ga k samostojni refleksiji lastnega sveta, h kreaciji lastne zgodbe. To emancipirano dejanje pa odpre prostor za izkušnjo najbolj pristno človeškega, za izkušnjo presežnega, za človekovo svobodo.[19]

Pesek

Sipka (granularna, zrnasta) snov je sestavljena iz neštetih drobcenih koščkov kamninskega in mineralnega izvora. Bolj drobni so kot pri grobem gramozu ali produ in večji kot pri fini mivki (s katero se je tudi prijetno igrati). Ustvarjalno igro s peskom je leta 1837 vpeljal razvojni psiholog Friedrich Fröbel,[20] pionirski zagovornik igre kot ključnega orodja celovitega razvoja otroka (ne pa izraza otrokove nemarnosti in lenobe), ko je odprl prvi *kindergarten* v Blankenburgu, kjer je otroke vzgajal prek proste, spontane ustvarjalne igre. Fröbel je ob opazovanju otroške igre s kockami ugotovil, da se otroci inovativno povežejo z materialom, spomnil se je svojega osamljenega otroštva, ki ga je preživljal v naravi, in jim ponudil še pesek, glino, kroglice, vrv. Peskovnik kot ustvarjalno otroško igrišče spodbuja spoznavne in tudi čustvene razvojne procese. Predstava[21] pa

17 | Novak, Saša. *Znanost v Akvariju*. Znanost na cesti, marec 2017, https://znc.si/blog/znanost-v-akvariju/.
18 | Steig, William. *Amos & Boris*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971.
19 | Kroflič, Robi. *Emancipacija skozi umetniško doživetje in pomen hendikepa kot instance drug(ačn)osti*. Časopis za kritiko znanosti, let. 42, št. 255, 2014, str. 117–127.
20 | Friedrich-Fröbel-Museum, https://froebel-museum.de/pages/de/friedrich-froebel.php.
21 | *Peskovnik* napovednik, https://vimeo.com/526222381?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=29900398.
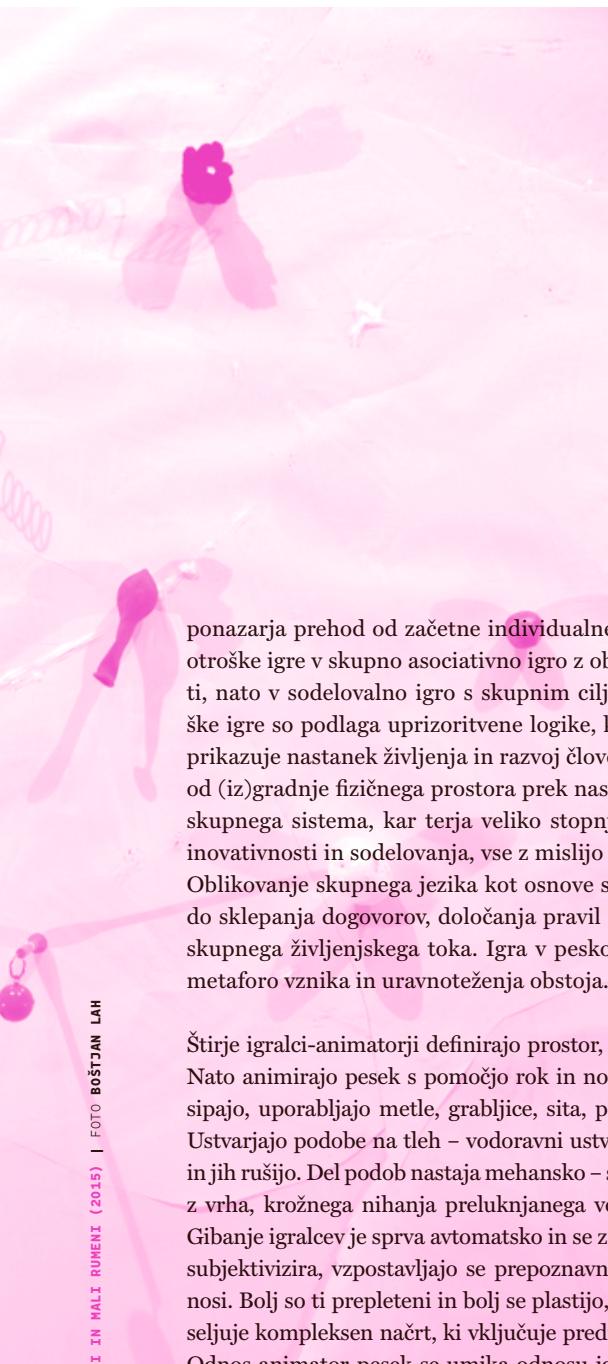
ponazarja prehod od začetne individualne prek vzporedne otroške igre v skupno asociativno igro z občasnimi konflikti, nato v sodelovalno igro s skupnim ciljem. Prvine otroške igre so podlaga uprizoritvene logike, ki na idejni ravni prikazuje nastanek življenja in razvoj človeške civilizacije – od (iz)gradnje fizičnega prostora prek naselitve in ureditve skupnega sistema, kar terja veliko stopnjo ustvarjalnosti, inovativnosti in sodelovanja, vse z mislijo na trajno sožitje. Oblikovanje skupnega jezika kot osnove sobivanja privede do sklepanja dogovorov, določanja pravil in vzpostavljanja skupnega življenjskega toka. Igra v peskovniku preraste v metaforo vznika in uravnoteženja obstoja.[22]

Štirje igralci-animatorji definirajo prostor, v njem gib(anje). Nato animirajo pesek s pomočjo rok in nog, pihajo vanj, ga sipajo, uporabljajo metle, grabljice, sita, posode, vedra ipd. Ustvarjajo podobe na tleh – vodoravni ustvarjalni površini – in jih rušijo. Del podob nastaja mehansko – s pomočjo sipanja z vrha, krožnega nihanja preluknjanega vedra in podobno. Gibanje igralcev je sprva avtomatsko in se z razvojem dejanja subjektivizira, vzpostavljajo se prepoznavni medsebojni odnosi. Bolj so ti prepleteni in bolj se plastijo, bolj v njih naseljuje kompleksen načrt, ki vključuje predmete (modelčke). Odnos animator-pesek se umika odnosu igralec-igralec, pesek (lutka) postaja sredstvo in cilj (peščeni grad). Njihova igra je neverbalna, uprizoritveno dejanje podpira glasba.

V *Peskovniku* je posebej pomembna svetloba: animira/preobraža peščene podobe, na primer iz praživali v pokrajino, iz pokrajine v ledeno dobo; sooblikuje razpoloženje v prizorih, na primer slepeča svetloba uniformiranosti, mrak niča, negotova noč idr. Poleg pritrjenih in premičnih reflektorjev so vključene ročne svetilke (lučke-lutke), sijoče nihalo, projektor. Intenzivnost in barva svetlobe se pomembno povezujeta s tèmo, ki je prav tako pomemben razpoloženjski dejavnik predstave. Občutek igrišča se udejanji na koncu – mladi gledalci so povabljeni v peskovnik.

Izmuzljivost snovi

Snovno gledališče je izmuzljivo – izmika se eni sami obliki, veže se s kontingenco. Ne moremo se znebiti občutka, da za vsakim delom stoji pomislek »kaj pa, če …«. Ta mahoma spomni na otroka, ki veselje do ustvarjanja povezuje z veseljem do rušenja – izhodiščem za novo možnost gradnje. Kopica možnosti na eni strani relativizira obstoječe, na drugi pa angažira stvariteljsko naravo človeka – v vlogi umetnika in tudi v vlogi gledalca. Snov kot možnost v predstavi (še posebej za mlade) ni le spodbuda in motivacija, temveč tudi medij ustvarjalnega dialoga, ki nenehno angažira gledalca kot aktivnega graditelja lastnega mentalnega sveta.[23]

22 | Spletni gledališki list, http://www.lgl.si/si/predstave/vse--predstave/904-Peskovnik#.YpOvgKhBwdV.

23 | Piaget, Jean. *The child's conception of the world*. Paladin, 1977.

LUTKOVNO GLEDALIŠČE MARIBOR, MIHA GOLOB **MALI MODRI IN MALI RUMENI (2015)** | FOTO **BOŠTJAN LAH**

POVZETEK

Snovno gledališče je sodobna lutkovna praksa, ki postavlja snov pred obliko in se veže s kontingenco. Prepuščanje materialu, da se *naravno* razraste v umetniško dejanje, spominja na otroško igro ustvarjanja in rušenja, globoko zapisano v mitih in pravljicah o stvarjenju, kjer snov nima ene same usode, temveč se pojavlja kot možnost, da postane katerakoli oblika. Izbira materiala vključuje njegove lastnosti, ki neusmiljeno narekujejo ritem, tempo in dinamiko uprizoritve. Animator je stvaritelj: oživlja neživo snov in sproti določa njene *oblike*. Je pa tudi raziskovalec: odkriti mora gibanje, lastno uporabljeni snovi. Ta ni zmeraj povsem pod nadzorom – dopušča *napako*, zato krepi občutek samostojnosti in naključnosti, ki angažira gledalca kot aktivnega graditelja lastnega mentalnega sveta.

O AVTORICI

Profesorica slovenščine in angleščine deluje na različnih področjih kulturno-umetnostne vzgoje v gledališču. Na Prvi gimnaziji Maribor je leta 1997 sooblikovala in do leta 2009 vodila sistem inovativnega učenja na področju gledališča, Gledališko šolo Prve gimnazije Maribor. Med letoma 2009 in 2016 je poslovno in umetniško vodila Lutkovno gledališče Maribor, od leta 2016 do 2021 pa zasnovala, programsko vodila in razvijala projekt *Prvi prizor: gledališče kot prostor učenja simbolnih jezikov* v Slovenskem narodnem gledališču Maribor. Med letoma 2018 in 2022 je delovala kot programska sodelavka in producentka Festivala Borštnikovo srečanje, kjer je oblikovala koncept in vsebino programskega sklopa in usposabljanja Mlado gledališče ter od leta 2019 do 2022 Borštnikov program socialne aktivacije. Organizira posvete, izvaja seminarje in druge dogodke na presečišču umetnosti in izobraževanja, je urednica (M. Forstnerič Hajnšek, *Planet Carmina*), avtorica člankov, lektorica, soavtorica in dramaturginja (*Akvarij, VOGP – glasba preživetja, Estera ali praznik usod, Baba, Klovna ne bo, Peskovnik*).

KLJUČNE BESEDE

sodobna lutkovna umetnost, snovno gledališče, možnost oblike, čustvena iluzija, ustvarjalno igrišče, otroška igra, aktivni gledalec

Literatura

Andres, Rok. *Živimo v trdem svetu – nekaj misli h komediji Iluzije*. Gledališki list Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega, let. 66, št. 11 (sezona 2015/2016), https://www.mgl.si/assets/Uploads/GL-Iluzije-Andres-Zivimo-v-trdem-svetu.pdf. │ **Blanga-Gubbay, Daniel**. »Kot oblak, ki ga oblikujejo svetovi.«, uredili Kraigher A., Rooss A. *Gledališče animiranih form.* Maska št. 179–180/Lutka št. 59, 2016. │ **Friedrich-Fröbel-Museum**, https://froebel-museum.de/pages/de/friedrich-froebel.php. │ **Haramija, D., Batič**, J. *Teorija slikanice.* Otrok in knjiga št. 89, 2014. │ **Kroflič, Robi.** *Emancipacija skozi umetniško doživetje in pomen hendikepa kot instance drug(ačn)osti.* Časopis za kritiko znanosti, let. 42, št. 255, 2014. │ **Lionni, Leo**. *mali modri in mali rumeni.* Miš založba, 2015. │ **Novak, Saša**. *Znanost v Akvariju.* Znanost na cesti, marec 2017, https://znc.si/blog/znanost-v-akvariju/. │ **Piaget, Jean.** *The child's conception of the world.* Paladin, 1977. │ **Rancière, Jacques.** *Emancipirani gledalec.* Maska, 2010. │ **Sitar Cvetko, Jelena.** *Iluzije po točkah.* Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva EU, marec 2022, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/iluzije-po-tockah/. │ **Steig, William**. *Amos & Boris.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971. │ **Trefalt, Uroš.** *Doživljajsko gledališče.* Poročilo selektorja 8. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije, 2015, http://ulu.si/8-bienale/. │ **Tretinjak, Igor.** *Miha Golob: »Za otroke je svet kot lunapark, ki ga opazujejo in nad katerim se navdušujejo brez preračunljivosti«.* Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva EU, oktober 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/miha-golob-za-otroke-je-svet-kot-lunapark-ki-ga-opazujejo-in-nad-katerim-se-navdusujejo-brez-preracunljivosti/. │ **Volpi, Elena.** *Loutkové divadlo jako cesta do dětské duše – Setkání umění a výchovy.* Doktorska naloga. Akademija lepih umetnosti v Pragi, Gledališka fakulteta, Alternativna in lutkovna tvorba in njena teorija, 2019.

GARETH K. VILE

VIZUALNO GLEDALIŠČE IN LUTKARSTVO

Uvod: Tiranija besednega gledališča

V anglofonski uprizoritveni umetnosti vse od časa Shakespeara prevladuje predpostavka, da je predloga za gledališče dramsko besedilo. Kljub temu da je bilo gledališče v nekem obdobju Cromwellove vladavine (med letoma 1642 in 1660) v Commonwealthu prepovedano, je britanska gledališka produkcija zgodovinsko usmerjena predvsem v omenjenega najpriljubljenejšega domačega dramatika, pri čemer je po njem poimenovano eno od nacionalnih gledališč v Angliji, dramsko besedilo pa so kot svoj temelj še v 90. letih 20. stoletja dojemala eksperimentalna ali avantgardna gibanja (v primeru tako imenovanih neobrutalistov, kot sta priznana dramatika Sarah Kane in Mark Ravenhill).

Tuji avtorji in ustvarjalci so sicer v 20. stoletju v Veliki Britaniji doživljali topel sprejem – predvsem Samuel Beckett in Bertolt Brecht v 50. letih –, vendar je bilo mogoče močno razširjene predsodke do gledališča celinske Evrope, ki je prepoznavalo pomen vizualne in fizične estetike na odru, zaznati še leta 1963, ko so Kennetha Tynana nagovorili k spremembi naziva njegovega delovnega mesta v novonastalem National Theatre v Londonu iz »dramaturga« v »literarnega menedžerja«. V tem literarno usmerjenem okolju so gledališke oblike, ki ne ustrezajo predvidljivemu modelu poudarjanja besed namesto dramaturgije, pogosto odrinjene na rob, potisnjene v kategorije, ki nakazujejo težavnost, provokativnost ali nezanimivost za širše občinstvo. Takega nezaupanja sta bila deležna lutkarstvo in tudi vizualno gledališče, pri čemer je bilo prvo pogosto omejeno na raven »družinske zabave«, kjer cveti, drugo pa se spopada s preohlapno opredelitvijo in nejasnostjo.

Pogled v nedavno preteklost

Po drugi svetovni vojni, ko je bil z namenom »združevanja umetnikov in gledalcev z vsega sveta« ustanovljen Edinburški festival, se je trend v Veliki Britaniji obrnil k bolj vključujočemu in raznolikemu sprejemanju uprizoritvenih žanrov. Domače britansko lutkarstvo je bilo pred tem

omejeno na obmorska zabavišča in dela za mlade – v slogu potujočih italijanskih skupin iz 18. stoletja –, a je dotok del iz celinske Evrope in Azije spodbudil britanske avtorje k privzemanju drugačnih produkcijskih strategij. V Londonu je gledališče Little Angel zagotavljalo stabilne razmere za lutkovno produkcijo ter goreče oznanjalo svoje poslanstvo s potujočimi programi, mednarodne skupine pa danes navdušujejo občinstvo in navdihujejo ustvarjalce kot stalen del gledališke krajine. Škotski festival vizualne umetnosti *Manipulate*, ki ga je leta 2008 ustanovila in ga programsko vodi organizacija Puppet Animation Scotland (PAS), je primer sodobno kuriranega programa, ki sopostavlja lokalne in mednarodne produkcije.

V 21. stoletju se je začelo lutkarstvo v skladu z vizijo festivala *Manipulate* čedalje močneje povezovati z vizualnim gledališčem: številne skupine, ki se ukvarjajo pretežno z lutkovnim gledališčem, same sebe označujejo za »vizualno gledališče« ter črpajo iz nabora panog, ki poudarjajo fizičnost, glasbeno opremo, klovnovstvo in usmerjenost v podobo, kot sredstev, ki napajajo pomen predstave. Poleg omenjenega festivala tudi edinburški festival *Fringe* beleži čedalje večje število gledaliških skupin, ki vsako leto avgusta v škotsko prestolnico pripeljejo predstave, navdihnjene z lutkovno umetnostjo.

Festival *Manipulate* in vizualno gledališče

Program festivala *Manipulate* 2022, ki ga je pripravila umetniška direktorica Dawn Taylor, potrjuje estetiko PAS in vizijo, ki preveva gledališče na Škotskem v 21. stoletju. Podobno kot skupine, ki se predstavljajo v umetniškem središču Tramway v Glasgowu – od leta 1990, ko je mesto nosilo naziv evropske prestolnice kulture, do zadnjih let z nedavno ustanovljenim festivalom Dance International Glasgow –, ima tudi *Manipulate* odločno mednarodno usmeritev. Dolgoročne vezi z evropskimi skupinami in umetniki, kot so Gisèle Vienne, Neville Tranter in Sabine Molenaar, so dale festivalu širino in eksperimentalni pridih, njihov vpliv pa je s samozavestnim prirejanjem različnih žanrov razkrila tudi

škotska produkcija, predstavljena v sekciji 'Snapshots' in na glavnem odru. O alternativni viziji gledališča, ki jo neguje PAS, ni pričala zgolj uvrstitev vizualnih uprizoritev v program: drzno sodobnost je enako kot formati predstav izkazovala tudi njihova vsebina z zavračanjem očitnega izolacionizma, ki je dajal pečat osrednjemu toku anglofonske dramaturgije v prejšnjem stoletju. Na festivalu se je v zadnjem desetletju predstavilo vsako leto več domačih umetnikov, kar priča o njegovem vplivu na sektor: njegov sedanji program je simbol tega, kako močno se je sektor razvil od začetka stoletja. Kot je dejala tudi Taylorjeva v intervjuju za škotski časnik *The National*: »Pred petnajstimi leti je bilo 80 odstotkov del mednarodnih, danes pa jih je med 60 in 80 odstotkov iz Škotske ali preostalih delov.«[1]

Kljub temu pa vsakoletne napovedi programa festivala po tradiciji spremljajo članki v množičnih medijih, ki sicer morda ne izražajo začudenja, vsekakor pa bolj tradicionalno razumevanje gledališča. »Lutkarstvo ni samo za otroke« je pogost naslov,[2] odnos med vizualnim gledališčem in lutkarstvom pa je redko predmet razprave. Dawn Taylor vidi pomen mednarodnih del v tem, da ponujajo odgovor na to ozkogledost. »V številnih evropskih državah je to ena najbolj razširjenih umetniških oblik,« je povedala za *The Courier*. »Tematike so običajno nekoliko ostrejše in številna dela se ubirajo bolj tvegano pot – so drzna.«[3] Na programu so poleg Tranterjevega lutkovnega gledališča, namizne animacije predmetov in izbora animiranih filmov dela, v katerih je poudarek na koreografiji, fizičnem gledališču in – v primeru skupine Paper Doll Militia – akrobatiki.

V nasprotju z drugim festivalom (*Puppet Animation Festival*), ki ga pripravlja PAS in je prvič potekal leta 1984 ter je izraziteje usmerjen v lutkarstvo in mlajše občinstvo, se *Manipulate* oglašuje kot festival vizualnega gledališča, kar je še vedno eklektična, široka kategorija, ki se izmika preprosti definiciji. A lutkarstvo kljub temu ostaja njegov osrednji del, dialog med lutkovnim gledališčem in drugimi žanri pa ponuja plodna tla tako za medžanrske uprizoritve kot za nenehno prevpraševanje dramaturgije v lutkarstvu samem.

Namen ustanovitve festivala *Manipulate*

Leta 2012 je tedanji umetniški direktor organizacije Puppet Animation Scotland Simon Hart pojasnil, da je *Manipulate* odgovor na status lutkarstva na Škotskem. »Festival je bil prvotno ustanovljen z namenom spodbujanja lutkarstva kot umetniške zvrsti – njegovih številnih slogov in tehnik – med odraslim občinstvom, ki ga zanima inovativno vizualno gledališče.« Ker je *Puppet Animation Festival* usmerjen v dela za mlade, je dejal Hart, »mislim, da so številni odrasli prikrajšani za resnično neobičajno in izstopajočo sodobno gledališko produkcijo«. Pri oblikovanju programa festivala *Manipulate* je poudarek še vedno na inovativnosti in premišljeni vsebini: številna dela v letošnji izdaji govorijo o kvirovski identiteti in seksualnosti, Dawn Taylor pa vztraja pri predstavljanju del, ki tematizirajo resna vprašanja. In inovativnost se delno nanaša na prevpraševanje meja forme in tehnike ter povezovanje lutkovnega gledališča z drugimi dramaturgijami in estetikami.

Oznako vizualno gledališče za opis svojega dela pogosto uporabljajo skupine, ki so jasno pozicionirane v polju lutkarstva. Med njimi so Smoking Apples, ki so z lutkovno predstavo *Celica* (Cell, 2014) doživeli uspeh na edinburškem *Fringeu*, *Flabbergast* in gledališče Témoin, ki se predstavljajo kot »fizično gledališče«, ali denimo škotski Vision Mechanics. Vse te skupine se ukvarjajo z animacijo predmetov ali lutk – Vision Mechanics denimo tu in tam uporabijo orjaško lutko, ki se prikaže iz morja –, vendar se identificirajo z estetiko, ki te okvire presega. Terminološka nejasnost pa utegne biti odbijajoča in morda lahko lutkarstvo samo pokaže pot do definicije.

Kaj je lutkarstvo?

Že staroegipčanski hieroglifi so nakazovali na »gibljive kipe«, ki si jih je Edward Gordon Craig v začetku 20. stoletja zamišljal kot obliko uprizoritvenih umetnikov, čistejšo od človeških igralcev, a lutkarstvo je v zahodno filozofijo odločneje vstopilo s Platonovo *Državo*: v prispodobi votline[4] s posnemanjem življenja gledalca preslepi prav senčna lutka. Čeprav je za Platona taka sposobnost zavajanja nekaj negativnega, pa lutko vendarle priznava kot običajen medij. Tudi grški satirik Lukijan je v drugem stoletju obsojal ročno lutko v podobi Glikona[5] zaradi animatorjevega pretvarjanja, da

1 | Spowart, Nan. *Manipulate Boss Heartbroken*. The National, januar 2022, https://www.thenational.scot/news/19867977.manipulate-boss-heartbroken-40-per-cent-programme-axed/.
2 | Knights, Emma. *Festival Coming*. Eastern Daily Press, december 2017, https://www.edp24.co.uk/things-to-do/norwich-puppet-the-atre-to-host-manipulate-visual-theatre-festival-1153408.
3 | McLaren, Jennifer. *Discover a Diverse World*. The Courier, januar 2021, https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/1930363/dawn-taylor-perth-puppetry-festival-manipulate/?plan_id=.

4 | Platon. *Država*. 375 pr. n. š., 514a–520a.
5 | Lucian. *Alexander the False Prophet*. Oxford University Press, 2021, 180 n. š.

v rokah drži boga. Čeprav je bilo v starem Rimu lutkarjem dovoljeno nastopati v znamenitem Dionizovem gledališču v Atenah, je morda k poznejši marginalizaciji lutkarstva v evropski uprizoritveni umetnosti prispeval prav platonski predsodek do te zvrsti. V srednjeveških javnih uprizoritvah bibličnih zgodb pod pokroviteljstvom cerkve so se pojavljale lutke velikega formata, a britansko lutkarstvo se je zares začelo razvijati šele v razsvetljenstvu, ko so v Londonu, predvsem pa Bathu prišle v modo italijanske ulične scenske konstrukcije v obliki kabine, po vzoru katerih se je razvila priljubljena obmorska oblika zabave s predstavami, v katerih sta nastopala lika Puncha in Judy.

A lutka, o kateri je pisal že Platon, je bila legitimen predmet evropske filozofske misli – Heinrich von Kleist v svojem delu »O marionetnem gledališču« iz leta 1810 razmišlja o vprašanjih svobodne volje, miline in instrumentalnosti ob opazovanju elegantne koreografije lutk – in je bila, ironično, edina oblika uprizoritvene umetnosti, ki v Cromwellovem Commonwealthu ni bila prepovedana. Toda to je šovinistična, evropocentrična različica zgodovine. Afriško in azijsko lutkarstvo imata bogato zgodovino, v kateri se je ljudsko in mitološko izročilo pogosto prenašalo iz generacije v generacijo, lutkovno gledališče bunraku, ki je trenutno v Veliki Britaniji zelo priljubljeno, pa se je rodilo v 16. stoletju na Japonskem. Lutkarstvo je po zaslugi svoje mednarodne, najverjetneje starodavne dediščine izjemno raznolik medij, ki združuje široko paleto oblik.

Mnoge definicije lutkarstva postavljajo v ospredje te različne konkretne oblike in njihov zgodovinski razvoj. Ročno senčno gledališče Drewa Colbyja in usnjene ploščice kitajskega senčnega gledališča, ogromne pompozne lutke škotske skupine Visual Mechanics[6] in ročne lutke skupine The Scottish Falsetto Sock Puppet Theatre, Punch in Judy ter predstava *Grivasti vojak* (War Horse, Handspring Puppet Company, r. Marianne Elliot in Tom Morris, 2007), z bunrakujem[7] in japonskim gledališčem navdahnjena dela skupine Rouge28 Theatre ter eksperimentalna animacija predmetov skupine Blind Summit – vse to se uvršča v isto kategorijo znotraj široke definicije, ki združuje neživ predmet na odru in živega uprizoritvenega umetnika. A ker ima vsaka oblika specifičen format, družbeni kontekst in estetiko, je taka definicija v najboljšem primeru neposredna, vendar omejena.

John Bell in bistvo lutkarstva

John Bell se želi v svojem prispevku *Death and Performing Objects*[8] dokopati do bolj materialne, a domiselne definicije s preučevanjem narave samih predmetov. Pri tem sklene, da je lutkarstvo v osnovi duhoven proces. Po njegovem je podobno kot klasična atenska tragedija utemeljeno na verski dejavnosti, njegovo vključevanje v obrede pa je bilo posledica konkretnih lastnosti uporabljenih materialov.

Kot pojasnjuje Bell, lutkovna predstava pozna temeljno delitev na živo (lutkarja) in negibno (predmet). Lutkar z animiranjem negibnega predmeta pogleduje v Smrt. Bell ob sklicevanju na von Kleista in članek Edwarda Gordona Craiga »Igralec in nadmarioneta« iz leta 1906 začrta ločnico med animacijo predmeta in gledališčem, ki vključuje samo žive igralce, s poudarkom, da lahko predmet nadomesti navzočnost človeka, pri čemer citira Craigovo posmehljivo ugotovitev, da je »človeško telo kot snov umetnosti po naravi povsem neuporabno«. Na podlagi McLuhanovega izreka, da je medij sporočilo, Bell usmeri pozornost v funkcijo lutkarstva s tematiziranjem konkretnega uporabljenega materiala.

Temu sublimnemu pogledu na lutkarstvo navkljub pa se Bell zavzema za lutkarstvo kot naturalistični, ne fantastični medij: »plemeniti rekvizit« lahko skupaj z igralcem ponudi celovitejšo reprezentacijo realnosti, v kateri je temeljno vprašanje življenja nasproti smrti vsebovano v samem tkivu uprizoritve. Platon je v svoji filozofiji kot primer uporabil senčno lutko, Bell pa se ukvarja z estetsko filozofijo, vsebovano v materialih uprizoritve.

Bell se posveti razliki med igralskim gledališčem, ki »lahko govori o smrti in pokaže smrt s pretvarjanjem živih teles, da so mrtva«, in gledališčem predmetov: »Lutkarji, zamaskirani igralci, animatorji predmetov, politični protestniki, upravljavci strojev, oblikovalci spletnih strani, filmski režiserji, ustvarjalci multimedijskih vsebin in oglaševalske agencije pri svojem delu nenehno vzpostavljajo in spreminjajo odnose med živimi ljudmi in neživo materijo: lesom, kamnom, kovino, plastiko, usnjem, kostjo. To na podzavestni ali simbolni ravni pomeni stalno obračunavanje s smrtjo.«

Bellova definicija odpira vznemirljive razmisleke: se v gostobesedni, kosmati satiri namiznega vodvila Borisa in Sergeya[9] ter prismuknjenih parodijah skupine Falsetto Sock

6 | Christie, Craig. *STORM comes to Burghead as Findhorn Bay Arts group introduce a 10-metre tall sea goddess to hundreds who turn out in the rain for the spectacle.* Forres Gazette, september 2021, https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/watch-ten--metre-tall-sea-goddess-storm-thrills-hundreds-in-250829/.
7 | Jauregui, Helen. *Kwaidan.* Animations Online, september 2015, https://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations-online/reviews/kwaidan-rogue28-theatre.

8 | Bell, John. *Death and Performing Objects.* P-Form, 1996, str. 16–20.
9 | Vile, Gareth. *Boris and Sergey's One Man Dramaturgy.* The Vile Blog, junij 2017, https://vilearts.blogspot.com/2017/06/boris-and--sergeys-one-man-dramaturgy.html.

Puppet Theatre skriva ironičen komentar k samozaverovanosti življenja? Ali balijsko senčno gledališče ubeseduje mitičen pogled, ki prepoznava neizbežno prepletanje življenja in smrti? Ko Neville Tranter predstavi svojo lutko v podobi Hitlerja, ali uprizarja nekakšno seanso? Ali *The Muppet Show* ponuja soočenje z umrljivostjo, kakršnega ni mogoče najti v *Hamletu*, *Oresteji* in *Čakajoč Godota*, razen če tudi te uprizorimo z lutkami?

Bell s to elementarno idejo lutkarstva jasno odpre lutkarstvo sodobnim uprizoritvenim oblikam. Pojem »upravljavcev strojev« obsega tudi računalniške programerje in animatorje, ki v domeno lutkarstva vključujejo film – tak primer je skupina Paper Cinema. V resnici je mogoče vso tehnologijo razumeti kot obliko animiranja predmetov. In če se omemba oglaševalskih agencij zdi naključna, velja dodati, da so v najuspešnejši marketinški kampanji zadnjega desetletja v Veliki Britaniji nastopale lutke surikat, ki so potrošnike vabile k primerjanju cen na trgu. Bellova definicija se ne zamejuje s formo ali estetiko, temveč z osnovno usmeritvijo k nekemu specifičnemu diskurzu.

Manipulate že vse od svojega nastanka v program vključuje tudi animacijo in Bell ponudi razlog za to zavezništvo: v resnici tudi zamaskirani igralci postanejo lutke, kar je argument v prid prepoznanju klovnovstva kot ene od oblik širšega spektra lutkarstva. Povezava med klovnovstvom, pantomimo in koreografijo, ki jo je v svojih uprizoritvah ustvarilo škotsko fizično gledališče LARDS – nekakšna superskupina, ki črpa iz različnih tradicij –, je znotraj Bellove definicije smiselna, saj njihove različne tehnike postanejo oblika tehnologije. Denis Diderot v svojem delu *Paradoks o igralcu*, v katerem razmišlja o igralski umetnosti, dejansko upodobi igralca kot lutkarja, ki svoje telo animira kot lutko. Animacija predmetov tako v zgodovini uprizoritvene umetnosti dobi pomembno mesto in ni nekaj primitivnega ali otročjega, temveč nekaj, kar vabi k dialogu s samo naravo bivajočega.

Vizualno gledališče

Vizualno gledališče je v najpreprostejšem smislu vsaka uprizoritev, ki ni niti radijska igra niti ena tistih oblik predstav, ki postavijo gledalca v temo in zgodbo pogosto pripovedujejo skozi slušalke (kot to velja za chicaški A Theatre in the Dark ali *Seanso* (Séance) skupine Darkfield iz leta 2017). V praksi gre za kontrapunkt anglofonski obremenjenosti z dramskim besedilom in besedami: to je gledališče, ki za svoj poglavitni nosilec komunikacije uporablja podobo. Na festivalu *Manipulate* 2022 je bilo zastopano s

plakati (serija *Favna* / Fauna skupine Adrien M & Claire B in kolektiva Brest Brest Brest), kurirano večerjo (v izvedbi skupin LARDS in Plutôt la Vie) ter eklektično kombinacijo drag performansa, gledališča noh, satire in plesa (*Kratko in sladko* / Short and Sweet, r. Daniel Hay-Gordon in Eleanor Perry, 2022). V preteklih izdajah je skupina Vox Motus v predstavi *Spolzko* (Slick, r. Jamie Harrison in Candice Edmunds, 2008) združila človeške glave s telesi lutk, da se je njihov dinamični humor zrcalil v okrnjeni telesni podobi. V predstavi *Izrezano iz papirja* (Paper Cut, 2010) se je Yael Rasooly obkrožila z odrezki iz revij, ki so napajali bujne fantazije njenega lika. Skupina Cloud Eye Control je leta 2013 ponudila trojni spored, v katerem se z uporabo projekcij in programske opreme ukvarja s sodobnimi stičnimi točkami med človekom in tehnologijo, kar neposredno potrjuje Bellovo idejo lutkarstva kot tehnologije.

Lutkarstvo kot vizualno gledališče

Vizualno branje lutkarstva je pričakovano preprosta naloga. Skupina Blind Summit v predstavi *Animator* (The Puppeteer, nekoč imenovani Henry – A Puppet Possessed, 2018) z vrečkami za smeti prepričljivo pokaže sugestivnost neživega materiala in z neposrednimi, preprostimi podobami uprizori umetnikove disfunkcionalne odnose. Ista skupina je v predstavi *Miza* (The Table, 2013) skoraj samo z lutko Mojzesa z minimalistično vizualno strukturo upodobila zmedenost lika – in njegovo hudomušno soočenje s spoznanjem o eksistencialni osami.

Neville Tranter je v predstavi *Schicklgruber* (Stuffed Puppet Theatre), ki je bila na sporedu festivala leta 2013, predstavil Adolfa Hitlerja kot lutko. In še lutka se je tej vlogi upirala: Tranter v dokaj očarljivem uvodu poskuša pomiriti njene dvome. Od začetka do konca uprizoritve je lik definiran z videzom lutke. Tranterjev Hitler v ostrem nasprotju s številnimi upodobitvami diktatorja ni zastrašujoč ali navdihujoč, še razumljivega zaključnega govora ni sposoben izpeljati in se zanaša na Goebbelsa in Evo Braun, da mu dvigujeta samozavest. Tranter po omahujočem začetku zastavi prepričljiv ton. Lutkovna podoba znanih nacistov omehča njihovo običajno strahotno brutalnost: Tranter ne čuti potrebe po dramatiziranju nacistične nehumanosti, temveč izpove melanholično zgodbo o poraženi ideologiji. Predstava nikakor ne poskuša upravičevati Hitlerjevega ravnanja, temveč ga predstavlja kot prezira vreden fiasko. Bellova teorija, da se igralec in lutka združita v neizbežno meditacijo o smrti, se konkretizira s prihodom igrive matilde. Čeprav je Tranterjeva dramska predloga inteligentna in pronicljiva serija

epizod, ki razkrivajo korenine nacizma v človeških slabostih, pa globino njegove kritike najbolj neposredno izraža potrta lutka. Sključeno telo, ki kaže občinstvu hrbet, upodablja šibkost, ki jo nihanja razpoloženja in izbruhi jeze le še poudarijo. Človek igralec je tako – kar bi razveselilo tudi Craiga – manj ekspresiven od nežive materije.

Vizualno gledališče kot lutkarstvo

Ločnica med vizualnim gledališčem in lutkarstvom je v 21. stoletju postala zabrisana, lutkarstvo pa čedalje pogosteje ponuja kritičen pogled na uprizoritveno umetnost, ki si zastavlja resna vprašanja o vlogi in navzočnosti človeškega telesa na odru. Če odmislimo obremenjenost z besedami ali dramskim besedilom, Bell in von Kleist v svojih teorijah poudarjata odnos med uprizoritvenim umetnikom ter scenografijo, rekviziti, kostumi in gibom: potencialni vokabular za obravnavo fizičnih vidikov gledališča je mogoče vtkati v širšo analizo uprizoritvene umetnosti, kakšno prinaša delo *Performance Theory* iz 90. let 20. stoletja. V njem Richard Schechner pokaže, da bo gledališke študije nadomestilo navezovanje dramaturške teorije na šport, verske obrede, politične proteste in večino človekovih dejavnosti.

Ni presenetljivo, da je lutkarstvo najdosledneje povezano s plesom. Če vzamemo vzorec iz sveta baleta – ta praviloma vsebuje koreografijo (koreografa?), ki opravlja delo na telesu skupine plesalcev –, se med koreografom in lutkarjem pokaže jasna in neposredna analogija. Za von Kleista je lutkar v resnici koreograf, ki se mu ne oporeka neskladje med idejo giba in njegovo izvedbo. Skupina Les Ballets C. de la B. je predstavila delo *VSPRS* (r. Alain Platel, 2007) z zborom plesalcev, ki izhajajo iz različnih tradicij. S tem je želela obenem izkoristiti različne gibalne vokabularje in razkriti neobičajnost normativnega urjenja v teh umetniških oblikah: obema, balerini in telovadcu, je pripisana nova vloga lutke. *VSPRS* med drugim govori o vplivu glasbe na telo, pri čemer divja ciganska skupina predeluje Monteverdija. Plesalci zapadejo v neizprosno psihedelično ponavljanje, katerega geste so navdihnjene s plesnimi tradicijami in tudi s tiki, ki so posledica stresa in tesnobe, dokler njihovi odzivi ne postanejo tako precizni, kot bi šlo za lutke na vrvicah.

Serija *Luvos*[10] skupine Editta Braun Company (Planet Luvos, 2014) in *Od blizu* (Close Up, 2016) se nedvoumno umešča znotraj znane definicije plesa: človeška telesa, ki se ob spremljavi glasbe premikajo v prostoru. Toda koreografija Editte Braun zmaliči plesalke v na videz nemogoče oblike, da se njihove človeške lastnosti zakrijejo in se iz človeškega mesa ustvarijo nezemeljska bitja. V nasprotju z lutko, ki se kaže v človeški obliki, le brez človeške delovalnosti, se plesalke tukaj deformirajo v pojave brez glave in udov ali grozljive, nelagodno čudovite oblike, katerih dlani so povezane neposredno s trupom. Nenavadnost teh teles s tematiziranjem drugosti namiguje na neke druge evolucijske procese, ki črpajo iz opisov Nezemljanov v znanstveni fantastiki. Njihov gib obuja v življenje drugačne zavesti, drugačne odzive na težnost, s čimer vsebuje enako kombinacijo poznanega in potujevanja kot lutka.

Sklep

Termin »vizualno gledališče« se pogosto uporablja za trženje uprizoritvene umetnosti, saj namiguje na nekaj eksotičnega ter se odmika od anglofonske obsedenosti z dramskim besedilom in Shakespearom. Čeprav lahko zveni ohlapno in obsega na videz nasprotujoče si žanre, pa vizualno gledališče širi definicijo tega, kar lutkarstvo potencialno je, ponuja nove oblike kritike in obravnave estetike ter temelji na filozofskem razumevanju lutkarstva, ki sega vse do Platonove *Države*. Gre za več kot zgolj klasifikacijo nabora slogov, kot so fizično gledališče, ples in lutkovno gledališče. Vizualno gledališče spodbuja razumevanje uprizoritvene umetnosti z novega zornega kota ter celo odpira vprašanja o odnosu človeškega do nečloveškega, zavesti in smrti.

Pri britanskem gledališču to pomeni tudi odpiranje bolj mednarodnim tokovom uprizoritvene umetnosti – ker je domača lutkovna tradicija omejena, so mnoge najvznemirljivejše produkcije vizualnega gledališča prišle iz celinske Evrope oziroma pri predstavi *Grivasti vojak* skupine Handspring Puppet Company iz Južne Afrike. A to zavračanje ozkogledega triumfalizma, utemeljenega na prepričanju o Shakespearovi superiornosti, je sprožilo mrzlično, domiselno vključevanje umetniških oblik in s tem ponudilo priložnost za odkrivanje novih načinov uprizarjanja. Lutkarstvo je daleč od marginaliziranosti; umešča se v bleščečo konstelacijo žanrov, pri čemer osvetljuje eksperimentalne forme in se obenem napaja z njihovo nikoli mirujočo domišljijo.

---

10 | Latimer, Andrew. *Luvos review 2012*. The Wee Review, marec 2012, https://theweereview.com/review/luvos/.

VISION MECHANICS **STORM (2021)** | FOTO **NEIL HANNA**

POVZETEK

Britansko gledališče tradicionalno daje prednost dramskemu besedilu kot bistvu gledališke produkcije, a je v zadnjih letih dotok mednarodnih uprizoritev spodbudil bolj eklektično razumevanje tega temelja. V škotski uprizoritveni umetnosti se je pojavilo zanimanje za lutkarstvo, ki se pogosto povezuje z vizualnim gledališčem – ohlapno kategorijo, ki kliče po definiciji. V prispevku z navezavo na široko definicijo lutkarstva, ki jo je predstavil John Bell, iščemo odgovor na vprašanje, ali vizualno gledališče definira prav lutkarstvo – v nasprotju z bolj običajnim pristopom, ki podreja lutkarstvo širšemu žanru. Pri tem pokažemo, da lutkarstvo lahko napaja diskurz o naravi telesa v uprizoritveni umetnosti, s čimer krepi kritično razpravo.

O AVTORJU

Gareth K. Vile je kot urednik za gledališče pri publikacijah *The Skinny* in *The List* ter neodvisni kritik za *The Vile Blog, Tempo House* in *Hit The North* že več kot desetletje eno vodilnih imen škotske gledališke kritike. Na Univerzi v Glasgowu pripravlja doktorat na temo dramaturgije in stripovskih superjunakov ter na šoli Loretto School vodi katedro za klasično filologijo. Je tudi škotski urednik Kritiške platforme sodobnega lutkarstva EU. Kot inovator, ki nikoli ne počiva, se prvenstveno ukvarja z javnim dojemanjem uprizoritvene umetnosti in kritike, pri čemer združuje akademska zanimanja z zavezanostjo dostopnosti. Ker prepoznava premik v diskurzu, ki ga je povzročil svetovni splet, se rad poigrava s formo, pogosto pa se v sodelovanju z organizacijami, kot so National Theatre of Scotland, Puppet Animation Scotland in Youth Theatre Arts Scotland, zavzema za še neuveljavljene kritike in razvija priložnosti zanje. Akademska izobrazba iz klasične filologije, gledaliških študij in sekvenčne umetnosti ga umešča na edinstveno stičišče tradicionalnega in sodobnega: njegova kritiška praksa dokazuje potencial za navezovanje tega znanja na razpravo o namenu uprizoritvene umetnosti.
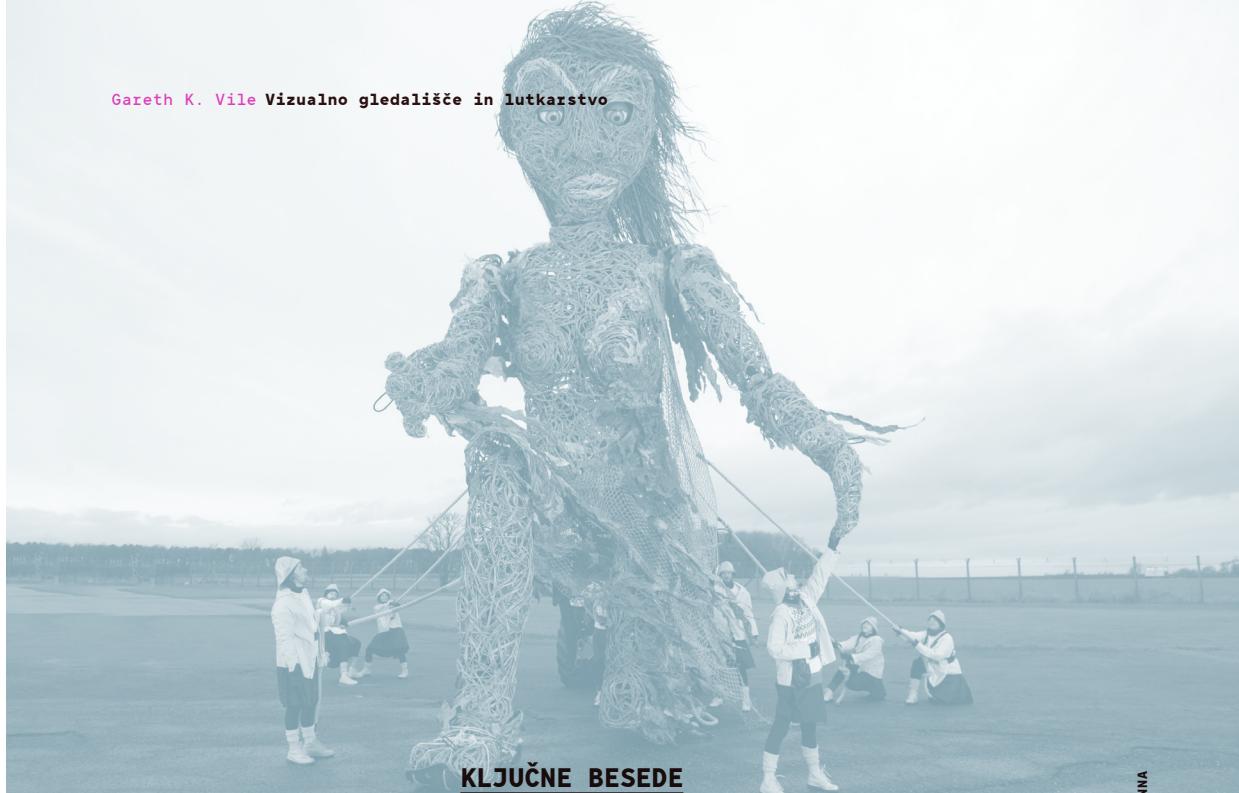
KLJUČNE BESEDE

Literatura

Bell, John. *Death and Performing Objects.* P-Form, 1996. | **Christie, Craig.** *STORM comes to Burghead as Findhorn Bay Arts group introduce a 10-metre tall sea goddess to hundreds who turn out in the rain for the spectacle.* Forres Gazette, september 2021, https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/watch-ten-metre-tall-sea-goddess-storm--thrills-hundreds-in-250829/. | **Craig, Edward Gordon.** *On The Art of Theatre.* Taylor and Francis, 2007. | **Jauregui, Helen.** *Kwaidan.* Animations Online, september 2015, https://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations-online/reviews/kwaidan-rogue28-theatre. | **Knights, Emma.** *Festival Coming.* Eastern Daily Press, december 2017, https://www.edp24.co.uk/things-to-do/norwich-puppet-theatre--to-host-manipulate-visual-theatre-festival-1153408. | **Lucian.** *Alexander or The False Prophet.* Oxford University Press, 2021. | **Latimer, Andrew.** *Luvos review 2012.* The Wee Review, marec 2012, https://theweereview.com/review/luvos/. | **McLaren, Jennifer.** *Discover a Diverse World.* The Courier, januar 2021, https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/1930363/dawn-taylor-perth-puppetry--festival-manipulate-/?plan_id=. | **Plato.** *Republic.* Penguin, 2007. | **Spowart, Nan.** *Manipulate Boss Heartbroken.* The National, januar 2022, https://www.thenational.scot/news/19867977.manipulate-boss-heartbroken-40-per--cent-programme-axed/. | **Vile, Gareth.** *Boris and Sergey's One Man Dramaturgy.* The Vile Blog, junij 2017, https://vilearts.blogspot.com/2017/06/boris-and-sergeys-one--man-dramaturgy.html.

LORNA IRVINE

Na niti: lutkarstvo in fizično gledališče

Vse od osemdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja fizično gledališče v Združenem kraljestvu vzbuja vedno več zanimanja pri gledaliških ustvarjalcih, pa tudi pri občinstvu. Pod vplivom predstav iz srednje in vzhodne Evrope so si gledališke skupine DV8, Frantic Assembly in Complicité prizadevale za združevanje koreografije in uprizoritev, ki temeljijo na besedilih, prihod novih ustvarjalcev, ki so se usposabljali na šoli L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, pa je spodbudil pojav neodvisnih monopredstav in vključevanje pantomime v britanske produkcije, ki so del mainstream kulture. Festivali, ki se prirejajo na Škotskem, kot so *Dance International Glasgow*, nekdanja in nepozabna dogodka *New Moves* in *National Review of Live Art* ter festival *Manipulate*, vključujejo v svoje širše kuratorske programe dela s področja fizičnega gledališča, s čimer so upoštevana gibanja v celinski Evropi. Pionirsko kuratorsko delo Richarda Demarca na Edinburškem festivalu in festivalu *Fringe*, v zadnjem času pa tudi prispevek berlinske agencije Aurora Nova, sta morda razlog, da je evropsko fizično gledališče postalo prepoznaven element prireditev, ki jih Škotska gosti v avgustu: poljske gledališke skupine, kot je Pieśń Kozła, se s festivala *Fringe* pogosto vračajo domov s številnimi nagradami in pohvalami kritikov. Fizično gledališče ruši meje med plesom, performansom, muzikalom, pantomimo, klovnovstvom in lutkarstvom, vendar je hkrati vključujoča in celovita kategorija, v katero se uvrščajo nekatere najbolj vznemirljive in provokativne predstave 21. stoletja.

Kaj je fizično gledališče?

Opredelitev fizičnega gledališča je lahko izziv: izhaja izključno iz zunanjega, saj pri svoji pripovedni ali tematski usmeritvi črpa iz telesa in giba ali koreografije telesa. Uprizoritev, ki temelji na gibu, lahko med drugim vključuje pantomimo, ples in klovnovstvo. Fizično gledališče spominja na performans, bolj anarhično obliko gledališča, ki se je pojavila v šestdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja in poudarja prestopanje meja med žanri ter se upira pričakovanim uprizoritvenim formalnostim in normam.

Divje, živalsko zvijanje telesa, graciozen izteg roke ali noge in nenaden rahel premik zapestja lahko del pripovedi pogosto upodobijo na bolj živ način kot replika ali veličastna scenografija. Če so kretnje zgovorne in mehke, se bo občinstvo odzvalo na izražena vizualna sporočila in znamenja. Ta lahko prevzamejo komaj zaznavne ali pa skrajne oblike: groteskno, smešno, spolno obarvano, srhljivo, absurdno ali romantično, kar razkriva mojstrstvo teatralnosti in spretnost nastopajočih.

Nekateri umetniki, ki se posvečajo fizičnemu gledališču, kot so člani skupin Red Bastard in Clout Theatre, se izpopolnjujejo iz bufonerije, da bi lahko svoje telo učinkovito »podrugačili«. V ta namen nastopajo v maskah in uporabljajo proteze, vendar se vedno dobro zavedajo prostora med nastopajočimi in občinstvom. Ta izredno zapletena in specializirana uprizoritvena oblika temelji na znani evropski tehniki Jacquesa Lecoqa. Kot navaja Lecoq: »Z masko se igralec v bistvu odpre prostoru okrog sebe. Igralec je tako v položaju, za katerega so značilni odkrivanje, odprtost, svobodno sprejemanje ... Nadenete si nevtralno masko, tako kot bi se vživeli v vlogo lika, le da v tem primeru ni lika, zgolj nevtralno generično bitje.«[1]

Morda se zato fizično gledališče pogosto dojema kot ločeno od »tradicionalnega« – navadno je ohlapnejše zasnovano ali pa je v njegovi strukturi večji poudarek na improvizaciji kot pri gledališču, ki se opira na scenarij. Podobno kot zabaviščna ogledala na sejmišču izkrivljajo in izpostavljajo različne dele telesa, tako tudi nastopajoči v fizičnem gledališču skušajo ustvariti intenzivnejšo izkušnjo gledališča s tem, da svoje telo dobesedno uporabljajo kot okvir za dogajanje na odru, poleg tega pa tudi podkrepijo teme, koncepte ali univerzalne resnice, ki jih prinaša predstava.

---

1 | Gordan, Robert. *The Purpose of Playing.* University of Michigan, 2006, str. 38.

GILLIAN GARRITY, RAMESH MEYYAPPAN **METULJ (BUTTERFLY, 2014)** | FOTO **XXX**

Kaj je lutkarstvo?

Ko se omenja lutkarstvo, marsikdo predpostavlja, da se med glavne vrste lutk uvrščajo upodobitve človeških figur, ki visijo na nitih, so izrezljane iz lesa in se upravljajo ročno, ali pa so to ročne lutke, kot na primer Punch in Judy, ki sta dobro znana zanimivost britanskih plaž. Seveda pa korenine lutkarstva segajo veliko dlje. Lutke, ki so v Aziji in srednji Evropi vseprisotne, so se pri pripovedovanju uporabljale že v 5. stoletju pr. n. št. Indijanci so lutke uporabljali v čarovnih obredih, Afričani pa so za podobne namene bolj kot lutke uporabljali maske. Tradicije, povezane z zahodno lutkovno sceno, povedo le polovico zgodbe. Lutke so lahko abstraktne, ali pa imajo človeško ali živalsko obliko in se običajno upravljajo ročno.

Japonsko gledališče bunraku, ki se je prvič pojavilo pred več kot štiristo leti, združuje pripovedovanje, lutkarstvo in glasbo. Razvijalo se je od svojega razcveta v obdobju Edo med letoma 1603 in 1868, leta 2008 pa ga je Unesco razglasil za nesnovno kulturno dediščino človeštva. Danes ni več tako priljubljeno kot v preteklosti in velja pretežno za del zgodovine.[2] Kitajsko lutkarstvo, ki naj bi nastalo v času dinastije Han pred dva tisoč leti, se je počasi razvilo v priljubljeno obliko ljudske umetnosti. Občinstvo v Združenem kraljestvu ga je spoznalo v dvajsetih letih prejšnjega stoletja, vendar pa je zaradi vzpona novih tehnologij in urbanizacije ravno tako postalo manj razširjeno.[3]

Razvoj lutkovne umetnosti in njenih neštetih oblik doživlja hitre spremembe; to, kar je v preteklosti veljalo za gledališko obliko, namenjeno predvsem otrokom, je prestopilo na področje bolj izbranih žanrov, kar lahko vidimo zlasti na festivalih, kot sta *Mednarodni lutkovni festival v Chicagu* in *Manipulate* v Edinburgu. Lutkovne predstave »za odrasle«, v katerih so obravnavane tabu teme, kot so rasizem, politika in seksizem – primer je vrhunski muzikal *Avenija Q* (Avenue Q, Robyn Goodman in Jeffrey Seller, r. Jason Moore, 2003) –, so razprodane tudi v največjih gledališčih po vsem svetu. V zadnjih sedmih letih se je povečalo število t. i. nočnih lutkovnih tekmovanj, ki so poznana ameriškemu občinstvu in na katerih prihaja do izmenjave poetik, ki vodijo v ustvarjanje idiosinkratičnih lutkovnih predstav za odrasle.[4]

Igralci, kot je ventrilokvistka Nina Conti, v gledališko obliko vnašajo predrznost in nič manj prostaško obarvan jezik, pri čemer lutka Monk v vlogi posrednika pripoveduje resnice, ki si jih igralka ne upa izreči. Lutkovne skupine, kot sta Paper Cinema in Manual Cinema, s svojimi domiselnimi in čudovitimi živimi predstavami približujejo senčne lutke množicam; člani skupine Bunk Puppets iz Melbourna ustvarjajo čarovnije iz zavrženih predmetov, saj za izdelavo svojih lutk reciklirajo odpadke; skupine, kot so Blind Summit, Familie Flöz in Vélo Théâtre, pa s svojimi čustveno nabitimi, pripovedno usmerjenimi predstavami premikajo meje lutkarstva. V Združenem kraljestvu je predstava *Grivasti vojak* lutkovne skupine Handspring Puppet Company (r. Marianne Elliot and Tom Morris, 2007) lutkarstvo približala novi generaciji občinstva. Produkcija je do družin prijazna, hkrati pa vključuje resen razmislek o vojni in prijateljstvu med različnimi vrstami.

Lutkarstvo v fizičnem gledališču

Veliko skupin, ki delujejo na področju fizičnega gledališča, uporablja lutkarstvo kot del svoje širše koreografije. Lutke pogosto nadomestijo igralce, kadar bi bilo neprimerno, da nastopijo otroci, ali preprosto za poudarjanje nekaterih konceptov v predstavi.

Emma Rice v nedavni filmski adaptaciji romana Angele Carter z naslovom *Modri otroci* (Wise Children, Old Vic in Wise Children, 2019) – ime, ki ga nosi tudi njena najnovejša gledališka skupina – uporabi dve majhni lutki, ki v prizorih, v katerih so upodobljeni dogodki iz preteklosti, predstavljata mladostno igrivost in nedolžnost dvojčic Nore in Dore Chance. To je še bolj poudarilo nasprotje z uničujočo izprijenostjo v času, ko dekleti odraščata in sta izpostavljeni sprevrženi strani zabavne industrije.

V seriji iger *Igre o Jamesu* (The James Plays, Škotsko narodno gledališče, 2016), ki jo je pisateljica Rona Munro zasnovala kot trilogijo, nastopa lutka, ki predstavlja mladega kralja Jamesa. Tokrat je glavna tema dela to, kako globoko je kralj padel z leti, lutka pa predstavlja mladostno norost, a tudi ranljivost. To je delovalo nekoliko neustrezno v širšem kontekstu igre, ki je nakazovala željo po umestitvi Shakespearovih zgodovinskih dram v škotsko okolje, vendar se zdi, da se drugi kritiki ne strinjajo z mojimi pomisleki.[5]

2 | Jōji, Harano. *The Rich History and Uncertain Future of Bunraku Puppet Theater*. Nippon.com, november 2014, https://www.nippon.com/en/column/g00219/.
3 | Katsura Rollins, Annie. *Chinese Shadow Puppetry*. April 2013, https://www.chineseshadowpuppetry.com/current-events.
4 | Tietse-Mietz, Sarah. *'You Can Be Anything': Myra Su's Puppet Worlds*. American Theatre Journal, julij 2020, https://www.americantheatre.org/2020/07/21/you-can-be-anything-myra-sus-puppet-worlds/.

5 | Clapp, Susannah. *The James Plays review – Rona Munro's timely game of thrones*. The Observer, avgust 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/aug/17/james-plays-edinburgh-sofie-grabol-observer-review.

Po drugi strani skupina Familie Flöz popolnoma briše meje med igralci in lutkami tako, da ti igrajo v kostumih in maskah, ki jim popolnoma zakrivajo obraz, zaradi česar se učinkovito preobrazijo v nekakšno človeško lutko. Vseobsegajoči občutek je bil hkrati nekoliko nezemeljski, a nenavadno ganljiv. Njihovi brezizrazni obrazi pa so prav nasprotno prispevali k večji izrazni moči likov, saj je igra s preprosto kretnjo, kot sta nagib glave ali dvig roke, povedala več, kot bi lahko sporočalo besedilo scenarija. Občinstvo se je igralcem pridružilo v njihovih bogatih notranjih svetovih ter občutilo njihovo bolečino in veselje. Predstava *Gledališče Delusio* (Teatro Delusio, Familia Floz in Theaterhaus, r. Michael Vogel, 2004) je bila zasnovana kot bizaren balet v zakulisju, v katerem so lahko celo tehniki baletne skupine našli svoj prostor pod žarometi. Ideal nevtralne maske, o katerem piše Jacques Lecoq, se je tukaj zdel primeren, saj je omejena igralska zasedba igrala več likov in za vsakega ustvarila čustven pripovedni lok.

Druge gledališke skupine, ki se posvečajo fizičnemu gledališču, namigujejo na lutkovne trope in tehnike, ne da bi lutke neposredno uporabljale. Mojstrski monolog Silvie Gallerano *Sranje* (La Merda, Fride Kahlo productions in Richard Jordan productions, 2012) je vaja v fizičnem gledališču, ki razvname čustva. V njej lik, igralka, ki sedi gola, pogreznjena v ogromen stol (kar je morda metafora za infantilizacijo žensk v današnji Italiji), javka, se kuja in kriči skozi celoten monolog – a izkaže se, da ima za to dober razlog. Sprva se njen lik zdi teatraličen, k čemur prispevajo tudi njene divje izbuljene oči in široko nanesena šminka, vendar zaradi postopnega nizanja informacij, ki so podane v nadaljevanju govora, postajamo liku vse bolj naklonjeni; je lutka sistema, ki so jo večji del življenja izrabljali strupeni moški, z njo manipulirali in jo zlorabljali. Že veliko pred primerom Weinstein je ta »lutka« na stolu postala močan simbol odpora – simbol patriarhalnega nasilja, preživela žrtev in stol kot stol terapevta.

Predstava *Pojedina* (Feast, 2019) skupine Clout Theatre je bila briljantna študija o tem, kako daleč lahko gredo klovni bufoni v smislu fizičnosti in čiste norosti. Predstava ni bila za občutljive. Trio, ki so ga sestavljali Sacha Plaige, Jenny Swingler in George Ramsay, namiguje na delo genialnega češkega lutkarja, filmskega ustvarjalca in animatorja Jana Švankmajera, ter njegove groteskne lutke uporabi kot okvir, s katerim se posveti raziskovanju človeškega pohlepa, revščine in potrošnje. Trije blazneži, napravljeni kot renesančni potepuhi, so pustili, da se je njihova hrana cedila, borili so se v nenavadnem plesu s testeninami, ki so ga spremljali ritmični udarci, ter uporabili kamero, da bi se posneli od znotraj. Nekateri gledalci so zapustili dvorano, vendar pa je bilo pogosto slišati tudi glasen smeh – tako kot mora biti,

saj bo lutkarstvo v fizičnem gledališču občinstvo razdvajalo skoraj toliko kot goli performans ali osladen muzikal.

Predstava *Nastajanje Ostržka* (The Making Of Pinocchio, Artsadmin, 2018) Ivorja MacAskilla in Rosane Cade je čudovit primer uprizoritve fizičnega gledališča, ki se nanaša na morda najbolj priljubljeno lutko: Ostržka. Z uporabo delov te klasične zgodbe za obravnavo MacAskillove spremembe spola v resničnem življenju in zastavljanjem vprašanja »Kaj naredi pravega dečka?« je dvojica ustvarila nežen, zabaven (in zagotovo odrasel) pogled na identiteto, pravice transspolnih oseb in ljubezen, z dodatkom nekaj lesenih spolnih igrač. Nastala je premišljena, pronicljiva igra v igri, ki govori o tem, kako lahko odnosi postanejo še bolj zapleteni, ko nam družba želi vsiliti vloge, pripisati oznake in postavljati pogoje. Zagotovo ni šlo za Disneyjevo uprizoritev, vendar pa je bila globoka in ganljiva in je na domiseln način namigovala na lutkarstvo.

Lutkarstvo in fizično gledališče

Odnos med fizičnim gledališčem in lutkarstvom je trajen, se nenehno širi in postaja vse bolj prefinjen. Evropska tradicija lutkarstva je verjetno prvič dosegla vrhunec v srednjem veku skupaj z literaturo *vox populi*. Lutkarstvo je tedaj prevzelo različne vloge, od poučevanja svetopisemskih zgodb do razširjanja političnih sporočil: po evropskih mestih, zlasti v Italiji in Franciji, se je povečevala priljubljenost lutkarstva za otroke in odrasle kot sredstva za zabavno pripovedovanje zgodb in raziskovanje globljih tem, povezanih z moralo in vero.

Ker je uporaba lutk, ki nastopajo skupaj z igralci, postala vse bolj razširjena v produkcijah fizičnega gledališča, je pogosto ponujala rešitev za težave v času konfliktov – na primer, delo Samuela Becketta v lutkovni obliki je bilo vir navdiha za nekdanjo Jugoslavijo, pripovedi, kot je *Doktor Faust*, in propagandne predstave pa nakazujejo, da se zgodbe, katerih tema sta vojna in gledališče, niso medsebojno izključevale, pri čemer so lutke postale simbol agitacije ali odpora.[6]

O cornwalski gledališki skupini Kneehigh Theatre in njeni kritiško dobro sprejeti produkciji *Zelo star gospod z ogromnimi krili* (A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings, 2005), ki je prirejena po delu Gabriela Garcíe Márqueza, Miriam Gillinson zapiše, da je kombinacija preprostega pripovedo-

---

6 | Stojanov, Divna. *Theatre Puppets Through the Ages.* The Theatre Times, junij 2020, https://thetheatretimes.com/theatre-puppets-through-the-ages/.

vanja in tehnike tisto, kar najbolj očara, vendar pa mora tudi resnično nagovoriti čustva občinstva: »Lutkarji lahko svoje like rezljajo iz lesa, vendar morajo za to posebno globoko razumeti notranje življenje svojih lutk. Navsezadnje ima dober igralec na voljo ogromen izbor izrazov, s katerimi lahko vstopa v vlogo. Lutkar ima samo enega.«[7]

Lutkarstvo in fizično gledališče pa pogosto ne delujeta skupaj kot celota. Uprizarjanje lutkovnih predstav v živo se lahko pogosto razlikuje od fizičnega gledališča in obratno. Čista lutkovna umetnost v celoti temelji na pripravljenosti gledalcev, da utajijo svojo nejevero in ne opazujejo ljudi, ki manipulirajo z nitmi ali ustvarjajo vtis, da predmeti letijo ali se samostojno premikajo na odru. Skupine, kot so Tortoise In A Nutshell, Handspring Puppet Company in Bread and Puppet Theater, se osredotočajo samo na lutkovno umetnost, gledališke skupine, ki se posvečajo fizičnemu gledališču, na primer Zen Zen Zo, Ontroerend Goed, Gob Squad in Theater Grottesco, pa se opirajo na samo grobo naravo človeške telesnosti in na neposrednost igralcev, ki nastopajo v danem trenutku. Lutka je nespremenljiva, ne more zboleti ali imeti zamenjave, ki bi po potrebi nastopila namesto nje; podobno lutka tudi ne more samostojno jokati, se potiti, plesati, govoriti, peti in se premikati.

Kljub vzponu napredne tehnologije in oblikovanja se zdi, da bo lutkovno gledališče vedno pritegnilo širok krog občinstva, kar dokazuje nedavni velik uspeh predstav, kot so *Grivasti vojak, King Kong, Mala prodajalna groze* in *Levji kralj*, vendar tudi fizično gledališče ne bo še kmalu izginilo. Predstave z nižjim proračunom imajo svoj čar in so tekmice produkcijam, ki so postavljene na oder večjih prizorišč, a se zdijo brez duše, če jih primerjamo z lutkovnimi predstavami, kjer pridejo do izraza obrtniške in ročne spretnosti ustvarjalcev.

To morda ne ustvarja vedno tako vznemirljivega učinka kot vpadljiva in najnaprednejša tehnologija in mogočna, draga scenografija in lutke, vendar pa smo zaradi majhnega občinstva lahko ob blizu priča navdušenju, ki se pokaže med otroškimi lutkovnimi predstavami ali uprizoritvami fizičnega gledališča, ki si jih je najbolje ogledati skupaj z vreščečimi otroki v času pred božičem. To je kot razlika med gledanjem in sodelovanjem: ker so predstave majhne in intimne, zaznamo vsako podrobnost. Visokoproračunske predstave se od občinstva nekoliko oddaljujejo, saj gledalce umikajo iz dogajanja in jih potiskajo v njihove sedeže.

7 | Gillinson, Miriam, *Puppet theatre: why it's anything but wooden*. The Guardian, junij 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/dec/19/puppet-theatre-kneehigh.

Na niti

Medsebojno povezovanje lutkarstva in fizičnega gledališča je neizpodbitno, saj gledališke skupine uporabljajo lutke, da bi ustvarile inovativne tehnike in napredne koncepte. To še posebej velja za gledališke predstave, ki so namenjene otrokom in družinam. V nekaterih primerih so predstave zajele več ravni in združile oba elementa. Gledališka skupina Scamp Theatre je zabavno fizično gledališče za najmlajše združila z lutkarstvom v svoji slavni predstavi *Palčič* (Stick Man, Freckle Productions, r. Sally Cookson, 2021), nedavna produkcija gledališča Citizens Theatre, *Ostržek* (2019), v režiji Dominica Hilla pa je črpala iz melanholije starajočega se Pepeta, čeprav se je igrivo odpravila v svet lutk in igrač. Grenko-sladko zgodbo o odraščanju *Kes* (2019) je za gledališki oder pred kratkim priredil Jonathan Watkins, predstavo pa so zaznamovali izjemno nastopanje, ples in lutkarstvo.

Vendar pa uprizoritve niso vedno izključno namenjene majhnim otrokom ali zasnovane za družine. Tudi temnejše teme in zgodbe imajo moč, da gledalce popolnoma uročijo. To zagotovo velja, ko gledališke skupine izberejo bolj eksperimentalen, ezoteričen pristop k žanru. Čudovita predstava Oliverja Emanuela *Zmaj* (Dragon, 2015) pripoveduje o izgubi starša in najstniku, ki se spoprijema s svojo bolečino. Žalost prevzame obliko lutk v podobi zmaja, s katerimi se je glavni junak prisiljen soočiti, kar je jasna vizualna metafora za premagovanje različnih faz žalovanja. Sammy J in lutka Randy, ki jo upravlja Heath Mclvor, sta znana obraza Edinburškega festivala. Večinoma se osredotočata na eksistencialno krizo in metagledališke šale. Ganljivo zgodbo uprizoritve *Metulj* (Butterfly, Gillian Garrity, 2014), ki jo je režiral Ramesh Meyyappan, so pripovedovale čudovite lutke Gavina Gloverja in lična scenografija s starinskim pridihom, ki jo je ustvaril Neil Warmington. Predstava se osredotoča na posledice, ki jih za seboj pustijo toksični odnosi, izhaja pa iz raziskav, ki jih je Vladimir Nabokov posvetil redu metuljev, in se opira na temo Puccinijeve opere *Madama Butterfly*.

Sklep

Fizično gledališče lahko nadgradi lutkovno kritiko tako, da izhaja iz omejitev, ki so lastne lutkovni umetnosti. Lecoq govori o številnih pomenih, ki nastajajo v tišini, in o nameri umetnika, ki izvaja pantomimo ali se giblje, kot ključnem dejavniku za razumevanje njegovih tehnik, ter navede: »Ko ni izrečenih besed, človek ohranja skromnost, ki omogoča, da se besede rodijo iz tišine.«[8] Preprosto povedano: lutkarstvo ne more doseči tega, kar lahko gibanje telesa.

Uporaba improvizacije in igre, ki sta ključ za sprostitev potenciala znotraj fizičnega gledališča, je le eden od glavnih vidikov tehnike, ki sta jo sprejela Lecoq ter njegov stanovski kolega in klovn Philippe Gaulier, ki je razumel potrebo po prehajanju v (človeške) vloge skladno s svojim občutkom. Kot pravi Gaulier, gre za to, da »najdemo svojega idiota ... Klovn je posebna vrsta idiota, ki je popolnoma drugačen in nedolžen. Čudovit idiot.«[9]

Ken Campbell, ki je vse svoje lutke prepustil ventrilokvistki in nekdanji partnerki Nini Conti, je bil mojster improvizacije na področju fizičnega gledališča in je slavno predpostavil, da je reči »da« vsemu, ne glede na to, kako bizarno je, najbolj osvobajajoč način dela v gledališču. Ta ikonoklastični slog je njegova zapuščina in sega od predstav, ki so trajale več kot 22 ur (priredba *Izkrivljanje* / The Warp (1979), do golote, pretepov in igralcev, ki so izgubili nit zaradi pomanjkanja spanja. Nekoč je dejal, da se ventrilokvizem šteje za preživetega: »Upoštevati morate, da se je naša kultura (v Združenem kraljestvu) odločila, da ne bo gojila ventrilokvizma. Toda v ZDA je nezaslišano, da si oče ali pa stric in ne znaš vsaj malo govoriti iz trebuha. Izkazalo se je, da veliko ljudi bolje dojame sporočilo, ki ga poda ventrilokvistova lutka kot pa kakšen bedak, ki jih nagovarja.«[10]

Tudi sama Nina Conti je dejala, da se ji zdi, da lutke pogosto prestrašijo ljudi, zato uporablja posebno tehniko, s katero jih pomiri: »Vedno začnem z opravičilom ... Ne bi želela priti na oder in delovati ponosno, da sem ventrilokvistka.«[11]

Tudi lutkovna umetnost lahko na različne načine navdihuje fizično gledališče, saj je umetniška oblika, ki se nenehno spreminja. Zapolni lahko prostore v pripovedi in produkcijam zagotovi novo strukturo. Številne skupine, ki uporabljajo lutke, vidijo neskončen potencial lutkarstva za doseganje drugačnega tona, kljub neživi naravi lutk. Kot pravi lutkovna režiserka Sarah Wright, ki je kot lutkarka sodelovala s skupino Kneehigh, med njenimi deli pa je tudi nedavna produkcija *Modri otroci* (Wise Children): »Lutkarstvo imam rada zaradi njegove drugačnosti, ker združuje vse naše strasti, vendar je zunaj nas. Navdušuje me, da imam vanj ,vpogled', ravno tako me vznemirja njegova stvarna narava.«[12]

Ideje so osnovno gonilo umetniškega procesa, ki je vključen v lutkovno ustvarjanje pri oblikovanju predstave. Včasih je potrebna zgolj ena močna ideja, osredinjena na lutke, ki tako postanejo izhodišče za pripravo celotne predstave. Jeff Achtem iz gledališke skupine Scamp Theatre je pojasnil: »Ponavadi začnem s preprosto idejo ali podobo. Razmišljam o mehaniki ali spremembah v gibanju. Nato potegnem na plano opremo in se začnem igrati s preprostimi materiali ali orodji, kot so milni mehurčki ali stroj za meglo. In potem resnično nastopi samo čas za igro. Ure in ure upogibanja, zvijanja in raziskovanja meja tega, kar bo mogoče doseči z orodji.«[13]

Z inovativnostjo, ki je v središču lutkovnega in fizičnega gledališča, bosta obe umetniški obliki ostali neločljivo povezani, dokler bosta obstajali, in sledili vsem potem, ki jih lahko začrta domišljija. Vse, kar lahko umetnik manipulira, lahko štejemo za lutko. To je ključnega pomena za razumevanje edinstvenega in posebnega odnosa – zapletenega, večplastnega, kjer ni nič nedovoljeno in kjer ni nobenih obveznosti.

8 | Lecoq, Jaques. *The Moving Body*. Methuen drama, 1997, str. 29.
9 | Zinoman, Jason. *The Dumbledore of Clowning*. The New York Times, januar 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/18/arts/television/philippe-gaulier-clowns.html.
10 | Campbell, Ken. *Gastromancy and other animals*. The Guardian, avgust 2000, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/aug/29/artsfeatures2.
11 | Jones, Alice. *Monkey is a weapon against my father, a version of me who can stand up to him*. The I, november 2021, https://inews.co.uk/culture/comedy/nina-conti-dating-show-tour-tickets-monkey-masks-tom-conti-1282730.

12 | Windsor, Emma. *A Life Fantastic*. Puppet Place News, avgust 2019, https://puppetplace.wordpress.com/2019/08/21/a-life-fantastic-an-interview-with-sarah-wright/.
13 | Dawson, Julie. *Edinburgh Fringe Interview: Jeff Achtem*. Edinburgh Reporter, avgust 2012, https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2012/08/edinburgh-fringe-interview-jeff-achtem/.

POVZETEK

V britanskem performansu je fizično gledališče modno in priljubljeno: občinstvo na festivalih v Edinburgu je dokaz, da so gledališke skupine z vsega sveta dosegle svoj komercialni in kritiški uspeh. Vendar pa številne gledališke družbe, ki se posvečajo fizičnemu gledališču, v svoja dela vključujejo lutkarstvo, ki je lahko prevladujoč medij ali del širše dramaturgije. Združevanje fizičnega gledališča in lutkarstva zagotavlja načine za kritiško oceno in vrednotenje obeh umetniških oblik, vendar njuno medsebojno povezovanje razkriva skupno predanost inovacijam in razmisleku o odnosu neživega in človeškega telesa, kar omogoča večplastno obravnavo težkih tem s čustvenega in intelektualnega vidika.

O AVTORICI

Lorna Irvine zadnje desetletje deluje kot umetniška kritičarka. Posveča se različnim temam: od popularne glasbe do divjih krvavih performansov in umirjenih gledaliških predstav, ki se uprizarjajo v času kosila. Avtoričina dela, v katerih se razkriva njeno navdušenje nad eksperimentalno koreografijo, ekspresivnim gledališčem in živahnim rockom, so bila objavljena v revijah in časopisih *The List, Fjord Review, The Skinny, TYCI, The Stage, Snack, The Wee Review* in *Exeunt* ter na njenih blogih *The Tempo House* in *Hit The North*.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

fizično gledališče, lutkarstvo, Edinburški festival, eksperimentalno gledališče, performans, škotski igralci, klovn, Lecoq

Literatura

Campbell, Ken. *Gastromancy and other animals.* The Guardian, avgust 2000, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/aug/29/artsfeatures2. │ **Clapp, Susannah**, *The James Plays review – Rona Munro's timely game of thrones,* The Observer, avgust 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/aug/17/james-plays-edinburgh-sofie-grabol-observer-review. │ **Dawson, Julie.** *Edinburgh Fringe Interview: Jeff Achtem.* Edinburgh Reporter, avgust 2012, https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2012/08/edinburgh-fringe-interview-jeff-achtem/. │ **Gillinson, Miriam.** *Puppet theatre: why it's anything but wooden.* The Guardian, junij 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/dec/19/puppet-theatre-kneehigh. │ **Gordan, Robert.** *The Purpose of Playing.* University of Michigan, 2006. │ **Jones, Alice.** *Monkey is a weapon against my father, a version of me who can stand up to him.* The I, november 2021, https://inews.co.uk/culture/comedy/nina-conti-dating-show-tour-tickets-monkey-masks-tom-conti-1282730. │ **Jōji, Harano.** *The Rich History and Uncertain Future of Bunraku Puppet Theater.* Nippon.com, november 2014, https://www.nippon.com/en/column/g00219/. │ **Katsura Rollins, Annie.** *Chinese Shadow Puppetry,* april 2013, https://www.chineseshadowpuppetry.com/current-events. │ **Lecoq, Jaques.** *The Moving Body.* Methuen drama, 1997. │ **Stojanov, Divna.** *Theatre Puppets Through the Ages.* The Theatre Times, junij 2020, https://thetheatretimes.com/theatre-puppets-through-the-ages/. │ **Tietse-Mietz, Sarah.** *'You Can Be Anything': Myra Su's Puppet Worlds.* American Theatre Journal, julij 2020, https://www.americantheatre.org/2020/07/21/you-can-be-anything-myra-sus-puppet-worlds/. │ **Windsor, Emma.** *A Life Fantastic.* Puppet Place News, avgust 2019, https://puppetplace.wordpress.com/2019/08/21/a-life-fantastic-an-interview-with-sarah-wright/. │ **Zinoman, Jason.** *The Dumbledore of Clowning.* The New York Times, januar 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/18/arts/television/philippe-gaulier-clowns.html.

KRISTINA STEIBLYTĖ,
RAMUNĖ BALEVIČIŪTĖ

Lutkovno gledališče je odkrito vsakič znova

Edini festival lutkovnega gledališča v Litvi, ki ga od leta 1997 redno organizirajo v Klaipėdi, pristaniškem mestu v državi, se imenuje *Materia Magica*. Verjetno si je težko zamisliti natančnejše ime za lutkovni gledališki dogodek, saj sta materija in magija ključni besedi, ki opisujeta naravo in moč lutkovnega gledališča. Lutkovno gledališče se v sodobni kulturi kaže kot izobraževanje, terapija, sodobna interdisciplinarna umetnost in prav zares kot čarovnija. Morda je najbolj prepoznavna značilnost te uprizoritvene umetnosti preplet arhaičnosti in sodobnosti. Tudi ko gledamo gledališko predstavo, ki temelji na sodobni tehnologiji, ne izgubimo občutka, da komuniciramo z nekom iz daljne preteklosti in se hkrati srečamo s svojim otroštvom. Lutkovno gledališče ni nič manj pomembno za odrasle kot za otroke, vendar je v Litvi še vedno razširjeno mnenje, da je ta oblika uprizoritvene umetnosti primerna le za otroke, saj se lutkovno gledališče zaradi zaznavnih značilnosti odraščajočega človeka, in sicer zaradi prepričanja o živosti predmetov v okolju ali o možnosti oživitve, idealno ujema z otroškim pogledom na svet. Sama narava lutkovnega gledališča narekuje igro dialektike med živim in neživim ter refleksijo. To lahko poteka v obliki ustvarjalne analize odnosa med izvajalcem in lutko, odnosa med živo predstavo in mehanizacijo ter na koncu, na ravni teme – kot bližine življenja in smrti. Najzanimivejše predstave kažejo, kako lahko lutkovno gledališče postane prostor za umetniško eksperimentiranje, ki lahko spodbudi ne le razvoj te oblike, temveč tudi razvoj uprizoritvenih umetnosti na splošno. Po drugi strani pa je mogoče opazovati brisanje meja med različnimi oblikami in hkratno širjenje koncepta lutkovnega gledališča. Na primer, lahko opazimo vdor filmske umetnosti na področje lutkovnega gledališča, vpliv lutkovnega gledališča pa se kaže v odličnosti lutkovne filmske animacije za otroke in odrasle.

Litovsko lutkovno gledališče je že od prvih profesionalnih poskusov neločljivo povezano z eksperimentiranjem. Stasys Ušinskas (1905–1974), slikar in scenograf, je zbral skupino somišljenikov, ki tako kot on niso imeli izkušenj z lutkarstvom, in eksperimentiral z ustvarjanjem lutk, iskal bolj raznolike možnosti njihovega izražanja ter prenesel lutkarstvo na filmsko platno v obliki prvega litovskega zvočnega lutkovnega filma *Sanje debelega človeka* (Storulio sapnas, r. Henrikas Kačinskas in Stasys Ušinskas, 1938). Ušinskasovi poskusi so zdaj udobno shranjeni v muzeju in nimajo velikega vpliva na sodobno litovsko lutkovno gledališče. Lutkarji, ki trenutno ustvarjajo in iščejo novosti, pa še vedno čutijo vpliv najpomembnejšega eksperimentatorja lutkovnega gledališča druge polovice 20. stoletja, Vitalijusa Mazurasa (1934). Ta je v svojih delih nasprotoval realistični upodobitvi, ki se je uveljavila v lutkovnem gledališču, in eksperimentiral ne le z vse bolj abstraktno obliko, temveč tudi z vsebino, ki se je oddaljevala od realizma. Ob koncu 20. stoletja se je v litovskem pristaniškem mestu Klaipėdi rodil prostor odprtega in eksperimentalnega lutkovnega gledališča. Jūratė Januškevičiūtė in njeni sodelavci so poleg gledališča začeli ustanavljati tudi lutkovno šolo.

Izrazite šole – izraziti poskusi

Jūratė Januškevičiūtė in njeni sodelavci niso le ustanovili lutkovnega gledališča KU-KŪ v Klaipėdi ob koncu 20. stoletja, ki je pozneje postalo Lutkovno gledališče v Klaipėdi, temveč so razvili tudi edinstven program usposabljanja lutkarjev. Njegova učinkovitost je očitna: lutkarji, ki so se izobraževali v okviru tega programa z režiserko Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė na čelu, so verjetno najštevilnejši in najizrazitejši eksperimentalni lutkarji v Litvi.

Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė, ki je leta 2004 diplomirala na Univerzi v Klaipėdi, je istega leta prejela nagrado litovskega ministrstva za prvenec za predstavo za odrasle *Edina* (Vienintelė) v Lutkovnem gledališču v Klaipėdi. Že v tem delu, ki združuje lutke, maske in igralčevo telesno plastičnost, je bila očitna režiserkina težnja po eksperimentiranju z obliko in materiali. Po uspešnem prvencu v Lutkovnem gledališču v Klaipėdi so bile živahne predstave za otroke in družine Radvilavičiūtėjeve, v katerih je uporabljala različna lutkovna in predmetna sredstva, deležne večje pozornosti kritikov leta 2008, ko je v Lutkovnem gledališču v Klaipėdi režirala še gledališko predstavo za odrasle. Politični lutkovni balet *Ubu* (Juoba), po drami Alfreda Jarryja *Kralj Ubu*, je Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė uveljavil kot eno najzanimivejših eksperimentatork v uprizoritveni umetnosti, ki za vsako predstavo išče novo obliko, ki najbolje izraža vsebino in je pogosto edinstvena v litovskem lutkovnem gledališču.

Pri ustvarjanju filma *Ubu* je režiserka uporabljala gospodinjske pripomočke, živila, dele modnih lutk ali samostojno delujoče ude, ločene od preostalega igralčevega telesa, da bi odkrila absurdnost drame. V majhnem prostoru, ki je spominjal na škatlo ali akvarij, je asociativna kombinacija predmetov in vsebine igre ter samega performansa spominjala na absurdistično igro. Leta 2014 je Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė nastopila v Lutkovnem gledališču v Vilni z delom *Peščeni človek* (Smėlio žmogus) po motivih Ernsta Theodorja Amadeusa Hoffmanna in predstavila litovskemu občinstvu sodoben koncept lutkovnega gledališča, ki vključuje sodobni ples, maske in lutke. Vitalijus Mazūras, najslavnejši litovski lutkar, predstavlja to vizijo in že več kot pol stoletja na odru ustvarja edinstven svet, poln izvirnih vizij.

Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė s scenografko Renato Valčik, koreografinjo in performerko Sigito Mikalauskaitė ter skladateljico Rito Mačiliūnaitė v predstavi *Peščeni človek* pripoveduje zgodbo o ustvarjalcu, njegovem protislovnem in razdrobljenem notranjem svetu ter odnosu z ljubljeno. Ustvarjalci te uprizoritve v gledališču "Lėlė" so romantično delo preobli-

kovali tako, da so ga stisnili, iz njega izparili vse romantične presežke in bistveno prilagodili zaplet, hkrati pa so ohranili bistvo dela – jedro teme o človeku, ki ga je zmotila norost, in vzdušje groze. Vendar zaporedja epizod predstave ni določal razvoj pripovedi, saj je bilo ustvarjanje zgodbe prepuščeno gledalcu, temveč tehnološke in vizualne možnosti. Z razvojem dogajanja se je vizualnost predstave vse bolj zgoščala, podobe pa so se kot figure strašnega *Peščenega človeka* množile in niso izhajale le iz gibanja igralcev, temveč tudi iz bogatega glasbenega tkiva in plesa luči. To premikanje je še bolj zgostilo neprijetno sanjsko vzdušje in nas potopilo v nekakšno avdiovizualno meglico. Predstava je potrdila, da je Radvilavičiūtėjeva aktivna eksperimentatorka, ki z veseljem preizkuša nove načine komunikacije med igralcem in lutko in/ali masko, vključuje plesne in cirkuške elemente ter drugačen način obstoja igralca lutke v različnih točkah tridimenzionalnega prostora.

Leta 2018 je v vilenskem lutkovnem gledališču "Lėlė" nadaljevala svoje eksperimente z odnosom med igralcem in lutko, telesom in predmetom v gledališki predstavi *Slika Doriana Graya*. Igra, ki je prikazana v najmanjšem gledališkem prostoru za majhno število gledalcev, se tako kot *Ubu* pred desetimi leti odvija v zlatem okvirju slike. V njem delujejo ljudje, deli človeškega telesa. Le da zdaj ne več s kuhinjskimi pripomočki in zelenjavo, temveč z miniaturnimi replikami znanih skulptur. Pripoved v tej predstavi, tako kot v večini drugih režiserjevih del za otroško ali odraslo občinstvo, je zgrajena predvsem s podobami. Le *Slika Doriana Graya* je statična v primerjavi z, na primer, *Ubujem* ali *Peščenim človekom*. Občinstva v njem ne zapeljejo toliko nepričakovane transformacije telesa, maske in lutke, ki se rodijo iz interakcije vseh treh instrumentov, temveč predvsem prostorske kompozicije na majhnem odru za zlatim okvirjem. Večina preobrazb se dogaja z manipulacijo teles igralcev in njihovimi odsevi v ogledalih, ki postanejo portreti duš likov.

Podobe, ki jih ustvarja režiserka, so vedno oddaljene od literarnih del. V *Ubuju* so, na primer, gledalcem pokazali različne predmete, ki so spominjali na ples, potem ko so bili na kratkem zvočnem posnetku predstavljeni odlomki zgodbe. V predstavi *Peščeni človek* so bili igralci in živa scenografija aktivnejši, vendar so preoblikovana telesa, neprepoznavne oblike in trajektorije gibanja pritegnili pozornost občinstva in ga zvabili v abstraktni prostor, kjer se je vsak lahko srečal s svojim notranjim svetom. Za to ni bilo potrebno besedilo ali zaplet. V predstavi *Očka in morje* (Tėtis ir jūra, Lutkovno gledališče v Klaipėdi, 2017), ustvarjeni za otroke od četrtega leta dalje, like Tove Jansson zamenja abstraktna, meditativna pripoved o skrivnostih morja, sestavljena iz luči, senc in violončela. *Slika Doriana Graya* je v primerjavi z drugimi reži-

serjevimi deli, ki so veliko bolj osredotočena na jasnost, bolj zapletena. Toda tudi če se odločimo za nekaj sredstev, s katerimi lahko razširimo dogajanje na odru, ta predstava, tako kot vsa druga dela Gintarėine Radvilavičiūtė, na občinstvo deluje predvsem s svojo podobo, vzdušjem in materialnostjo. Svet podob in vizij, ki ga ustvari režiser, je izziv za gledalčev um in čustva, saj se mora z opustitvijo besedila in pogosto tudi zapleta zanašati na osebne asociacije, slutnje in interpretacije. Ali pa se preprosto prepustiti obliki, ki očara z natančnostjo.

Čeprav ima gledališče v Klaipėdi jasno vodjo, ki je nagnjena k eksperimentiranju, delo Radvilavičiūtėjeve ne zasenči drugih zanimivih umetnikov in del v pristaniškem mestu. Ti so večinoma povezani s tečajem režiserjev in igralcev lutkovnega gledališča, ki so med letoma 2012 in 2016 študirali na Univerzi v Klaipėdi. Ta tečaj je vodila velika skupina strokovnjakov, pri čemer je bil program, ki ga je pripravila Jūratė Januškevičiūtė, nekoliko prilagojen. Med njimi je bila **Karolina Jurkštaitė**, režiserka in učenka Jūratė Januškevičiūtė. Pod njenim vodstvom so mladi lutkarji iz Klaipėde ustvarili gledališko predstavo *Ljubezen, don't stop* (Meile, don't stop, Trupė 459, 2015), ki je bila nagrajena z najpomembnejšo litovsko gledališko nagrado zlati odrski križ. Miniature o ljubezni v osmih škatlah so bile ena za drugo prikazane enemu gledalcu. Eksperimentalno pri tem delu ni bilo le intimno, osebno srečanje z različno interpretirano temo ljubezni, temveč tudi uporaba različnih umetniških izraznih sredstev in materialov v vsaki škatli, od miniaturnih lutk, vode do oči igralke, ki gledajo gledalca.

Del tega majhnega, a izjemno ustvarjalnega lutkarskega tečaja se je uveljavil v lutkovnem gledališču v Klaipėdi. Trenutno je verjetno najbolj zanimivo spremljati delo režiserke **Aušre Bakanaitė**. Čeprav jim v tem gledališču še vedno manjka celovitosti, se kaže tudi duh eksperimentiranja v Klaipėdi, saj združujejo različne vrste uprizoritvenih umetnosti in se poigravajo z različnimi materiali. Predstava *Malina* (Lutkovno gledališče Klaipėda, 2017), na primer, združuje lutkovno in gibalno umetnost, maske, predmete, igle, ogledala in celo živalsko srce.

Poskusi v prestolnici

Vključevanje in spodbujanje mladih umetnikov sta med najpomembnejšimi orodji za spodbujanje sprememb na umetniškem področju. V Vilni je usposabljanje mladih lutkarjev izjemno redko. Do začetka 21. stoletja so se igralci, posebej usposobljeni za delo z lutkami, nazadnje pridružili gledališču "Lėlė" leta 1979. Tako so na začetku 21. sto-

letja veliko pričakovali od lutkarjev na litovski Akademiji za glasbo in gledališče. Več igralcev mlajše generacije se je uveljavilo v vilenskem gledališču "Lėlė" in Državnem lutkovnem gledališču v Kaunasu, s čimer so pomladili skupini in poživili ustvarjalno življenje gledališč. Iz tega tečaja sta izšla tudi Karolina Žernytė in Šarūnas Datenis, ki režirata in eksperimentirata. Njuna prva eksperimentalna dela so se začela zunaj lutkovnih gledališč, vendar je Šarūnasu Datenisu sčasoma uspelo oblikovati lastno identiteto kot režiserju otroških gledališč, Karolina Žernytė pa se je uveljavila v nevladnem sektorju kot ustvarjalka socialno občutljivih gledaliških in izobraževalnih projektov.

Šarūnas Datenis, igralec, je že v prvem delu, ki ga je režiral, *Petelinček skubilec* (Gaidelis pinigautojas, 2012), razkril svoje nagnjenje k vizualnemu in interaktivnemu gledališču. Z umetnikom Antanasom Dubro je lutkar opustil običajna sredstva lutkarstva in ustvaril predstavo iz slik in zvočnih materialov, ki so animirani v živo na odru. Slednjo je s pomočjo občinstva ustvaril tudi Datenis kar na odru. Podobno so vizualnost in podobe, ki so se rodile na odru, pomembne tudi v njegovem drugem režijskem delu *Deklica z vžigalicami* (2014). V tej predstavi je pred očmi gledalcev nastal film. Občinstvo je tako lahko hkrati spremljalo predstavo, ki so jo ustvarjali trije igralci, in film, ki je bil projiciran na odrski zavesi. Manipulacija z različnimi umetniškimi oblikami in interaktivnost, ki je bila vidna v Datenisovih prvih predstavah, sta ostali pomembni, ko je nadaljeval svoje režijsko delo v gledališču "Lėlė" v Vilni. To je morda najočitneje v njegovem filmu *Čipolin* (Čipolinas) iz leta 2020, ki je bil prilagojen tudi za gledanje na daljavo. Predstava ne sledi le zapletu pravljice Giannija Rodarija, temveč vabi tudi k raziskovanju različnih prostorov gledališča, ki jih naseljujejo liki iz zgodbe. Datenis s svojimi poskusi ne spreminja celotnega področja lutkovnega gledališča ali vsaj obraza lutkovnega gledališča, ki nastaja v vilenski regiji. Vendar pa njegovo delo pomembno prispeva k odpiranju poti za nove ustvarjalne usmeritve in eksperimente v javnem sektorju.

Karolina Žernytė, sošolka Šarūnasa Datenisa, se ukvarja z radikalnejšimi ustvarjalnimi poskusi. Leta 2010, po diplomi na litovski Akademiji za glasbo in gledališče, je začela uresničevati zamisel o gledališču za slepe, ki si jo je zamislila, in kot se je takrat zdelo, ni bila preveč uresničljiva. Skupaj s sodelavci in po posvetovanju s skupnostjo slepih je lutkarica ustvarila *Čebelje pravljice za šest čutil* (Bitinėlio pasakas šešiems pojūčiams). Zdaj, več kot deset let po premieri te predstave, je Karolina Žernytė ustanovila Gledališče čutov (Pojūčių teatrą), zbrala majhno skupino somišljenikov, režirala predstave v Litvi, Latviji in Rusiji ter oblikovala in

izvajala izobraževalne programe za otroke in odrasle z različnimi učnimi težavami. Še vedno raziskuje možnosti gledališča in učenja na podlagi vseh čutil, razen vida. V takem gledališču je nemogoče biti le gledalec: Gledališče čutov gledalce, tako videče kot slabovidne, ki si upajo zavezati oči in sodelovati v predstavi, spremeni v udeležence predstav.

Njeno prvo delo, *Čebelje pravljice za šest čutov*, temelji na litovskih, vzhodnih, afriških in severnih pravljicah. Vsebina te predstave ni bila tako pomembna kot ustvarjanje dramaturgije za čute, zato so bile izbrane precej preproste zgodbe, ki so se poigravale z različnimi vzdušji in prostori. Z zvoki in rekviziti so slepi udeleženci dobili vtis vožnje z ladjo, sprehoda po gozdu ali obiska templja. Raziskovali so, kako se dotakniti občinstva, da bi prenesli srečanje z različnimi živalmi ali rastlinami, ter kakšni okusi in vonji lahko vplivajo na občinstvo. In poskušali ugotoviti, koliko je mogoče uskladiti storitev za nekaj slepih gledalcev z vizualno privlačnostjo predstave, ki zagotavlja donosnost naložbe za gledalce, ki dogajanje spremljajo od zunaj.

Čebelje zgodbe za šest čutov so Karolini Žernytė odprle pot, da svojo metodo prilagodi in razvije v profesionalnih gledališčih. Leta 2013 je bila povabljena k ustvarjanju predstave v Moskvi in prejela nominacijo za nagrado zlata maska v kategoriji socialni eksperiment. Ta uspeh ji je zagotovil nova naročila v Rusiji do leta 2015, ko je ponovno začela delati v Litvi. Dela, ki jih je uprizorila v Rusiji, in prvo študentsko delo so temeljila na obstoječih besedilih: Gogoljeva *Majska noč* (Moskovsko lutkovno gledališče, 2013), pravljici *Ježek v megli* (Ežiukas ir rūkas, Državno lutkovno gledališče Naberežnyje Čelnų, 2014) in *Kalifova štorklja* (Kalifas gandras, Državno lutkovno gledališče v Irkutsku, 2015). Gledališka predstava *Kamen voda želo* (Akmuo vanduo geluonis), ki je nastala leta 2015 v Mladinskem gledališču v Klaipėdi, je pokazala, da režiserka med delom v Rusiji ni le izboljšala oblike gledališča, ki ga je izumila, ampak je razmišljala tudi o možnostih razširitve spektra zgodb in izraznih sredstev.

Kamen voda želo je bilo prvo delo Žernytėjeve, v katerem ni uporabila vnaprej napisanega ali izbranega besedila ali zgodbe. V sodelovanju s filozofom Kristupasom Saboliusom, umetnico Eglė Lekevičiūtė in z igralci Mladinskega gledališča v Klaipėdi je Karolina Žernytė po načelu ustvarjalnega laboratorija ustvarila abstraktno pripoved, ki temelji na litovski mitologiji. V tej predstavi je govorna, literarna pripoved skoraj povsem opuščena. Ljudskih pesmi je bilo le nekaj, več prostora pa je bilo namenjenega zvoku, ki so nastali in se izvajali na kraju samem. Le da ne ponazarja dogajanja, tako kot je to bilo prej, ampak ustvarja vzdušje. Karolina Žernytė

in njena ekipa še naprej delata na enak način. V predstavi *Pred svetlobo* (Prieš išvystant šviesą, Gledališče čutov, 2015), ki govori o stanju pred rojstvom, v prostorsko prilagodljivi, nenehno spreminjajoči se predstavi *Tense in sense* (Gledališče čutov, 2015) o spominih na otroštvo, v predstavi *Izvirnik* (Pirmapradis, Litovsko narodno dramsko gledališče, 2016), ki temelji na teoriji Carla Gustava Junga, in v predstavi-instalaciji *Teža. Plovilo* (Svoris. Trauka, Gledališče čutov, 2017) udeleženci ne le poslušajo pripovedovane zgodbe, ampak si morajo predvsem ustvarjati lastne zaplete, pri čemer jih vodijo slušne, taktilne ali akcijske reference.

Eksperimenti z lutkami in predmeti, ki jih izvajajo lutkarji, ki niso lutkarji

Premikanje meja lutkovnega ustvarjanja ali interdisciplinarnost dramskega gledališča nista novosti. V zadnjem času pa se lutkarji in dramatiki, navdihnjeni z novimi tehnologijami in v iskanju novih vizualnih izrazov, vse bolj približujejo drug drugemu. Lutke, ki niso lutke, se uvrščajo celo na največje evropske gledališke festivale. Včasih pa predstave povsem opustijo igralce in se zanašajo na animirane ali statične predmete v prostoru in njihovo sporočilno moč.

Ko razmišljamo o medijih lutkovnega gledališča, ki presegajo lutkovna gledališča, v Litvi najprej pomislimo na tiste umetnike, ki so delovali v sedemdesetih in osemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja. **Jonas Vaitkus** (1944) se je konec 20. stoletja uveljavil kot ustvarjalec, ki razmišlja o položaju posameznika v družbi in ga pogosto prikazuje kot igračo okoliščin, družbe ali bogov. Izbral je dramska dela in izrazna sredstva, ki so poudarjala to temo. Tako je konec 20. in v začetku 21. stoletja v svojih uprizoritvah uporabljal način igre, ki igralca spremeni v lutko, maske in kostume, ki podaljšajo ali deformirajo človeško telo, ali animirane predmete, ki na psihološko realističen način dopolnjujejo ali spreminjajo življenja likov. Eimuntas Nekrošius (1952–2018), eden najvidnejših likovnih gledaliških umetnikov v Litvi, je v svojih predstavah pogosto povzdignil predmet v status samostojnega lika. Njegova vizualna komunikacija, igra z materiali in predmeti, nas je včasih celo spominjala na gledališče Vitalijusa Mazūrasa. Toda morda najbolj živahno in drzno je lutkovna gledališka sredstva uporabljal in jih še vedno uporablja režiser **Gintaras Varnas** (1961). Začetek njegove ustvarjalne poti je povezan s satiričnim lutkovnim gledališčem Šėpa. Tudi po uveljavitvi v dramskem gledališču je Gintaras Varnas v svojih predstavah pogosto uporabljal lutke. Nastopili so v predstavah *Donja Rosita ali jezik cvetja* (Do-

nja Rosita, arba Gėlių kalba, Državno dramsko gledališče v Kaunasu, 2003), *Zločin in kazen* (2004, Državno dramsko gledališče v Kaunasu), *Publika* (Gledališče Utopia, 2010) in *Geto* (Getas, Državno dramsko gledališče v Kaunasu, 2018). Morda so bile lutke najbolj impresivno uporabljene v operah Claudia Monteverdija, *Dvoboju Tankreda in Klorinde* (Tankredžio ir Klorindos dvikova, 2008) ter *Plesu nedostopnih* (Nedėkingųjų šokis, projekt Baroque Dialogs, 2008).

Olga Lapina, režiserka, ki je ustvarila izjemno zanimive predstave za otroke, je prav tako pokazala sposobnost komuniciranja s predmeti, ozračjem in prostorom, pri čemer se včasih opira na lutkovno gledališče. Leta 2015 je Olga Lapina v vilenskem gledališču "Lėlė" režirala predstavo, ki združuje lutke in žive igralce, *O tem, kako je Kolka Pankin odletel v Brazilijo in Marčius Nepaknin verjel v nič ali Ga ra rar* (Apie tai, kaip Kolka Pankinas skrido į Braziliją, o Marčius Nepakninas niekuo netikėjo, arba Ga ra rar), ki je nastala po igri Daniila Charmsa. Leta 2016 je režiserka v sodelovanju z umetnico Renato Valčik uprizorila predstavo *Dolga prekinitev* (Ilgoji pertrauka) v Gledališču čudakov (Keistuolių teatras) in predstavo-igro za odrasle *Šifra: HAMLET* (Kodas: HAMLET) v Ruskem dramskem gledališču. V obeh delih je domiselno uporabila transformabilne predmete ali predmete, ki preoblikujejo prostor in like, ter tako združila igro igralcev s spretnim pripovedovanjem zgodbe. V nadaljevanju sodelovanja z istim umetnikom je Olga Lapina režirala performans-instalacijo *O strahovih* (Apie baimes, Državno mladinsko gledališče, 2017). Igranje igralcev je v tej uprizoritvi skoraj povsem opuščeno, z občinstvom pa se komunicira prek zvočnih posnetkov, ki potujejo po spretno in občutljivo urejenih prostorih.

Koreografinja **Birutė Banevičiūtė**, ki ustvarja za otroke in dojenčke, se je v Plesnem gledališču Dansema z umetniškim raziskovanjem za najmlajše občinstvo približala lutkovnemu in predmetnemu gledališču. Njene predstave so postopoma začele vključevati številne predmete, ki jih je ne le kazala najmlajšim gledalcem, temveč je z njimi tudi manipulirala in vabila dojenčke, da se pridružijo igri. Od vizualno spektakularnih objektov v *Mozaiku* (Mozaikoje, Dansema, 2012), ki se jih otroci niso mogli dotakniti, je gledališče Banevičiūtėjeve postopoma preraslo v spektakularne instalacije *Na travniku* (Pievelėje, Dansema, 2019), kjer so se otroci že lahko gibali in raziskovali, ne da bi jih pri tem kdo motil. Zato ni presenetljivo, da je Birutė Banevičiūtė pred kratkim začela delati tudi v lutkovnih gledališčih: leta 2020 je v državnem lutkovnem gledališču v Kaunasu ustvarila predstavo *Svetovi* (Pasaulėliai), leta 2022 pa je v lutkovnem gledališču v Klaipėdi ustvarila predstavo *Brez*

konca, brez roba (Be galo, be krašto). Tako je odprla manj znano povezavo med lutkovnim in predmetnim gledališčem ter plesom v Litvi in jo prilagodila najmlajšim gledalcem.

Nenehno obnavljanje in posodabljanje

Za lutkovno gledališče v Litvi je že od njegovega nastanka značilen duh eksperimentiranja. Ko ustvarjalni režiserji in umetniki na novo razmislijo o konstrukciji lutk, materialih, ki se uporabljajo na odru, ter odnosu med igralcem in predmetom – lutko, masko, rekvizitom –, dobi ta arhaična umetniška oblika nepričakovane sodobne odtenke. Toda čeprav presega okvire lutkovnih gledališč in prispeva k prenovi drugih uprizoritvenih umetnosti, ostaja lutkarstvo, zlasti za odrasle, v Litvi na obrobju uprizoritvenih umetnosti. Obžalovanja vredno je, da ta izjemno zanimiva vrsta uprizoritvene umetnosti ni v središču pozornosti občinstva, kritikov in institucij ali pa je le redko. Po drugi strani pa takšna marginalna prisotnost odpira širši prostor za umetniško raziskovanje z manjšo odgovornostjo do občinstva in institucije, ki je gledališko predstavo financirala. Tudi ob morebitnem komercialnem ali umetniškem neuspehu se lahko uveljavi predlagani novi pristop k lutkovnemu in predmetnemu gledališču. Odprti prostori in ustvarjalna svoboda še naprej privlačijo lutkarje in tudi druge izvajalce uprizoritvenih umetnosti.

POVZETEK

Najzanimivejši primeri predstav kažejo, kako lahko lutkovno gledališče postane prostor za umetniško eksperimentiranje, ki lahko spodbudi ne le to obliko, temveč tudi razvoj uprizoritvenih umetnosti na splošno. Besedilo analizira, kako ti procesi potekajo v sodobnem litovskem lutkovnem gledališču. Ob upoštevanju dveh najpomembnejših lokacij lutkovnih eksperimentov – Klaipėde in Vilne – je predstavljeno in analizirano delo klaipėdskega lutkovnega gledališča, zlasti Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė, vilenskega lutkovnega gledališča "Lėlė", Šarūnasa Datenisa ter ustanoviteljice in direktorice Gledališča čutov Karoline Žernytė. Besedilo obravnava tudi poskuse, ki presegajo meje lutkovnega gledališča.

O AVTORICAH

Kristina Steiblytė je gledališka kritičarka, ki aktivno dela v litovskem kulturnem tisku. Diplomirala je na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze Vytautasa Didysisa, kjer je končala do-

diplomski (2011) in magistrski (2013) študij. Bila je članica različnih odborov za gledališke nagrade, sodelovala je kot gostujoča urednica gledališkega časopisa, pisala besedila o litovskem gledališču v tujem tisku in kot dramaturginja sodelovala z gledališkimi ustvarjalci. Trenutno je vodja Združenja kritikov uprizoritvenih umetnosti. Glavna področja njenega zanimanja so vloga gledališča v družbi, sodobno baltsko gledališče, lutkovno gledališče. | **Dr. Ramunė Balevičiūtė** je gledališka kritičarka in raziskovalka, avtorica knjig in člankov ter urednica knjig in zbirk člankov, glavna urednica *Revije gledališča* (Teatro žurnalas). Je prorektorica za umetnost in znanost na litovski akademiji za glasbo in gledališče. Poučuje, vodi seminarje gledališke kritike, vodi zaključna dela in aktivno sodeluje pri doktorskem študiju umetnosti. Glavna področja njenega zanimanja so umetniško raziskovanje, igralstvo, gledališki in kognitivnoznanstveni vmesniki, gledališče za otroke.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

lutkovno gledališče, eksperiment, litovski lutkarji, obnovitev
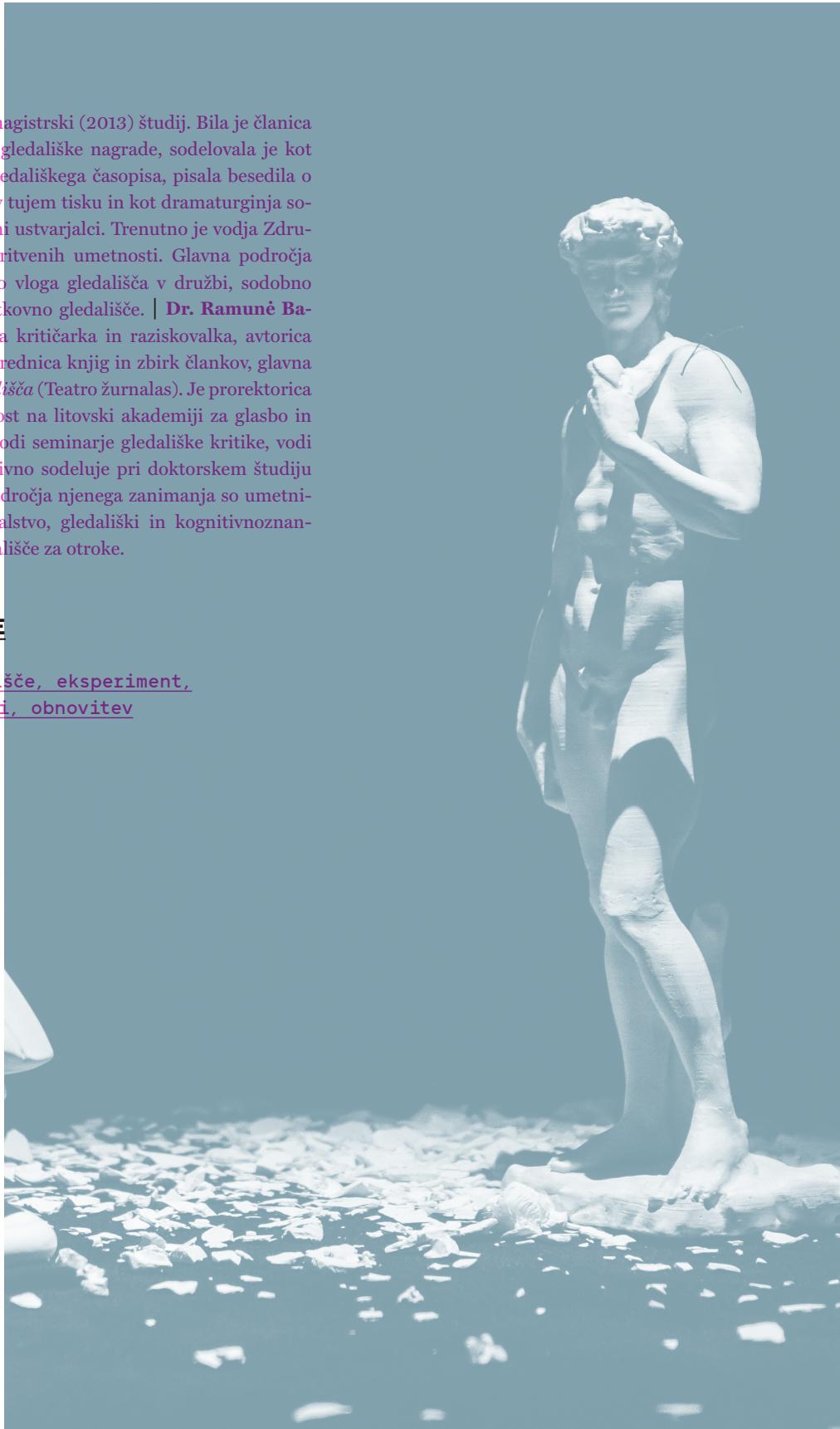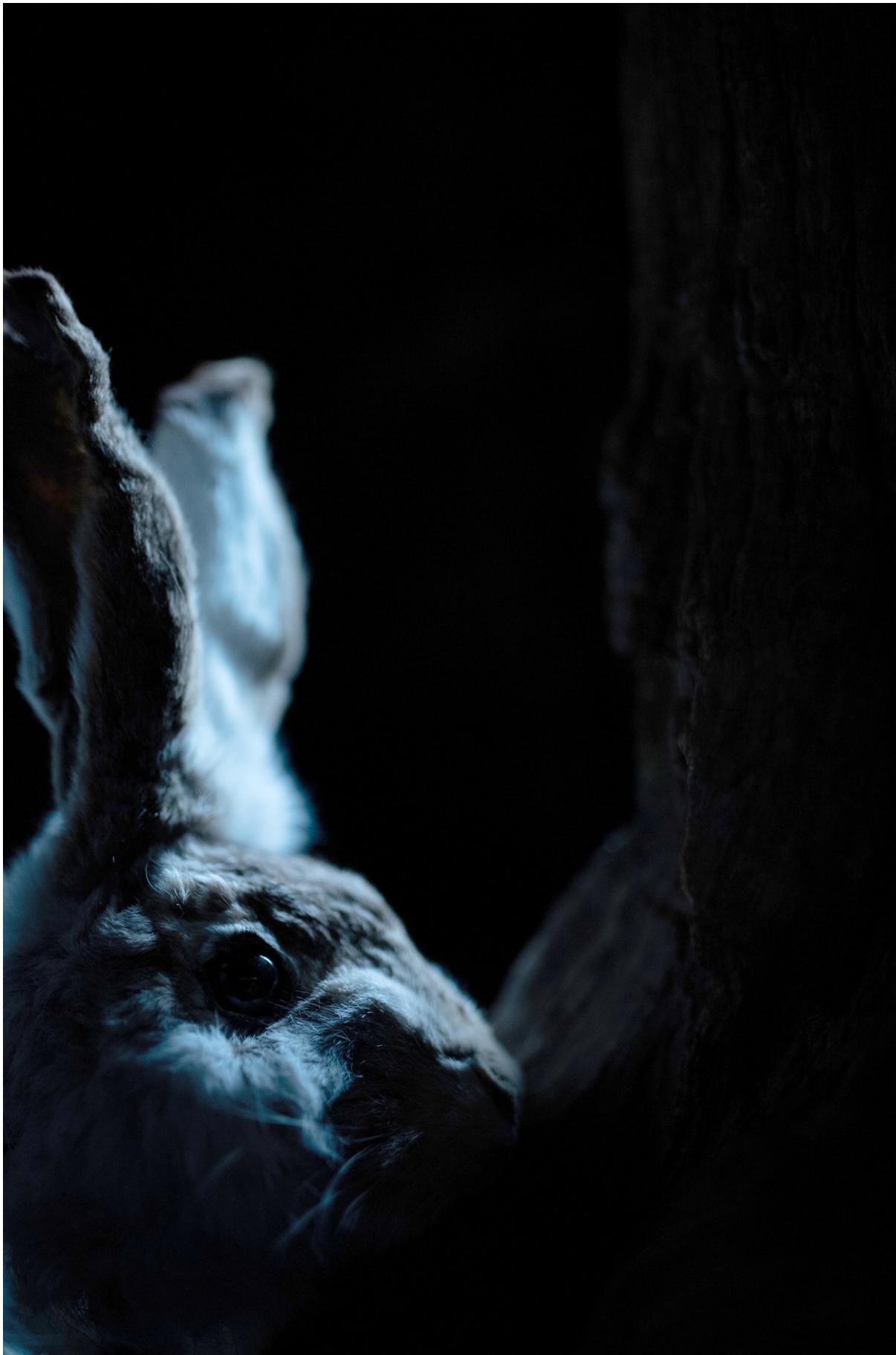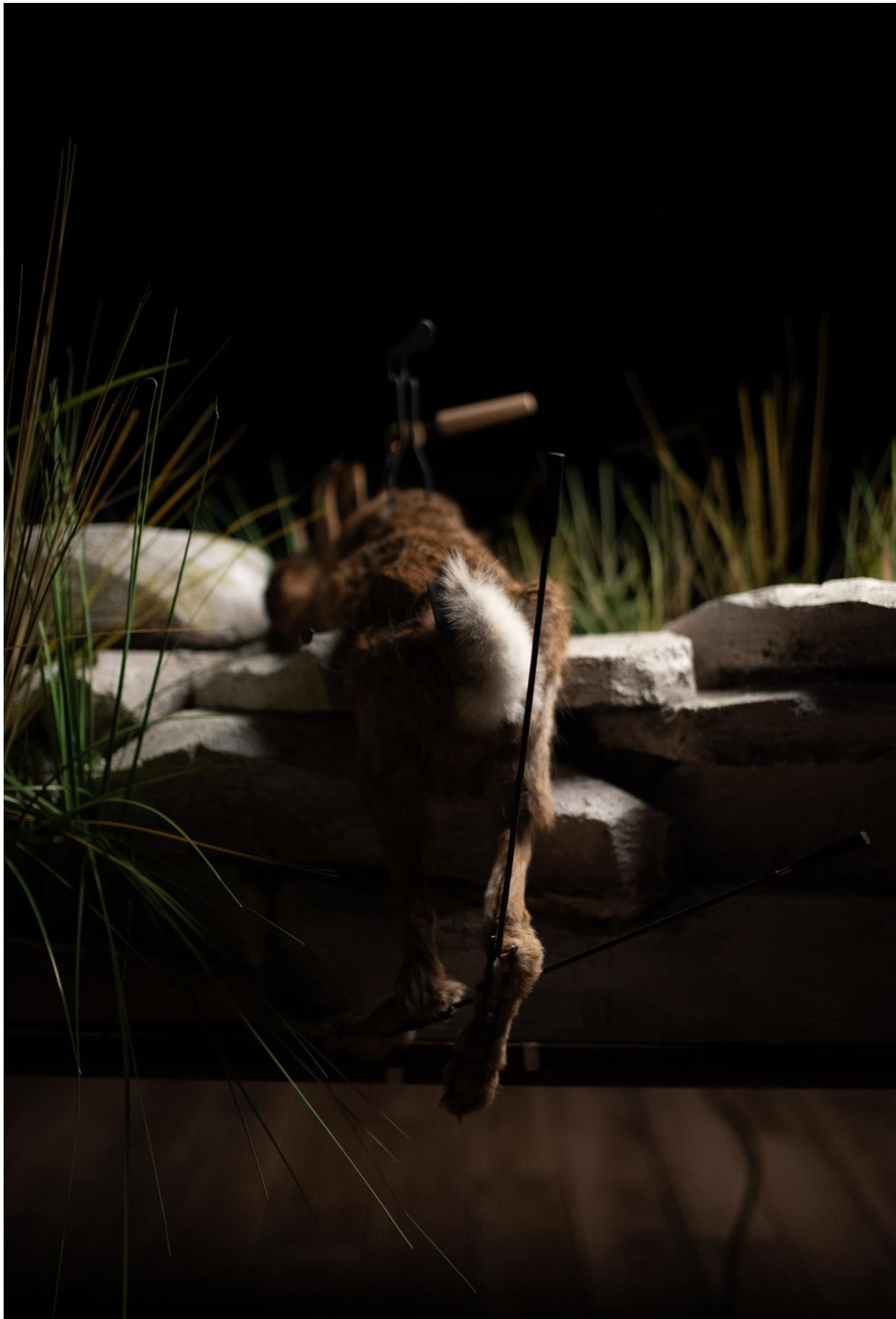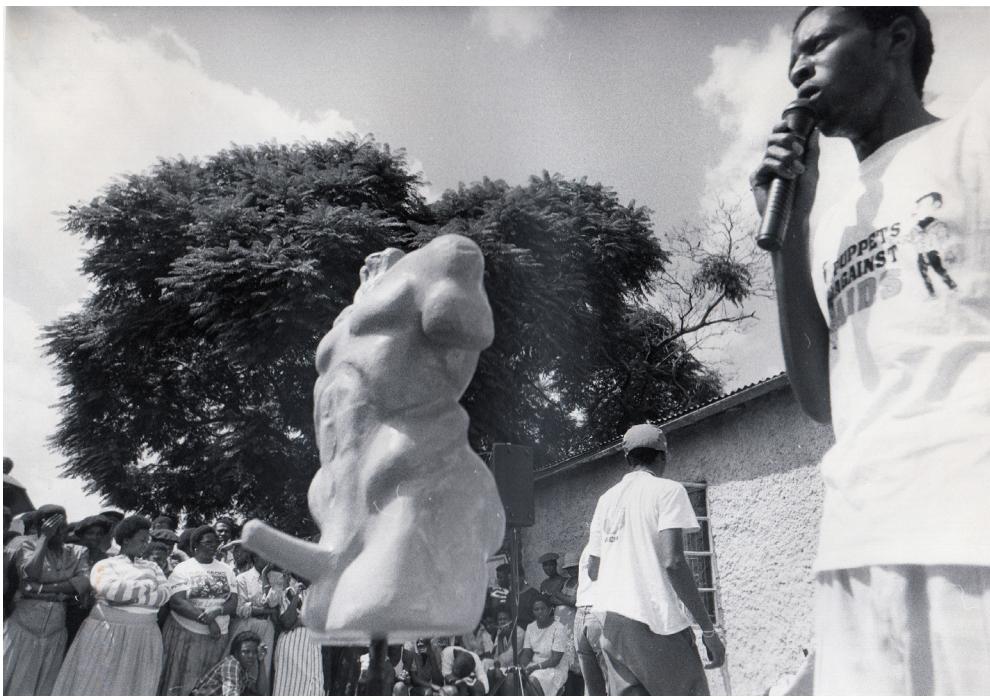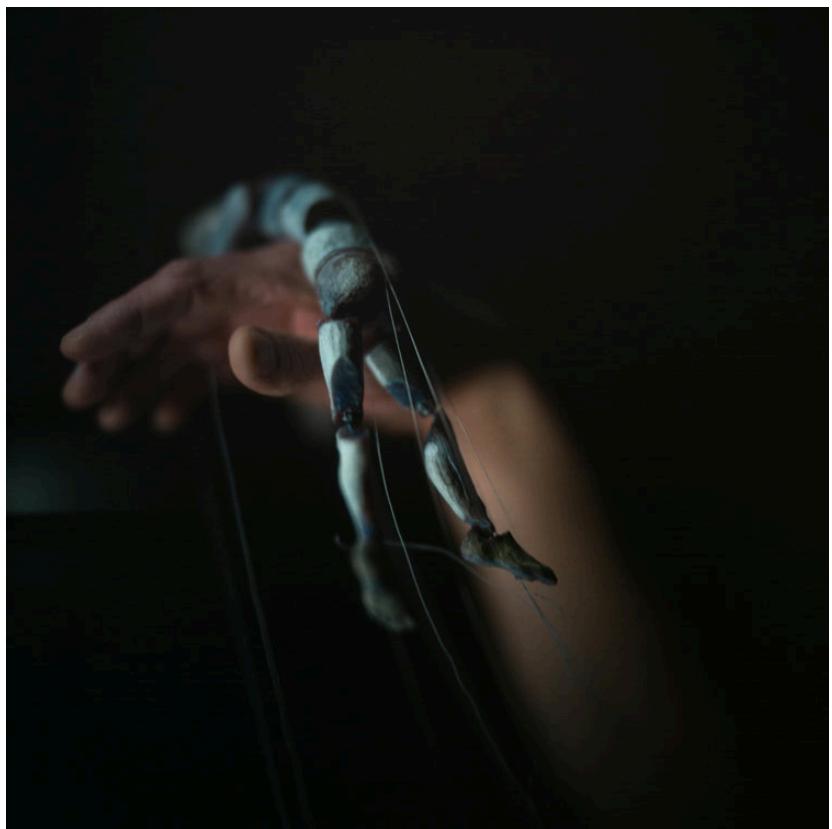
Hello my son, did you have a good meal?

108

MAŠA JAZBEC

The Virtual Desire to Actualize the Puppet
How to Understand the Puppet's Place in Art with Gilles Deleuze

Gone are the days when traditional puppet forms were joined by a multitude of new puppet forms. Automated, mechanised, technologically advanced, digital, mechanical, android, hybrid, and other forms of animation in the broadest sense are being joined by new forms as we speak. So how can one think about the puppet and animated forms in an art whose space and time are changing so rapidly? Not only has the "puppet"[1] been marginalised in the noblest sense, it seems that the "puppet" is pitted against itself.

Thinking about the "puppet" requires us to think outside the conventional box and demand a new approach. Although the 20th century French philosopher Gilles Deleuze has not explicitly thought about puppets or the puppet theatre in his long philosophical career, his points and concepts seem very attractive for thinking about puppetry in the world of art.

---

1 | "Puppet" in quotation marks represents contemporary puppet forms and the question what deviations from traditional puppet forms fall into the field of puppetry.

The Puppet is Looking for its *Abécédaire*

In the past, many have studied Deleuze's thought in the field of puppets and animated forms,[2] focusing on his most important philosophical works (some of which were written in collaboration with Félix Guattari), such as *Difference and Repetition, A Thousand Plateaus, What is Philosophy?, Anti-Oedipus, The Logic of Sense, The Movement Image, The Time Image* and others. The French researcher, philosopher and lecturer Flora Garcin-Marrou also takes interesting approaches in her studies[3] by applying Deleuze's philosophy to the field of theatre. In one of her articles, she writes about the possibility of dramatizing or theatricalising philosophy in the form of the alphabet, inspired by Gilles Deleuze's *Abécédaire*. The latter consists of world-famous interviews that his former student Claire Parnet recorded with the French thinker a few years before his death and published after his death in 1996. It is an important part of Deleuze's legacy, as it allows a wider audience to gain insight into key philosophical concepts in the form of an 'abcedarium'. In the eight-hour interview, each letter of the French alphabet opens a question on a specific topic. The letter A stands for *Animal*, the letter B for *Boisson* ('drink'), the letter C for *Culture*, D for *Désir* ('desire'), all the way to Z, which stands for *Zigzag* ('zigzag'). The subjects do not explain or attempt to explain the concepts developed by Deleuze in his decades of work. Also, the interviewee was not asked the questions in advance, as he only knew the themes for each letter. During the interview, the viewer observes how the philosophical and the everyday, banal thoughts slowly merge. For example, with the letter R, which stands for resistance, the conversation about the initial rebellion of the individual to stand against common opinion, human vulgarity, and stupidity, turns into the feeling of shame that every artist must feel. Shame because human nature forces us to imprison life, while art liberates life and reminds us of the vital force of creation. This is precisely the format of the interview that reveals the depth of Deleuze's philosophy. His concepts are part of the process in which questions and problems arise. In fact, according to the philosopher, questions must not be fixed but produced or fabricated (*fabriquer une question*) in order to generate a problem. New concepts are only created through the production of questions and problems. This allows for a specific play of questions and problems that does not have to be singular and final, but leaves room for multiple possibilities and plural interpretations. Deleuze is interested in the interstice (*entre*), not so much between meanings, but rather in the space "between" structured signs. What is a sign at a given moment in the process can lead to another sign, it can open another path and slide into another field. However, the intensity of these structured signs forces creativity. According to Deleuze, to think is to create, to produce and to design the new.

We can use *Abécédaire* to think about puppets and forms of puppetry, but this time we could transfer it to the field of puppetry.[4] What themes define the puppet, which characteristics can be attributed to it? And above all, what relationships and relations are perceived in relation to puppets? Since the "Puppet Abécédaire" does not yet exist, at least not according to the criteria of Deleuze's philosophy, we can begin to produce questions and problems. We will look for relations between the puppet and Deleuze's concepts such as decentralisation, rhizome, time, and space, virtual and actual, with the help of a study developed by Flore Garcin-Marrou.

Splitting and Decentralising Puppets

When we think about puppets, in many cases we tend to use philosophical terms such as object, subject, animate, inanimate, physical, metaphysical. In addition to these binary terms, the concept of animation is constantly present in puppetry. How the puppet is animated, who animates the puppet and what else can be animated. It seems that we are always on a vertical scale of thinking about puppets, where "vertical" refers to the hierarchical co-positioning of what is animated and who animates it. The vertical and thus hierarchical structure allows us to focus on one aspect or factor within that structure. What does the one who animates mean for what is animated? Is the animated subject to the one who animates? Is the one who animates above that which is only animated? The relationship and the relation are thus always established, but only by placing one of the elements of the binary concept in a focused or centralised

2 | In this article, the author focused on the studies from Aline Wiame and Flore Garcin-Marrou.

3 | In this article the focus in on: "De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze." *Marionnette, corps-frontiere, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. "Corps et voix",* 2016.; "Pas si bete la marionnette!". *Bêt(is)es: Entre Derrida, Deleuze-Guattari et Sloterdijk.* Chimeres, p. 131–138.; Flore Garcin-Marrou. "L'Abecedaire de Gilles Deleuze". Dossier: Art et alphabet. Revue Ligeia, p. 153–156, January–June 2017, p. 212–219.

4 | In her article about Deleuze's *Abécédaire* (source mentioned above), Flore Garcin-Marrou mentions Canadian choreographer Andrée Martin and her work *L'Abécédaire du corps dansant* (2016) as an example of the transfer of Deleuze's *Abécédaire* to the field of the art of dance. This is how Deleuze's philosophy transfers, theatralises into the field of art.

position. When we think about what the animator means, it will always be the starting point for further considerations. The animator becomes the central concept from which we derive its attitude towards the animated entity, be it an object, a substance, or a puppet. The way we think about the animated does not change either.

Our starting point is the view of the animate to which we ascribe its properties and essence, and only then do we look for the forces that define the animate in its relation to the one who animate it. The philosophical thought of Gilles Deleuze presents us with a different structure of thought. Instead of a hierarchical vertical scale in which we move from one central concept to another, caught in a mental ascent and descent on the scale, the French philosopher offers a horizontal structure of thought. In this case, the starting point from which we promote signs does not matter much because we do not focus entirely on it. Instead of going from one starting point to the next, we will move through different lines, trains of thought and the persistent questioning of the medium itself (puppet) as we search for different territories, fields, and events between them. At this point, the animate and the animator are not pitted against each other and are not thought of as individual entities. The animate is not pitted against the inanimate, and the subject is not pitted against the object. Instead, the characters will create an interwoven movement of different elements. The movement of the animator can point to the movements of the animated, the movement of the animated decomposes into affects (sensations) of the audience and describes a new sign in the animator. Within the process, signs and intensities intertwine, and similar to a rhizome (or mycelium), we cannot clearly see or determine the central point of the action.[5] The action is not represented by objects or their properties, but by the dynamics in the process of their emergence. We are in a realm of the indistinguishable, where we do not look for the deficit or absence of something else in things, phenomena, and perceptions, but move between different identities in such a way that a particular sign (of a thing, phenomenon or perception) can always be something else. When we try to look at an artistic event through the prism of Deleuze's thinking, we always face its components with an "either-or" (either seen, heard, discovered or puppet, an-

imated form, the animator means x or y), while in between there is a sliding surface of emergent meanings. The split, the way of splitting off from established, fixed concepts, grounds Deleuze's theatre of real movement.[6] For Deleuze, the continuous production of taking in and consuming (in the perceptual world of the viewer or creator, the continuous processing of the medium and the material) is a creative activity, processualism or process as a possibility of liberation.[7]

To return to the introductory remark that the "puppet" must stand against itself, this would mean leaving or breaking open its established identity and creating a new field for understanding the "puppet" and puppetry. Every idea about a puppet is its potential, a possible beginning or end. Within the artistic event in which the idea or potential of puppetry (animated, produced, mechanised) is conceived, there is a web of intensities and the search for a common boundary that transforms the action that takes place in a specific space and time into a creative activity. It forces the creator who uses the possibilities of puppetry to generate sensations and to constantly pose questions and problems in the realm of puppetry. Deleuze (in the context of his notions of cinema art) referred to this as the "liquid perception"[8] in which the concept seeks its territory. In the realm of puppetry, we could say the same thing. A puppet that stands against itself must search for its territory and constantly produce questions and problems before it formulates its concept.

Automaton as a Paradigm of Vital Energy

In her article "From the 'Rhizomatic' Puppet to Spiritual Automaton with Gilles Deleuze",[9] Flore Garcin-Marrou reflects on the important role of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy and concepts for the new way of thinking about the puppet and the puppet theatre. This careful reading of Deleuze's works offers an overview of the various conceptions of the human puppet in the history of philosophy. In doing so, at-

5 | Gilles Deleuze transferred the concept from botany to philosophy. *Rhyzome* means a web in which we cannot identify a central point. In a similar way, we cannot identify a starting point and the end of a plant in roots. Each point is a possible start or end. In philosophy, the concept of *mycelium* (used in Slovenian instead of *rhyzome*) is considered to be a descriptive model in which elements are not hierarchical.

6 | The Deleuze's concept is also referred to by Aline Wiame in her article: Aline Wiame. "Deleuze's 'Puppetry' and the Ethics of Non-human Compositions", eds. Kreiger, A., Rooss, A. *Theatre of animated forms*. Maska no. 179–180/Lutka no. 59, 2016, pp. 60–67.
7 | Gilles D., Guattari, F. *Anti-Ojdip : kapitalizem in shizofrenija.* Krtina, 2017, pp. 478–479.
8 | Gilles Deleuze. *The Movement Image*. Studia humanitatis, 1991.
9 | Flore Garcin-Marrou. "De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze." Marionnette, corps-frontiere, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. "Corps et voix", 2016, str. 7. Flore Garcin-Marrou. "De la marionntte 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze." *Marionnette, corps-frontiere*, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. "Corps et voix", 2016.

tention is drawn to the important turn Deleuze made in the second half of the 20th century by re-reading the German dramatist and writer Heinrich von Kleist and his essay "On the Marionette Theatre",[10] as well as his concept of the image of movement and the image of time in cinematic art.

Kleist, who was a figure of German Romanticism, saw the puppet as the antagonist of the actor. In the spirit of this era, the human creator proves to be incomplete and cumbersome, while the marionette is a perfect, natural presence. Indeed, the puppet is completely subject to the laws of mechanics and defies the imperfect nature of human individuality. The puppet adheres to the wishes of its animator and is therefore the most impeccable performer of the artistic event. Its advantage is that it does not succumb to the imperfections of its body, for it is the task and the power of the animator to coax from it the perfect movement. For Kleist, the qualities of the marionette, the dead limbs and the strictly regulated mechanisms that follow the law of gravity, represent the perfection of movement. For the German Romantic, the puppet is a symbol of ideal human nature and the representation of perfect theatricality since it has no other life outside the theatre.

In one of the commentaries on Kleist's text, Deleuze points out that the puppet cannot merely abide the law of gravity and the power of its animator. The bond that connects the puppet and the animator is not that of a pure and perfect movement, instead it is a multiple bond. It is a bond that carries different intensities of the virtual and the real. In Deleuze's context, the virtual stands for something that can be actualised. The bond between the puppet and the animator is thus not only reflected in a figurative representation, but also in its virtual dimension (something that can still be actualised). And the virtual that allows the conceptual, physical, and narrative potentials of the puppet (together and not only through its animator) to become an event is layered, decentralised, and stratified. The puppet and the animator establish possible relationships based on the principle of "back and forth":[11] The puppet can be virtualised in the animator; the animator is actualised in the puppet and vice versa. It can happen that the puppet dominates the animator, because "the animator is virtualised in it (becomes

part of the fiction), while the puppet is actualised, as it lets us believe that it suddenly came to life in reality".[12]

When Deleuze talks about the difference between theatre and film, he points out more than once the relationship between what is seen and what is heard. Theatre speaks about something and shows us something at the same time, the heard and the seen are produced at the same time and space. Film, on the other hand, shows us something, but what the film talks about is produced "under" the image (as a new layer of image). According to Deleuze, there is a difference between the dramatic image and the "automatic" image, which requires a new understanding of the actor or the role. A theatre actor plays or brings to life the combination of voice and body, while a film actor, in contrast, performs a kind of rupture or transference of body and voice, much like a puppet. Deleuze says that the transference of what is heard and what is seen is typical of film.[13] A theatre actor speaks the words directly, uses his body to dialogue with the dramatic structure or directly with the audience. Film, on the other hand, deconstructs theatre dialogue; it shifts the absolute of drama and brings into dialogue the split between the here and the now of utterance. The role or the actor becomes automated. The film actor does not use the same expressive technique; his movements become part of the audiovisual material of the film image. "In addition, the automatic actor stands out for his approach to the movement. Since the movement is not dramatic, but automatic, the drama is no longer at the basis of the act: movement becomes a 'direct information of the cinema image'".[14] Choreographies or theatrical images are always connected to a movement, to something that sets them in motion, whereas the film image creates the movement itself. The movement is thus excluded from its figurative nature. Flore Garcin-Marrou refers to Deleuze's various examples of film directors. The movement of natural elements, such as water, seas, rivers, is not simply a natural movement. Rather, these elements become automatic machines (automata) that retain their individual character but to which other signs, prescriptions and affects (signs of perception and emotion) are added. All these automated processes thus go far beyond simple presentation and contribute to generating the power of movement – a movement that requires a new subjectivity

10 | Kleist's essay that was published in *Berliner Abendblet* and was conceived as a reflection of a dance event.
11 | Flore Garcin-Marrou. "De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze." *Marionnette, corps-frontiere*, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. "Corps et voix", 2016, p. 7. Flore Garcin-Marrou used the phrase "va-et-vient" meaning a continuous shift between come and go.

12 | Ibid.
13 | Deleuze's presentation at the conference *What is a Creative Action?* (*Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création?*), Femis Foundation, 17. 5. 1987.
14 | Flore Garcin-Marrou. "De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze." Marionnette, corps-frontiere, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. "Corps et voix", 2016, p. 8.

due to the intensity of the signs of perception and affects. "This paradigm of the mental automaton, taken over from Spinoza, characterises this state of mind capable of linking ideas with ideas, images with images, independently of any reference to the object and in radical emancipation from dramatic and mimetic requirements. In this new automatic subjectivity, the viewer also becomes a mental automatism when he enters into a connection with the moving image whose vibrations he experiences.[15]

Deleuze's concept of the "mechanical" and the figure of the automaton as a paradigm of vital energy, self-movement, and the multiplication of perceptual possibilities in the field of cinematic art overlaps with his thoughts on the aesthetic, social and economic upheavals of the 20th century. In reflecting on Deleuze's concepts, Flore Garcin-Marrou emphasises the need to rethink theatre and philosophy, which cannot escape the world's growing technological progress.

Puppet Automaton

Even the "puppet" cannot run away from technological progress. No matter whether it is a classical, traditional puppet in any form, or puppet machines, androids, and all other forms of puppets that we call animate forms. The most important insight to follow Deleuze's thinking, and the first step in working out the question and problem about the puppet, the animated form in the realm of art, is to split the puppet from its metaphysical nature. Gilles Deleuze was one of the first major philosophers of the 20th century to think about the role of cinema in the world of art, in parallel with thinking about art as part of the ever-advancing technological progress in a (not necessarily more advanced) society. The "puppet" can follow a similar path. The rhizomatic approach of looking at the puppet from different angles and always placing it in new contexts and looking for new possibilities of territory is the approach to take in a changing society. The puppet, whether virtual or real, can always become an automated image or rather an event. But only to the extent that an automated event means a necessary call to the creator to set life in motion, to free it from the established chains of everyday life into which we like to shackle it.

ABSTRACT

Although the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze never explicitly spoke or wrote about puppet theatre, his concepts can be used to re-establish the concept of puppetry and animated forms. Through a parallel reading of the works of the French theorist Flore Garcin-Marrou, who often refers to Deleuze's thinking in her work, the article focuses on a different approach to the perception of puppetry and highlights the horizontal approach of thinking about the puppet as a deviation from the hierarchical arrangement. Furthermore, it introduces the actual and the virtual in the realm of the puppet, while in the second part refers to the puppet and the spectator as a spiritual automaton.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After studying Philosophy and Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana and University of Burgundy), Maša Jazbec focused her studies on French language, pedagogics, and theatre. She worked as a dramaturge and theatre-speech specialist. In recent years she has explored puppet art and wrote for the EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform and translated poetry, plays and expert articles. She teaches French language, explores narrative skills, organises cultural, artistic, and educational events, and puppet and theatre performances in Slovenian and French. As a pedagogue, translator, and performer, she actively works with the French Institute in Slovenia, the Centre de Créations pour l'Enfance, Centre culturel de Tinqueux in France, the Vodnik Homestead in Ljubljana, and the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre.

KEY WORDS

Gilles Deleuze, philosophy, animated forms, puppetry field, theatre, art, virtual–actual, Flore Garcin-Marrou, mycelium (rhyzome), deterritorialization, Abécédaire, signs-perceptions, vital energy, spiritual automaton, Time-Image, The Movement Image, the potential of puppetry, creative action

15 | Ibid, p. 9.

Bibliography

Aline Wiame. »Deleuze's "Puppetry" and the Ethics of Non-human Compositions«, eds. Kreiger, A., Rooss, A. A. *Theatre of animated forms.* Maska no. 179–180/Lutka no. 59, 2016. | **Beauchamp, H., Garcin-Marrou, F., Noges, J., Van Haesebroeck, E.** *Les Scènes philosophiques de la marionnette.* Éditions L'Entretemps et Institut International de la Marionnette avec le soutien de l'Université de Toulouse, 2016. | **Deleuze, Gilles.** *Podoba-gibanje.* Studia humanitatis, 1991. | **Deleuze, Gilles.** *Podoba-čas.* Studia humanitatis, 2020. | **Deleuze, Gilles.** *Razlika in ponavljanje.* Založba ZRC SAZU, 2011. | **Deleuze G., Guattari, F.** *Micelij: esej.* Hyperion, 2000. | **Deleuze G., Guattari, F.** *Kaj je filozofija?* Študentska založba, 1999. | **Deleuze G., Guattari, F.** *Anti-Ojdip : kapitalizem in shizofrenija.* Krtina, 2017. | **Flore Garcin-Marrou.** "L'Abecedaire de Gilles Deleuze". *Dossier: Art et alphabet.* Revue Ligeia, no. 153–156, january–june 2017. | **Flore Garcin-Marrou.** "De la marionnette 'rhizomatique' a l'automate spirituel, chez Gilles Deleuze." *Marionnette, corps-frontiere*, etudes reunies par H. Beauchamp, J. Nogues et E. Van Haesebroeck. Presses de l'Universite Artois, coll. "Corps et voix", 2016. | **Flore Garcin-Marrou.** »Pas si bete la marionnette !«. *Bêt(is)es: Entre Derrida, Deleuze-Guattari et Sloterdijk.* Chimeres no. 81, 2013. | *L'abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze:* avec Claire Parnet, DVD, Montparnasse, 2004. | *Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création?* Femis, 17. 5. 1987.

TJAŠA BERTONCELJ

The Condition of the Inanimate in Puppetry
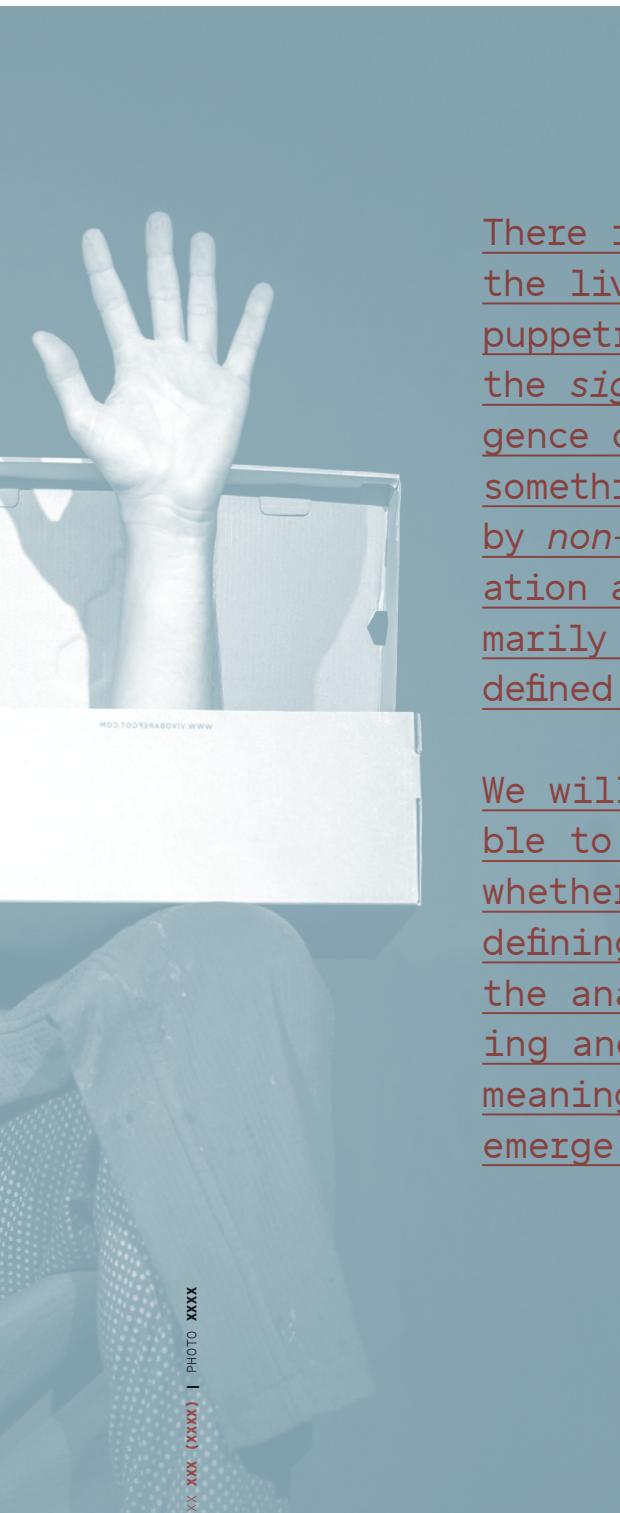
There is an obvious mutual analogy between the living and the puppetry. The basis of puppetry is defined by *being, formation* and the *sign of existence*. However, the emergence of being presupposes as its origin something that *is not being* and is defined by *non-being*. For this reason, the consideration and definition of puppetry focuses primarily on the puppet as an *inanimate* object defined by the act of *bringing it to life*.

We will explore to what extent it is possible to question this general assumption and whether it can continue to be the basis for defining puppet theatre. At the same time, the analysis of different modalities of being and non-being will determine which meanings of the *animate* and *inanimate* emerge in contemporary puppet performances.

Through theory

XXX, XXX (XXXX) | PHOTO XXXX

The Basis of the Inanimate

The act of revival has interesting conceptual underpinnings, as the animated object has a different ontological status than it appears in performance. Puppetry is deeply fascinated and focused on the certainty of *lifelessness* that can come *alive* through puppet animation. This is followed by the question: How do we perceive the inanimate?

The *inanimate* is often seen as something diametrically opposed to human existence, which is the ultimate measure of aliveness. Inanimate matter and things therefore lack autonomy, consciousness, reason, self-consciousness, mental phenomena, the ability to communicate, sensuality and the capacity for autonomous movement. This kind of binary perception of the world distinguishes between living and active subjects on the one hand and passive and stable phenomena or "non-instrumental entities" on the other.[1]

Following "Eastern" principles of being, the *animate* in another system of thought also includes the human, animal, and plant worlds. Something we normally perceive as inanimate can have a life of its own or be in the early stages of animistic belief, according to which all things have a soul. We can question and radically change the "established" anthropocentric basis and recognise the ambiguity and cultural conditionality associated with the definition of the inanimate. This is reinforced by modern discourses that reinforce the non-human world.

In the chapter "Playing with the Eternal Uncanny"[2], John Bell writes that puppets reconstruct our superiority over the material world. They allow us to question the modern paradigm and power over science and reason. Man is no longer an absolute prerequisite or, as Edmund Husserl defines it, "the last criterion of the sense of being [...] and everything existing in the world."[3] Outside of such a conventional and human-centred view, it is possible to break down the fixed structure of the inanimate.

Animators in contemporary puppetry are no longer absolute demiurges in complete control of materials and objects; these take on a more autonomous character to which the an-

imator responds. Attention shifts to the autonomous movement of the objects and their sensory qualities, suggesting that the objects have a will and whims of their own.[4] The expressive potential of the objects thus distracts us from Man – Master – God. Nika Arhar writes: "The inanimate world of material things not only expresses the anthropocentric impulse to regulate the world but can act as a driving force with its own power in the new decentralised world, co-creating a common system and meaning, best reflected in contemporary puppet theatre."[5] The "position of the subject who directs, regulates, acts, inspires, gives impetus and assigns meaning"[6] is seen from a new angle.

We can question what the inanimate is. How we perceive it in puppet shows is often related to what the process of *bringing it to life* represents. The inanimate is ultimately determined in relation to the animate. We can become aware of the ontological state of the puppet before it comes to life and becomes an "imaginary subject."[7] This in turn shows that the object of animation is not always an *inanimate thing* but can also extend to the realm of animate and living beings.

Signs of the Animate

The act of bringing puppets to life clearly raises questions about being: what is life, what is alive and what is a sign of being alive? When and why can we say that something exists? How is the phenomenon of existence to be understood? And also: what does the act of bringing a puppet to life mean in the contemporary practise of puppetry? Perhaps the indicator is its altered ontological status, the illusion of the puppet's independent character, or something else?

The conventional process of revival can be seen in Philippe Saumont's production entitled "*3*" (Le Théâtre Des Tarabates in co-production with Passerelle-Scène nationale deSt-Brieuc, 2021). It depicts the birth or embodiment of a puppet: a palm tree brought to life becomes a final, human-centred image. By gaining its independence, the act

1 | Keren Turbahn, Julia. *On How to Let 'It' Be*. 2018, *https://em-anat.si/media/11d28b5b00/Let.it.be_JKT-Jan.Rozman_Thing-ing-EN-FINAL.pdf*. In: Lepecki, André. *Singularities – Dance in the Age of Performance*, Routledge, 2016.
2 | [2] Bell, John. "Playing with the Eternal Uncanny", eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, pp. 50–51.
3 | Hribar, Tine. *Ontološka diferenca*. Fenomenološko društvo, 1992, p. 12.

4 | Margolies, Elanor. "Return to the Mound, eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. T*he Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, pp. 322–323.
5 | Arhar, Nika. "Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu", ed. Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.
6 | Ibid.
7 | Piris, Paul. "The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet", eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, p. 40.

of self-creation, and the appropriation, management and manipulation of the animator, the puppet acquires an ever more complete, individual image. The process is completed in the final scene when the body of the puppeteer becomes the body of the puppet.[8] In this case, the final stage of the puppet's *liveliness* is reached when it takes on the form of a human body. All other more abstract and fragmented forms of liveliness (e.g. a finger puppet or a puppet as a palm) prove to be imperfect forms of life. The measure of liveliness in this case is tied to the conventional notion based on the figural image of the human being.

The history of puppetry is marked by the attempt to create the most convincing illusion of life through the duplication of human and animal life.[9] This illusion is defined by Bert States as "binocular vision", which allows " theatre audiences to grant fictive life to characters or objects based on their behaviours and the performance setting, encouraging spectators to project psychology and emotions onto human actors or inanimate objects".[10] The greater the resemblance to the lives of living beings as we know them, the more the differences between the imaginary and the real become blurred.

The performance by the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre and Flota *Still Life* (Tihožitje, 2020), directed by Tin Grabnar, hyper-realistically brings *creatures that were once alive* back to life. It deals with the elusive question of the phenomenon of life and raises the question of the relationship between life and death. The illusion of life appears in hyper-realistic images of animated stuffed hares that come (back) to life. The focus is on the return to life, the attempt to come as close as possible to their natural (past) existence – grazing in the meadow, preening on the stones, feeding their offspring. The theme and argument of *Still life* is life before death, before the hares are used for taxidermy purposes and before they are used on stage. It restores the original and intact living existence and tries to bring it back on the stage. At the same time, the act of resuscitation is accompanied by the paradox of the *dead* – even when we approach their living state in nature as close as possible, they remain defined by the inanimate.

The animation of objects and the subsequent expansion of the medium of the puppet break down the conventional sign of the animate that was based on physical appearance. The figural image of a living being is no longer a necessary condition for a puppet to co-create a symbol of life. But what signs of life emerge when animation no longer recreates realistic images and when the physical image of the puppet no longer co-creates the illusion of life?

The characterisation of the puppet as a subject is at the forefront of the online version of Ariel Doron's performance *Unboxed* (2021).[11] It shows the animation of a specific part of the animator's body – the animator's body takes on the role of an animated puppetry object that is not supposed to have a life of its own. The animator's left hand gradually becomes an object in its own right, animated using the stop-motion technique. What follows is a turning point in the performance as the hand is given its own source of life. The act of bringing puppets to life thus leads to a new role and the associated stage subjectivity. A completely individual, fictional character emerges. The signs of life are contained in figures that feel, think, act, move and perceive "independently" of their animator.

First, we observe the classical metaphor of the puppet show: the god – the animator – gives life to an object and is thus the only condition for this life. During the performance, the object "frees" itself from its animator and the puppet thus acquires its own being. This relationship is the theme of Philippe Genty's famous work *Figure 1.1*, in which the puppet Pierrot becomes aware of its manipulator. By freeing itself, the puppet acquires an independent life and exercises its right not to be.

Genty's piece shows the relationship between human/creator and object/creation, while Doron's work also explores other levels of meaning. The author assumes that there is a relationship between the animator and the animator's body part. Although the audience watches the animation of Doron's body throughout the performance, the animator's hand initially presents itself as an inanimate puppet separate from Doron. Later it acquires an independent being and, in this way, mentally separates itself from its "owner". The modalities of the inanimate and the animate are much more complex and are related to the absence or acquisition of personality. The hand *comes to life* because it acquires its own (independent) character.

8 | These sections summarize and supplement the analysis from my previous publication; see: Bertoncelj, Tjaša. *Festival v Charleville-Mézièresu, paleta svetovnih lutkarskih izrazov.* ECPCP, october 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/festival-v-charleville-mezieresu-paleta-svetovnih-lutkarskih-izrazov/.
9 | Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T. "Programming Play", eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routhledge, 2014, p. 308.
10 | Ibid, pp. 308–309.

11 | Originally: *Boxed* (2019)

A mixture of the animate and the inanimate in far-reaching metaphysical dimensions is found in the combination of puppetry and visual theatre. In visual theatre, the object of animation is a comprehensive stage set and thus a series of different animated elements. There is a series of moving images that include "animated bodies and animated things, and their interaction and integration in the overall *image*".[12]

La Messe de l'Âne (2021), directed by Olivier de Sagazano and produced by Compagnie Ipsul, combines elements of visual art, physical theatre, and animation of the entire set. In the performance, the performers apply clay to their bodies and complete their body image in this way. The bodies deform and thus appear like abstract sculptures. The dividing line between the animator and the animated disappears as they become a unified whole. Through the skilful combination of animate and inanimate elements – light, sound, music, text, body, images, and action – a new and more abstract concept of animation establishes itself on stage as the piece progresses.

The disillusioning nature of puppet theatre, moving away from a comprehensive representation of life, leads to increasingly abstract *signs of the animate*. In contemporary puppet theatre, the criteria of the animate have expanded and transformed into symbols that are harder to define compared to a clear human-based figure image with a clear characterisation of voice and movement and a clear representation of the signs of the animate.

The clearly formed image of life and the mimesis of the human and animal world have been left behind in favour of imitation[13] and the elusiveness of a clear subjectivity. We witness more abstract signs, references, and metaphors of the living. The illusion of *the animate* can thus be abstracted as the sign of breath. Does this mean that *the animate* is a breath? A movement? A subject? A thought of a spectator? So, what is the character of *liveliness* that is typical of contemporary puppetry?[14]

Movement is one of the most important symbols of life and the definition of animation in puppetry. Examples of puppetry movements that do not characterise the characters

can be found in the performance *I inherit my glory from Rostam* (Man anam ke rostam bovad pahlavan, 2016) by Ali Moini (produced by Selon L'Heure and the Montpellier Danse Festival, La Passerelle – Scène Nationale de St Brieuc, and La Filature Scène Nationale de Mulhouse) and in the performance *Requiem for the Future* (Rekviem za prihodnost) by Maja Smrekar, co-produced in 2016 by the Aksioma Institute and the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre in partnership with the *City of Women Festival*.

I inherit my glory from Rostam features the animation of a metal frame together with flesh tissue. Ali Moini and a life-size metal puppet stage a synchronous movement. Each dance movement of the animator finds its echo in the metal frame of the puppet. By imitating the movements, the puppet becomes a human double. The puppet represents a duplicate of human movement and is not conceived as an independent living figure. The duality between the animate/manipulator and the inanimate/dependent is reinforced by the difference between the human, organic body, and the metallic, artificial structure. The author introduces pieces of flesh, which he attaches to the metal structure in the last part of the performance. He adds something to the artificial material that was once part of the living world.

The mere act of movement is also enacted in the performance *Requiem for the Future*. Exploring the associative paradigm of the movement of animals and machines, the author designs the three parts of the performance: DOG, DRONE, and absent HUMAN. Throughout the performance, the author aims to break the anthropocentric relationship and establish a connection between technology, nature, and the hybrid anthropo-zoo-technomorphism of robots and animals.[15] In this case, the puppet is *a living being:* a dog. The process of bringing it to life involves manipulation, animation of movement and establishing a relationship with the object of animation. This results in an essential feature of contemporary puppetry, which loses direct contact with the concept of bringing to life through the management of an animated "object".

Masahiro Mori[16] believes that movement is "fundamental to how humans perceive animate and inanimate objects".

12 | Butler Garrett, Thomas. *The Puppet, the Cinematic and Contemporary Visual Theatre: Principles, Practices, Logos*. University of Brighton, 2009, p. 78.
13 | Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T. "Programming Play", eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, pp. 310–311.
14 | Interesting insights also appear in the article The Unbearable Freedom of Associative Thinking by Maša Radi Buh, published on the EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform on 21.10.2021.

15 | From the description of the performance: https://veza.sigledal.org/uprizoritev/rekviem-za-prihodnost.
16 | Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T. "Programming Play", eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. Routledge, 2014, p. 310.
17 | Maurič Lazar, M. "Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu", ed. Tjaša Bertoncelj *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.

Martina Maurič Lazar[17] valorises this idea metaphysically. Puppetry is "the movement of thought – the movement of meanings and metamorphoses, the movement of metaphors that trigger different constellations and uses of things, objects and meanings on stage." Movement can thus extend to the objectivity of animate objects and also to the super-objective sphere of meaning. In this way, it also defines that not every stage movement is already a puppetry movement, as it must include the intention to *animate meaning*.

Instead of saying that the movement of an animated "object"[18] defines a sign of life, we could say that in contemporary puppetry practise, movement creates meanings. Rather than viewing puppetry animation as an act of bringing to life, we can speak of *manipulation/management/attitude* towards the animated. This assumes a caesura where we can speak of *animated x* rather than a traditional *animated* puppet character.[19] In these cases, puppet theatre does not create a semiotic tool of the animate and inanimate, as the system of signs no longer requires the creation of a direct illusion of life and animation has a different basis – the creation of meanings. Perhaps, like Henryk Jurkowski, we need to derive this basis by looking at the characteristics of puppets: "they have to overcome their immovable state",[20] which can also be understood in a metaphorical and metaphysical sense.

Transition from Bringing to Life to Animation

The word *animate* is derived from the Latin word *animare*. It means *to bring to life*. Although this primarily evokes an association with the process associated with *the inanimate* – i.e. to *give life to the inanimate* or *to make someone alive* – the essential component is to make someone more *lively and active*.[21] Thus, the object being brought to life does not depend on its animate or inanimate quality, but can be linked to kinetics, a specific activation, the relationship established with the object, or the acquisition of a metaphysical meaning. This confirms the thesis that puppetry can no longer limit itself to the definition according to which it brings inanimate objects to life, but that it must build on the gesture of animation. In contemporary puppetry, we can speak of the epistemological shift from the puppet as object and character (*living, figural, characterised object*) to the puppet as the result of manipulation (*puppet is any animated entity*); in this context, the word animation has a wide range of meanings and thus many possibilities of rendering. Because of the modern possibilities of the medium, the puppet is defined to a lesser extent by what it is, in what physical form it expresses itself and what ontological status it has, but primarily by the process in which it is brought to life. Puppets also appear in combinations of animate and inanimate figures, but they are much more complex and displace the clear binary relationship between the animate and the inanimate.

The postmodern analysis of the social situation and art is characterised by fluidity, as things appear indefinable rather than firmly determined by forms. The openness and fluidity that characterise the animating moment in puppetry create openness and boundlessness of puppetry thought and practise. What is perhaps necessary for professional insight into puppetry is the constant questioning and development of new definitions. As Jurkowski states in an analysis of puppetry in the last century that is still relevant today, "there is no single satisfactory definition of puppet theatre".[22] Therefore, we can reconsider the puppet's defining characteristic of being inanimate, but also its traditional definition, which extends to ever new forms by breaking down conventional structures. Despite the fact that the puppet defies definition and transcends the basis of the inanimate and the animate, it still exists and hovers between the animate and the inanimate. Its foundation has meanwhile remained/become a hybrid void.

---

18 | Frequently combined with characterization.

19 | x as an unknown variable, as the broadest potential of the animated. x can be an object, material, light, sound, thought, ecc.

20 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Aspects of Puppet Theatre: A collection of Essays.* Puppet Centre Trust, 1988, p. 8.

21 | Animirati (*animate*) (n.d.) In: Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika. Retrived from www.fran.si.

22 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva: 1. knjiga.* Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998, p. 16.

ABSTRACT

The article deals with the ontological foundations of the puppet as well as with the levels of the *animate* and the *inanimate*. It includes an analysis of the classical definition of puppetry, which considers the puppet as an inanimate object brought to life through animation, creating the illusion of life. The article explores the different modalities of the inanimate and the animate in performances that alter or shift the clear boundaries of the criterion of the inanimate in puppetry, along with the perception of animation as an act that brings objects to life. Puppetry transcends its basis of the inanimate, while the signs of the animate have become more abstract and no longer a necessary condition for puppet animation. A much more meaningful basis in contemporary puppetry is a theoretical turn towards puppet animation. For this reason, the postmodern fluidity, and the "inability" to give definitions are inherent in puppetry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tjaša Bertoncelj is an editor, dramaturge, curator and theatrologist. She holds a master's degree in Sociology and Philosophy of Culture from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. In recent years she has specialised in the field of puppetry and theatre of animated forms. As a practical dramaturg, she has worked with established directors (Matija Solce, Tin Grabnar, Fabrizio Montecchi) and was employed as a dramaturg at the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre in the 2019/2020 season. She also works as a writer, curator, and editor. Since 2019, she has been co-editor of the international journal for puppetry art and the theatre of animated forms, *Lutka* (Puppet), and editor of the Slovenian Platform, which is part of the EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform. In 2021, she conceived and designed a digital exhibition on contemporary Slovenian puppetry.

KEY WORDS

animate, inanimate, bringing to life, animation, movement, managing an animated object, animate meaning, puppet

Bibliography

Animirati (animate) (n.d.) In: Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika. Retrieved from www.fran.si. | **Arhar, Nika.** »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, ed. Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. | **Bell, John.** »Playing with the Eternal Uncanny«, eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Bertoncelj, Tjaša.** *Festival v Charleville-Mézièresu, paleta svetovnih lutkarskih izrazov.* ECPCP, october 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/festival-v-charleville-mezieresu-paleta-svetovnih-lutkarskih-izrazov/. | **Butler Garrett, Thomas.** *The Puppet, the Cinematic and Contemporary Visual Theatre: Principles, Practices, Logos.* University of Brighton, 2009, https://research.brighton.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/the-puppet-the-cinematic-and-contemporary-visual-theatre-principl. | **Hribar, Tine.** *Ontološka diferenca.* Fenomenološko društvo, 1992. | **Jochum, A. E., Murphey, T.**. »Programming Play«, eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Keren Turbahn, Julia.** *Kako stvarem pustiti, da so.* 2018, https://emanat.si/media/330171e19e/Kako.stvarem.pustiti.da.so-JKT-Jan.Rozman_Predmetenje-FINAL.pdf; In: Lepecki, André. *Singularities – Dance in the Age of Performance*, Routledge, 2016. | **Margolies, Elanor.** »Return to the Mound«, eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Maurič Lazar, M.** »Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu«, ed. Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. | **Piris, Paul.** »The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet.«, eds. Ponser, N., D., Orenstein, C., Bell, J. *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Aspects of Puppet Theatre: A collection of Essays.* Puppet Centre Trust, 1988. | **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva: 1. knjiga.* Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998.

IGOR TRETINJAK

Through Conscious Passivation to Absolute Power

Introduction

In many ancient cultures, puppets in their "zero" or static phase, ruled over man: that is, as Henryk Jurkowski writes, "they possessed a special magical power that allowed them to rule over certain groups of people."[1] The key element of this domination was "the belief that the puppet originates from another world, from a special, sacral territory".[2] Many centuries and stages of development later, the puppets returned to their "static" beginnings and completed the circle, or, in Jurkowski's words, the "spiral",[3] by once again taking power over humans, but this time not in the position of their "sacral subject" but in that of a demiurge. In this way, they completed the developmental journey from idol and symbol to a substitutive[4] and central figure as well as a co-player and partner to a demiurge of their own demiurge. In the following text, we will reduce this long and complex performative journey to a brief overview, with a special focus on an important turn in the final phase.

A Historical Overview of the Relationship Between the Puppet and its Animator

According to some historians, most notably Charles Magnin, the puppet in its ancient origins was a static idol whose first movements were limited to participation in processions.[5] In the Middle Ages, this "immobile mobility" was replaced by a mechanical mobility through which the puppet performed miracles of faith in churches with unexpected movements of the hands, face and eyes, thus becoming a material confirmation of the power of the immaterial. In the next stage of development, the puppet went from being a passive source of admiration to an active source of entertainment by moving (even literally) into performative waters. At the same time, faith was replaced by man as the former "animator". In the hands of man, the puppet went through numerous stages of development and roles, from popular amusement to an artificial copy of the actor to the tightly controlled star of the performance, and along the way children's toys were inscribed as the source of the puppet, as were idols and icons. In this wide arc between ritual and play, the puppet developed its own expression, the key moment of which is the actor's emergence from the shadows onto the stage. Although many puppeteers saw this moment as the beginning of the end of puppetry, it proved to be an important step on the way back to power. On the one hand, the open animation gave the performer the opportunity to present himself, and on the other hand, it brought the performer on a par with the puppet in terms of performance. The previously omnipotent ruler who pulled the strings from the shadows, controlling and shaping the puppet's destiny, now also became its equal partner on stage.

The newly created partnership opened up numerous possibilities for building a relationship between the actor and the puppet, in which the actor would sometimes leave the role of demiurge to the puppet. Sometimes this was done consciously, sometimes not, and a somewhat unexpected and – for that reason alone particularly interesting – relationship developed in the moments of the puppet's immobility when, seemingly inanimate, it took power over its demiurge. If we look at this relationship through Kleist's romantic idea of the marionette and the dancer,[6] in these moments the

---

1 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Teorija lutkarstva: Ogledi iz istorije, teorije i estetike lutkarskog teatra*. Subotica, 2007, p. 28.
2 | Ibid.
3 | Henryk Jurkowski says that puppet theatre has changed in recent decades, returning to existing expressions "like on a spiral of sorts. [...] This means that having rejected some forms or certain topics as already worn out, it returns to them after some time, but on a different level of relationships, even if that return happens in an unconscious way." Jurkowski, Henryk. *Metamorfoze pozorišta lutaka u XX veku*. International Children's Theater Festival Pionir, Subotica, 2006, p. 127.
4 | Downsized artificial copy of the actor, note by I.T.
5 | More in: Jurkowski, Henryk. *Povijest europskog lutkarstva 1: Od začetaka do kraja 19. stoljeća*. International Center for Cultural Services, 2005, p. 22–23.

---

6 | In his famous work "On the Marionette Theatre", Kleist transforms the romantic idea of gradation from the unconscious perfection of nature through the conscious imperfection of man to the finally conscious perfection of the genius into a sequence in which the unconscious perfection of the marionette is lost and turned into imperfection by way of a conscious dancer, so that the ultimate and conscious perfection becomes embodied in God. More in: Kleist, Heinrich von. *O marionetskom kazalištu*. Scarabeus-naklada, 2009.

marionette replaced the initially unconscious and immobile domination, followed by the conscious mobile dependence on the animator, with a conscious immobile domination and thus became the artificial representative of God on stage.

False Rule

The development of the puppet and its relationship to the animator took centuries, and in the play *Oedipus Rex* (Kralj Edip), staged in 2020 in a co-production between the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc and the Rijeka Municipal Puppet Theatre, directed by Luciano Delprato, it was channelled in one scene. The relationship between the puppet and the animator changed and was explored throughout the play, so that in this one scene the puppet went through most of the positions – from a prop to a living figure in the hands of the animator to its equal partner and finally to the ruler. This short-lived triumph of the puppet over its own demiurge took place in a theatrical thriller in which Oedipus physically takes on everyone from the characters to those who moved them, from the puppets to the animators, finally defeating the father in the scene by taking matters into his own wooden hands and defeating his own demiurge. The puppet's domination, however, was the result of a conscious decision by the animators who, motivated mainly by the possibilities of stage (inter)play, only seemingly decided to let their own puppet take the lead and thus deceive both the artificial hero and the audience for a moment.

Something similar happened in the anthological play *The Miser* (Skup, GK Komedija Theatre and Dubrovnik Summer Festival, 1983) directed by Joško Juvančić and visually designed by Zlatko Bourek, where a lonely actor found himself in the artificial world of puppets. On their home ground, the puppets imposed their own rules on the actor, treating him as a stage partner, but also as part of the scenography, something contemporary puppet artist Ilke Schoenbein often plays with in her projects.[7] In these cases, although at first glance the artificiality prevails over the live actor, it is still animated by the animators (in or out of the shadows), so the rule itself is only a result of the stage fiction.

On the Way to (Partial) Freedom

The performer's play with the puppet's demiurge position offers great performative possibilities, but it remains in the space of theatricality, i.e. playing with layers of theatrical illusion. A further step from the puppeteer's conscious play with the theatre within the theatre arises in situations where he is forced to relinquish some of the power to the puppet. Paul Piris believes that these situations occur in moments when it seems to us "that the puppet is running away from its materiality and begins to act freely."[8] Contrary to Piris, sometimes it is precisely its materiality that allows the puppet a partial freedom, i.e. a (self-)control.

In the piece *Anywhere* (2016) by Théâtre de l'Entrouvert, directed and performed by Elise Vigneron and Hélène Barreau, the puppet was formed out of ice. This peculiarity completely changed the course of the play, as the puppet had an unpredictable life expectancy from the beginning. During the performance it melted and left wet traces of its stage existence, and in the end these traces also disappeared into the steam. Within a strictly defined time frame, the performers were only partial masters of the puppet, whose stage life depended on a variety of elements such as the temperature of the venue, the set and the body of the animator, and the dynamics of the interaction. Thus, the material of the puppet, as its physical essence, was the controller of the play and of the puppet's (stage) life. Werner Knoegden writes that " we call 'living' that matter which has the ability to change on its own, from within, as in the case of growth."[9] The puppet in *Anywhere* did not grow, but it shrank on its own, without the influence of the animator, which in part made it not only theatrical but actually alive.

A similar situation arose in the piece *Death or On Life* (Smrt ili o životu, 2019) by the Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek, in which fifth-year students under the direction of Tamara Kučinović and Maja Lučić built up a life story about the death of selected materials and objects through a series of etudes. By choosing unstable artificial elements such as feathers and kettles, they pointed to the fleeting nature of life and tested animation in an uncontrolled environment. Again, the performers had no control over the piece – in the kettles, the water boiled at its own pace, occasionally causing problems as different boiling times disrupted the flow of

7 | More on Ilka Schönbein's artistic work and her views on puppets in: Younge, Janni. *Reconfiguring Being:Puppetry and Perspectives on Being Human Explored Through the Work of Ilka Schönbein*. Critical Stages / Scènes critiquesno. no. 19, 2019, http://www.critical-stages.org/19/reconfiguring-being/.

8 | Piris, Paul. "The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet", eds. Bell, J., Posner, D. N., Orenstein, C. *The Routledge companion to puppetry and material performance*. Routledge, 2014, p. 39.
9 | Knoegden, Werner. *Nemogući teatar: O fenomenologiji kazališta figura*. ULUPUH, 2013, p. 25.

the piece. Similarly, the feathers were much more affected by the instability of the environment than the animators themselves, i.e. the restlessness of the air and the flames of the candles that awaited them at the end of their flight. In these cases, the puppet identified with its own material and, thanks to its characteristics, successfully resisted the absolute power of the animator, partially imposing its own rhythm and course of play. In the following examples, the puppets went one step further and gave up their main characteristic – mobility – in order to gain control over the animator.

The Active Power of the Passive

In the play *The Emperor's New Clothes* (Cesarjeva nova oblačila, 2020), a co-production of the Rijeka City Puppet Theatre and the Maribor Puppet Theatre directed by Zoran Petrovič, the motionless puppets did not take power over their own animators, but they largely replaced them with context, as in the previous examples. In this case, an conveyor belt and a video camera take center stage, their dynamic movement bringing the space around the static puppet to life, indirectly bringing the puppet to life. Petrovič had performed similar puppet activations with a video camera in his earlier projects at Moment Maribor. In the piece *Victoria 2.0* (2016), he transformed immobile Barbie dolls in a tennis scene into very dynamic and lively movements with "the help of a camera and a screen projection. Those static Barbies and their invisible balls became quite alive through careful and precise zooming and camera movement, additionally guided by witty sports commentary."[10] By combining a dead body on a live stage and an animated body in a performatively "dead" medium, Petrović "shifted the focus from the subject of the animation to the observer himself"[11] who, carefully guided by the eye of the camera, became a co-creator of the game through the possible inclusion of invisible balls in a tennis match.

Juraj Aras combined an inanimate mask with an inanimate sound recording on stage in the play *Desnica: Games of Spring and Death* (Desnica: Igre proljeća i smrti, Teatro Verrdi, 2017), which is based on parts of Vladan Desnica's reflexive existentialist novel *The Spring of Ivan Galeb*. The mask thus appears in an action reduced to contemplation and silence or, in traditional puppetry, to the stage death of the puppet. If we add to this the radio recording, i.e. a performatively lifeless voice, we get a double stage lifelessness that leads to the ontological instability of the puppet. In this "lability", the puppet was constantly born and died on stage, changing from the position of a prop, a part of the stage and costume set, to a character in its own right, the partner of the animator and at some moments the demiurge of its own demiurge. In the midst of this theatrical "dynamic inanimateness" stood the performer, who used the puppet and the radio expression equally as stage partners. The puppet's head in the performer's hands was common sense in a sick body, attached to a clothes rack it became a patient walking the hospital corridors with an IV, and lying in bed – the illness itself, while the reproduced sound became an inner voice and a partner in a game of chess. In this complex performative triangle, the hero constantly danced between the visual and auditory elements and the titular sources and death, separating them, and transforming them into one. In this dance, the puppet was a leader rather than a led, which placed it in a superior position from which, in addition to its own partial emancipation, it also influenced the animator and established a dual partial power.

From a Mobile Symbol to an Immobile Ruler

Thirty years before *The Emperor's New Clothes* and *Desnica,* the passive puppet briefly took almost complete control of its animator. This happened in 1988 in the piece *Why Are We in Vietnam, Minnie? (*Zašto smo u Vijetnamu, Minnie?) by the Zagreb Puppet Theatre, directed by Branko Brezovac. Marin Blažević called this piece, which is atypical for a theatre that still cultivates traditional expression, but also for Croatian puppetry in general, "a hysteria of parallel projections"[12] that "brings to saturation, to extreme in fact, the concept of multimedia theatrical polyphony."[13] The performative mishmash was held together by the puppet production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. It featured a multi-layered relationship between Biff and Happy Loman – played by actors – on the one hand, and projections of their youth interpreted by puppets animated by the same actors on the other. Until a turning point, the puppets were dependent on the actors, which corresponded to the level of content in which the image of the past was a distorted projection shaped by the family and the environment. The

10 | Tretinjak, Igor. *Duhovito igranje kazalištem i kilama.* AUK Online Magazine, no. 7, 2018, http://www.uaos.unios.hr/artos/index.php/hr/kritika-br-8/tretinjak-viktorija-2-0.
11 | Ibid.

12 | Blažević, Marin. *Razgovori o novom kazalištu 1: Branko Brezovec, Ivica Boban, Damir Bartol Indoš, Vjeran Zuppa*. Center for Dramatic Arts (CDU), 2007, p. 47.
13 | Ibid., p. 78.

dependence of the puppets and the past on the characters and the present is underlined by crude and exaggerated animations and humorous mutual comparisons and banter.[14]

The twist in the play comes in a scene where Biff finds out that the family's role model and father, Willy Loman, has a mistress. This realisation destroys the foundation on which the Loman family was built and grew. So the 70-centimetre tall, compact tabletop puppets that manipulated the characters like their own past were replaced by large, soft, awkward and grotesque puppets whose passivity and rigidity were too heavy a weight for Biff and Happy to bear. The breaking point thus led to a situation where the puppets, previously under the total control of their animators, became their rulers, the weights pulling the characters (and animators) down. And all this from the position of a passivated symbol. Throughout the piece, the actors, with their emphatically imprecise animation, deliberately prevented the autonomy and stage life of the puppets, demonstrating their own superiority. By preventing them from becoming characters, they transformed the puppets into symbols of failure and metaphors for problems, both taking away their stage life and giving them meaning, especially with the increase in passivity that denoted the increase in their influence over the characters.

As the loss of animating power was graded, their power in terms of content grew, bringing them close to Tadeusz Kantor's view that objects or puppets are "man's earlier, forgotten essence, his self in the memory that still follows him and under whose authority human actors act".[15] Although the human actors in *Minnie* did not literally act under the rule of the puppets, they took over through the development of the content level. But their domination was not only in the content reading, but also in the performative aspect, in which passivity and inertia became a literal burden for the actor, clearly indicating his powerlessness. In this way, the puppet liberated itself from its own animator and exerted a strong influence on its character. In the 2014 play *The Unclean and the Girl* (Nečisti i djevojka) by Zadar Puppet Theatre, the puppet came even closer to having absolute power over the animator's fate (and its own).

Towards Absolute Power

The Croatian puppeteer Luko Paljetak believes that a motionless puppet on stage "suspends life."[16] And with the suspension of stage life, the puppet is no longer a character and a subject, but becomes a symbol or object. So, the puppet can function in two ways on stage – as an active subject and as a passive icon, as we have seen in earlier examples. In the words of Henryk Jurkowski: "it can replace the stage character, using all the privileges of the stage subject, and on the other hand it can be a passive symbol of that character, an instrument used by the actor, incidentally, demonstrating his own professional artistry."[17]

In the piece *The Unclean and the Girl*, directed by Rene Medvešek, these two extremes merged. The motionless puppet was a passive icon, completely dependent on its animator. Through this virtue, it did not become a character, but remained in the position of a sign or symbol of a character. On the other hand, its static nature directed, encouraged, and forced the animator to breathe movement into the character with his own body, thus transposing both the character and the puppet into himself. In this way, the animator became the symbol of a symbol and gave up his original role of demiurge to the puppet, which was now the mover of its own mover, the demiurge of its own demiurge. The actors remained faithful to this "guided" movement for most of the play, even in the moments when they were not holding puppets, which brought them even closer to the status of a puppet in terms of their performance. With this interplay and co-manipulation between puppet and actor, Medvešek put the stage reality into perspective – he used the puppets as an additional fictional cover and transformed the stage play into a double fairy tale, bringing the atmosphere closer to his own oral folk tale. At the same time, he brought the puppet into intense proximity to its ancestor, the idol, thus completing the spiral.

Conclusion – A Closed Circle

In modern (Croatian) puppetry, the puppet has completed a spiral of development and returned to its own origins, in which it ruled over man in the function of a static idol. Following in the footsteps of her ancestors, she rejected movement, but also faith as a mover, and focused her attention and power on her

---

14 | In a scene featuring sit-ups, the actor-character breaks down under the weight of age and poor fitness, while the puppet as his former young, strong, and idealized self, with the help of the animator, but also the co-author in creating that projection, performs sit-ups with ease.

15 | Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramsko kazalište*. Center for Dramatic Arts (CDU), Center for Theory and Practice of Performing Arts (Thk), 2004, p. 94.

---

16 | Paljetak, Luko. *Lutke za kazalište i dušu*. International Center for Cultural Services, Zagreb, 2007, p. 22.

17 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Teorija lutkarstva*. Subotica, 2007, p. 289

own god – the animator – and took power over them. By this alone she made a "kleistian" evolutionary leap from a passive and unconscious ruler over the idolaters to a passive but conscious ruler over her own ruler, pointing to her enduring and mystical power as well as her endless possibilities. The closing of this circle raises the question of the further development of the medium of puppetry in Croatia. Will it continue to passivate animators through robotics and artificial intelligence, or will it return to the relationships and areas that have not yet been sufficiently explored in this puppetry space? From its current position on the throne? All paths are open.

ABSTRACT

Through an analysis of examples of Croatian and European contemporary puppetry, the text traces the position of the puppet in relation to its demiurge from initial passive and unconscious domination through active subordination to the present conscious return to passive domination. This spiraling return, read in the "kleistian" sense, places the puppet in the position of an artificial stage god.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. sc. Igor Tretinjak, theatre critic and theatrologist. Lecturer at the Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek. Editor-in-chief of the portal kritikaz.com, editor of the regional platform *Od malih nogu*, editor, mentor, and coordinator of the Osijek section of the Creative Europe project EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform. Author of the monographic study *Pinklec Phenomenon – From Ritual to Play: 30 years of the Pinklec Theatre Company* (Čakovec, 2017) and several research and professional articles on puppetry, children's theatre and performing arts.

KEY WORDS

Animation, animator, puppet, non-animability, demiurge, passivation, idol

Bibliography

Blažević, Marin. *Razgovori o novom kazalištu 1: Branko Brezovec, Ivica Boban, Damir Bartol Indoš, Vjeran Zuppa.* CDU – Centar za dramsku umjetnost, 2007. | **Jurkovski, Henrik.** *Metamorfoze pozorišta lutaka u XX veku.* Međunarodni festival pozorišta za decu Pionir, Subotica, 2006. | **Jurkovski, Henrik.** *Teorija lutkarstva: Ogledi iz istorije, teorije i estetike lutkarskog teatra.* Subotica, 2007. | **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Povijest europskog lutkarstva 1: Od začetaka do kraja 19. stoljeća.* Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2005. | **Kleist, Heinrich von.** *O marionetskom kazalištu.* Scarabeus-naklada, 2009. | **Knoegden, Werner.** *Nemogući teatar: O fenomenologiji kazališta figura.* ULUPUH, 2013. | **Lehmann, Hans-Thies.** *Postdramsko kazalište.* CDU – Centar za dramsku umjetnost, ThK – Centar za teoriju i praksu izvođačkih umetnosti, 2004. | **Paljetak, Luko.** *Lutke za kazalište i dušu.* Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2007. | **Piris, Paul.** »The Co-Presence and Ontological Ambiguity of the Puppet«, eds. Bell, J., Posner, D. N., Orenstein, C. *The Routledge companion to puppetry and material performance.* Routledge, 2014. | **Tretinjak, Igor.** *Duhovito igranje kazalištem i kilama.* Artos, online časopis AUK, no. 7, january 2018, http://www.uaos.unios.hr/artos/index.php/hr/kritika-br-8/tretinjak-viktorija-2-0. | **Younge, Janni.** *Reconfiguring Being: Puppetry and Perspectives on Being Human Explored Through the Work of Ilka Schönbein.* Critical Stages / Scènes critiques, no. 19, 2019, http://www.critical-stages.org/19/reconfiguring-being/.

MAŠA RADI BUH

A Post-humanist Feminist Intervention
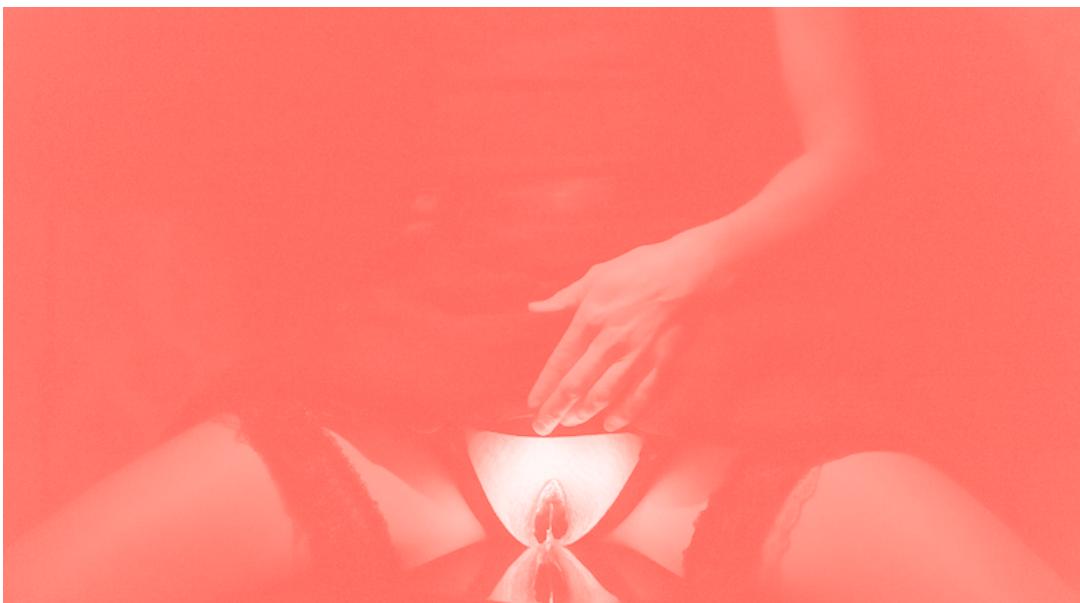
Nowadays, the intertwining of contemporary technological innovation with the art of puppetry is no longer an exotic novelty; it has gradually evolved from the pioneering phase of initial and ground-breaking exploration to the phase of exploring all the possible frontiers and options made possible by technology. What used to be a highly anthropomorphised puppet figure, whether as an imitation of the human body or as an anthropomorphised element of flora and fauna, is now intensely developing through/outside this categorisation, democratising/expanding the notion of what a puppet can be and what makes a puppet what it is. On the one hand, all these transitions give rise to hope; on the other hand, this very moment is an indispensable opportunity to discuss the role of gender in this field. This is a moment suitable and open for questioning the limiting and discriminatory and implicit beliefs that form the foundations of puppetry art – which includes the question of gender both on the systemic level and on the stage, on the level of micro- and macro-dramaturgy, as Flemish dance dramaturg Marianne van Kerkhoven[1] calls these two sides.

By expanding, shifting, and transgressing the boundaries, the fluidity, lack of definition and inhomogeneity of contemporary puppetry becomes a space of play and experimentation in which – just as a puppet can be anything – almost anything is possible, depending on the expanse of our creative imagination. At the same time, the puppet figure, compared to the actor, because of its kinship with the human body, opens up the space of potential to reconfigure and transform the misogynistic and sexist history of the creation and development of puppetry.

The traces of exponential and rapid technological development are not only visible in art or in its spread into our everyday lives. In the second half of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st century, several disciplines have developed in response to the changes and expanded the field of how we understand the living in contrast to the humanistic glorification of the human and the human spirit. Authors such as Donna Haraway, Karen Barad and Rosi Braidotti relate broader definitions of the living – which are not limited to human, animal, and plant life – to feminist efforts to achieve equality. This is the idea that I will relate to similar efforts within puppetry practise in the rest of this article. If posthumanist feminism applies the redefinition of the living to a more inclusive understanding of the world, can a redefinition of the puppet and puppet art contribute to the process of eliminating sexism integrated into form and content?

Two main perspectives that have been adopted in the book *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations,*[2] the first of which aims to provide a multi-layered overview of the relationship between the female gender and puppetry, are also the sociological-theatrological perspectives that are generally most commonly used in the analysis of theatre art by feminist practise. The first analyses the actual performative event and its elements and attempts

1 | Van Kerkhoven, Marianne. *Van het kijken en van het schrijven: teksten over theater.* Van Halewyck, 2002, p. 197–203.
2 | Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A., editors. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475.

to find problematic or positive modes of representation in which stereotypical images of women and femininity are either demonstrated or refuted. The other, the macro perspective, focuses on the social and economic position of women in puppet theatre and observes how social forces influence their activity. However, since society is too complex a phenomenon to be divided into only two levels, its micro and macro activities, we cannot consider these levels separately. Any action or event inevitably affects both levels, which is why these reflections on redefining the puppet seek the potential for such change in both spheres.

Women and the Performance Level

"Neutrality" of the Puppet Form

A puppet is an object composed for performance, with no inherent or inherent form prior to its conception; it exists only as an aggregate of outlined possibilities. Compared to an acting or animation body, it is liberated from the discourse of sex and gender. Unlike the human body, its nothingness, from which it is created and in which it is limited in the process of becoming only by the financial and technical possibilities and imagination of its creator, does not depend on a complex cluster of the evolutionary history of cells that would determine its appearance genetically and physically. But despite its unlimited potential, a puppet is not an element that exists in a neutral vacuum. On the contrary, dependent on the imagination and fantasy worlds of its creators, who are always also actors in a particular social world, it is cut off from any freedom in its manifestation. Like any other cultural element – as feminist theory has shown in the last century – the stage appearance of the puppet is shaped under the influence of social ideas and ideals about the category designated as gender. Their features correspond to the stereotypical characteristics that were considered the ideal and generally acceptable image of a man or woman at the time of their creation. However, since the puppet on stage is a product of various forces, each of which already generates its own course of discussion, we will first look at the presentation of the puppet on stage as its complex product from a critical perspective. Regardless of the perceived image, anthropomorphic or otherwise, a puppet object as a character, triggers an (subconscious) categorisation of its gender by the audience at the moment of animation.[3] Therefore, the representation of the gender

of the puppet body depends on the relationship between its visual appearance and the social markers that imply a certain gender based on general perception. In deconstructing such relations of markers, the emergence and growth of the theatre of animated forms offers a potential niche in which the relief figure of the puppet object moves away from imitating humans and challenges us to redefine what we understand as the living and how we understand it.

There is no such thing as a so-called neutral body; this applies to outdated conceptualisations of sex and gender, where the female body is reduced to an "accessory" or presented in distinction to the male body, as well as to other areas. Western society as a whole (with the exception of a few smaller bubbles) is unable to avoid defining gender when it comes to recognising visual markers on a body and interpreting them in accordance with the social ideas that have been instilled. Let us take a humanoid puppet that appears in various puppet techniques – from marionette theatre to hand and table puppets – and transfer it for the purpose of a thought experiment to the world of children's toys, where the mode of play resembles the animation principle, and we will find a fascinating and vivid situation. The difference between the figures that supposedly represent and distinguish male and female characters (let us take two of the most popular representatives, Barbie and Ken, as an example) lies mainly in their relief, while their crotches are identical and Barbie, unlike Ken, has enlarged breasts. This parallel puppet and animation world, in which children encounter gender and also represent it in animation play, provides one of the example indicators of the lack of a neutral puppet body. In the first chapter of the aforementioned publication *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations,* entitled "The Monster and the Corpse: Puppetry and the Uncanniness of Gender Performance", puppeteer Laura Purcell-Gates first deconstructs the supposed neutrality, only to find in the rubble the possibility of creating unease, which in turn generates new ideas in the audience about how gender might be (visually) represented. Using first-hand experience, she demonstrates what was described in our analysis of Barbie and Ken – that a body without visible sexual characteristics is by no means sexless but is usually always attributed to the male gender/sex.[4] However, the author also high-

---

3 | This is all the more present when/if the character speaks, particularly in languages in which the verb form depends on grammatical gender and biological sex.

4 | Purcell-Gates, Laura. "The Monster and the Corpse: Puppetry and the Uncanniness of Gender Performance", eds. Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A. *Women and Puppetry.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475.

lights the flip side of this gendering of the "neutral" puppet: when such a doll wants to represent the female gender on stage, it causes discomfort and confusion for the audience, as they are in a state of limbo in which the audience is challenged to overcome their ability to think gender.[5]

Characteristics of the Relationship between the Puppet and its Animator

The word "puppet" has a double meaning in English and Slovenian – it is used either to describe a woman with a subordinate social position or a child's toy whose main function is to be manipulated according to the child's impulses and desires.[6] In the introductory text,[7] Alissa Mello and Claudia Orenstein analyse the etymology of the word and the feminisation and other pejorative stereotypes it contains. The very name implies subordination, which is why the term "puppet" always contains a heap of ideological ballast. If a puppet in the artistic sense is a performative element historically associated with animation and manipulation, the use of the same word in everyday language (where it usually refers to the description of a woman) is based on a variety of connotations that have to do with the lack of autonomy. The puppet and its name are anything but accidental; being treated manipulatively and being subordinate to someone else (which, historically, is a position attributed to women) is the constitutive set of the social understanding of the puppet. And here we are confronted with a paradox. On the one hand, a bundle of social hierarchies is interwoven with the puppet and puppetry, and on the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the body of the puppet is still seen as primarily male. So, it is not a question of the puppet itself originally wanting to represent a subordinate female character and therefore occupying a lower rank as an artistic form. On the contrary, in certain historical contexts, puppetry had a high status and portrayed heroic stories.[8] Yet it has retained a feminised notion, not because of its content, but because of its technique – manipulation with the aim of animating. Contemporary changes in the art of puppetry, including "the departure from the traditional illusionary puppetry and the emergence of a visible puppeteer no longer hidden behind a screen as two major

milestones",[9] provide the space for redefining this constitutive relationship between the puppet and the puppeteer. In other words, as Tjaša Bertoncelj writes in her accompanying text to the exhibition *Contemporary Slovenian Puppetry*: the redefined relationship between the puppet and the puppeteer "emerges as an important object of reflection and one of the most important conceptual foundations".[10] For such reflection to develop on stage and change the relationship between the puppet and the puppeteer, a conceptual change is needed, not only a redefinition of animation and manipulation; it is especially important how the role and autonomy of the puppet is perceived.

As early as 2007, in a report on the selection for the Biennial of Puppetry Artists of Slovenia, Rok Vevar distinguished and defined the term puppet in Slovenian as a smaller subgroup within the theatre of animated forms, where "mimetic representations of animals, humans or recognisable fantastic creatures predominate",[11] in short, where we already perceive the creatures that are animated on stage as living beings and their puppet form takes on the mimetic traits only with the help of the puppeteer. In contrast to the animation of creatures such as animals, humans or, say, monsters, which are perceived as alive in the general imagination, the concept of animated forms focuses on objects that are not primarily interpreted as living creatures in everyday life (and not in philosophy) and to which no animating properties are attributed (a stone is a vivid example of this). In order to breathe life into them, the animation of such forms is based on anthropomorphisation, i.e. the attempt to humanise them through language and/or gestures so that they exhibit traits of animation. In the relationship between the puppeteer and the object of animation, this shift from the puppet, which closely resembles a human being, to the object, which loses this resemblance, implies passivity and manipulation. In fact, the very expression theatre of animated forms suggests that something is happening to the object – it is being animated – although with the emergence of the visible puppeteer and the deconstruction of illusion, this relationship shatters the traditional animation of the puppet object.

5 | Ibid.
6 | Let us not forget, it is this kind of play where children often test the limits of violence.
7 | Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A., editors. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475.
8 | In this case the male gender is not used generically.

9 | Bertoncelj, Tjaša. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.
10 | Ibid.
11 | Vevar, Rok. *Poročilo Selektorja 4. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije*. 2007, http://ulu.si/4-bienale/.

Post-humanist Feminism and the Puppet

If, despite the changes that contemporary puppetry brings, puppetry art fails to circumvent various relationships and representations that perpetuate sexist, misogynistic and other problematic ideological principles, the potential to overcome this can be found in the features of contemporary puppetry that do not seek to redefine and appropriate existing relationships and characters/puppets. The introduction of modern technologies, which has been intense in recent decades, and the new posthumanist theories that have emerged in parallel, turning away from the ideal of rationality and calling it unfit for purpose, are much more likely to be a tabula rasa and a space for redefinition/invention than the traditional puppetry landscape because of their recent emergence. This has already been recognised by posthumanist feminism, which sees the oppression by the male-centred system not only in the female gender, but also in the relationship to the Other, i.e. the natural and non-human world. One of the most visible exponents of this theory is Donna Haraway, who, as Rosi Braidotti writes in "Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism", has already grounded feminist thought in her "A Cyborg Manifesto"[12] by replacing anthropocentrism with a set of *relational* connections between *human* and *non-human* living beings, the latter including technological artefacts.[13] By proposing figurations such as cyborgs, companion species and other hybrid figures of radical interspecific relationality, Donna Haraway blurs categorical distinctions such as human – non-human, male – female. If we apply Donna Haraway's and posthumanist feminist proposals to the art of puppetry, the hybrid spaces of contemporary art and modern puppet technologies can offer an aspect of puppetry that defies the binary categorisations puppeteer – puppet, male – female puppet body. Indeed, if we follow the thought of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, a revolt, or an attempt to reappropriate such binaries, which, as already shown, are anchored in the history of social hierarchies, in fact also reproduces the norm and strengthens it. In other words, as Cariad Astles argues in her article "The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology": a puppet who rebels on stage against its puppeteer and provokes the puppeteer's reaction only underlines its own inability to exist without him, its inability to ever be fully autonomous, since it can only exist in its co-dependency. With such a puppet, co-dependency is built into its design and concept. To see a truly liberated puppet on stage would mean that it would have to be designed with independence from the puppeteer in mind.[14]

Excessive Anthropomorphism as a Potential for Feminist Emancipation

Despite the advent of object theatre or the theatre of animated forms, we still look for at least a shred of a reflection of ourselves in the puppet and animation in (puppet) theatre, even if we are able to move away from exclusively human images. The movement of the animated object must remind us of familiar gestures from the movement vocabulary of the human or animal body in order to "come alive", and we must also perceive this in other animated objects, such as robots, lights, etc. So, if we enact anthropomorphic images of ourselves, and the universal image of contemporary humanism is still the Man (i.e. a white male), one of the potentials of feminist emancipation could be a radical shift away from the anthropomorphised puppet towards hybrid creatures, as already discussed by Donna Haraway. Puppets that are thus not classical marionettes (no mimetic representations of animals, humans, or recognisable fantastic creatures) and at the same time transcend the boundaries of liveness attributed to animated objects are an unexplored space where binaries do not (yet) exist. Because of their purposeful design, these puppets can therefore remain puppet objects that are not represented at all; they are so alien that it is difficult to ascribe any characteristics of gender or sex to them. In "Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu" (Reflections on Contemporary Puppetry), Nika Arhar writes that "it is not important for a 'puppet' to come alive as a fictional living being, but to 'come to life' in its particularities (just as fantasy can also 'come to life') and perhaps also open up some questions about the nature of its own and/or our reality".[15] And this coming alive in its particularities is what sets the puppet apart from anything human, because even a spotlight or stage lighting, i.e. a group of objects without any human characteristics, can "come to life".[16]

12 | Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century", ed. Joel Weiss. *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments.* Springer Netherlands, 2006, p. 117–58, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3803-7_4.
13 | Braidotti, Rosi. "Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism", ed. Richard A. Grusin. *Anthropocene Feminism.* University of Minnesota Press, 2017, p. 21–48.

14 | Astles, Cariad. "The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology.", eds. Burgholzer, L., Hochholdinger-Reiterer, B. *Itw : Im Dialog: Uneins – Désuni – At Odds. Identitätsentwürfe Im Figurentheater*. Alexander, 2021, p. 206–215.
15 | Arhar, Nika. "Razmisleki o sodobnem lutkarstvu", ed. Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo*. Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo.
16 | More: https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/news-ip/the-unbearable-freedom-of-associative-thinking/.

The complex position of women in puppetry is far from unique in this (artistic) field; it reflects the problems of the contemporary world and the time of the fourth wave of feminism, marked by a sense of disappointment and disillusionment that the rights acquired are not final and that the road to equality is not yet over; more than that, progress is not linear, and societies can quickly fall back into regression and neoconservatism. The rapid development of the technological world presents contemporary feminism with a new challenge and at the same time a new opportunity, even if the overly optimistic *dot-com-boom* era of the early noughties, when the World Wide Web seemed like a space of freedom and the creation of progressive positions for women's emancipation, is a thing of the past and current trends in Silicon Valley are once again reinforcing male dominance (the fact that the most successful companies are led by white men, i.e. Mark Zuckerberg, Jack Dorsey, Adam Neumann, is not insignificant). As it has only been around for a couple of decades, unlike traditional forms, technology can be seen as something new and ahistorical in the world of modern puppetry as the space where there is the potential to not only negate binary forms of representation, but also as a niche where the internal societal gendered hierarchical order has not yet been established. According to Cariad Astles,[17] traditional puppetry, especially its branches that are considered highly valued and celebrated arts, is situated within the canon of Western male-dominated theatre based on the demonstration of technique, skill and power, i.e. the components of manipulating the puppet. Instead of requiring female puppeteers, who want to achieve equality and an end to discrimination, to constantly demonstrate their technical and craft skills and compare them to their male counterparts, thus trapping them in a constant process of demonstration and legitimisation, contemporary (non-anthropomorphic) and/or technological puppetry, in which the puppet object is no longer necessarily an animate form but an object that is "brought to life" in the full range of meaning, opens up a space of potential that is a priori liberated from historical and thus persistent sexist and misogynist patterns. Contemporary hybrid/technology-driven puppetry is not based on a millennial tradition in which participation in the art of puppetry would be taboo for women, but it nevertheless holds a trap. This is because, despite public school systems, gender-segregated education still encourages an interest in technology in the male gender more than in the female gender, which can result in female puppeteers knowing less about technological solutions, especially in environments where education is not systematised or focuses on classical puppets. In addition, times of financial crisis (which are also possible in the post-Covid hyper-inflation recovery period) that mean less funding and less prestige for the art of puppetry – when it is easier for women to enter puppetry than in times when the art is celebrated – also mean less room for 'modernity' and investment in researching and developing technological solutions and inventions.

But, to use a cliché, the success of feminism as such and the breakthrough of women in puppetry would not have been possible without the relentless but realistic optimism of all previous generations. Their desire to try, to take risks and to seek new possibilities in an oppressive environment has led to the moment when it is even possible for books like *Women and Puppetry* to be produced. In the context of this moment, the tradition of alliance building that has contributed to a broader range of acquired rights and greater intersectionality and diversity at every stage of feminism's history can inspire us in the effort to eradicate the sexist and misogynistic foundations of puppetry from the time of its original development. An oft-quoted phrase by poet and activist Audre Lorde,[18] The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house, as universal and insightful as it is, can therefore also be applied to the discussion of contemporary puppetry and its feminist potential. The retention of the anthropomorphic puppet figure, whose animation depends on the will of a human animator, still implies the category of gender, even if it attempts to redefine it, while the puppet objects that push the boundaries of the "animated" are freed from such connotations from the start.

17 | Astles, Cariad. "The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology.", eds. Burgholzer, L., Hochholdinger-Reiterer, B. *Itw : Im Dialog: Uneins – Désuni – At Odds. Identitätsentwürfe Im Figurentheater.* Alexander, 2021, p. 206–215.

18 | Lorde, Audre. *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.* Penguin, 2018.

ABSTRACT

A "Post-humanist Feminist Intervention" is a reflection on the potential of contemporary puppetry to overcome gendered notions of physicality. Compared to an actor, the figure of the puppet, because it is not connected to the human body, opens up the potential to reconfigure and transform the misogynistic and sexist history of the creation and development of puppetry. The potential for transcendence is found in modern technology in conjunction with the new posthumanist theories. Puppet objects designed according to this concept, rather than serving as mimetic representations of animals, humans, or recognisable fantastic creatures, are unexplored spaces where binaries do not (yet) exist. Therefore, through purposeful design, they can preserve the absence of gender representations, as hardly any characteristics of sex or gender can be attributed to their physical images.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maša Radi Buh, reviewer, theatrologist and cultural sociologist. She graduated in the sociology of culture from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and completed a master's degree in theory and dramaturgy of contemporary performing arts at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She works for the web portal Neodvisni – teritorij sodobnih scenskih umetnosti, the EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform, and is co-editor of the web portal Kritika. Together with z Varja Hrvatin and Jakob Ribič, she creates the radio programme Teritorij teatra on Radio Študent and explores the strategies of collective theoretical thinking.

KEY WORDS

post-humanist feminism, gender, puppet body, theatre of animated forms, puppet

Bibliography

Arhar, Nika. »Razmisleki o Sodobnem Lutkarstvu«, ed. Tjaša Bertoncelj. *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. | **Astles, Cariad.** »The Return of the Puppetress/Sorceress. Feminism and Ecology«, eds. Burgholzer, L., Hochholdinger-Reiterer, B. *Itw : Im Dialog: Uneins – Désuni – At Odds. Identitätsentwürfe Im Figurentheater.* Alexander, 2021. | **Bertoncelj, Tjaša.** *Sodobno slovensko lutkarstvo.* Sigledal, 2021, https://repertoar.sigledal.org/razstava/sodobno-slovensko-lutkarstvo. | **Braidotti, Rosi.** »Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism«, ed. Richard A. Grusin. *Anthropocene Feminism.* University of Minnesota Press, 2017. | **Haraway, Donna.** »A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century«, ed. Joel Weiss. *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments.* Springer Netherlands, 2006, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-3803-7_4. | **Lorde, Audre.** *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.* Penguin, 2018. | **Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A.,** editors. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475. | **Purcell-Gates, Laura.** »The Monster and the Corpse: Puppetry and the Uncanniness of Gender Performance«, eds. Mello, A., Orenstein, C., Cariad, A. *Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations.* Routledge, 2019, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=2125475. | **Van Kerkhoven, Marianne.** *Van het kijken en van het schrijven: teksten over theater.* Van Halewyck, 2002. | Vevar, Rok. *Poročilo selektorja 4. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije.* ULU, 2007, http://ulu.si/4-bienale/.

The Political and Radical Through the Eyes of a Puppet

Public space is always dominated by those who have the most to offer. Consequently, all those below are constantly looking for new forms of resistance to preserve the possibility of democracy. Puppetry is certainly one of these traditions. It is an art that explores politics in public space in one way or another. A puppet, as part of the material culture of society, is thus shaped by the political dimensions of the historical moment in which it was created, not only by what it says, but (above all) by how it says it. Moreover, in a more direct sense, puppetry is imbued with the political, for it has often been a (symbolic) vehicle for protests, in various springtimes of nations and in anti-authoritarian campaigns. However, the fact that puppetry has become one of the most important political media could also be due to the supposed triviality with which the puppet is viewed. This has repeatedly enabled it to convey subversive and explicit political thought. It proves crucial, especially at the moments when it was most political, which was at times when other arts have been restricted or censored.

One must be careful, however, when referring to works of art as "political". We can quickly fall for the idea that all art is *a priori* and *de facto* political. This may be true in a very loose sense since art (except in pure cases of 'art for art's sake') is in one way or another bound up in its time and context. Therefore, when we come across the term 'political theatre', it is crucial to define it. Otherwise, our reviews and analyses may end up encompassing the entire history of theatre. Therefore, in this review of the main political traditions of puppet theatre, I consider only those puppet shows, phenomena, and manifestations that actively engage with political concepts because they seek either to support or attack them. In short, it is about events that explicitly address political issues of their time. Or as political theatre has been defined by Michael Kirby in his article "On Political Theatre": "[…] it is a performance that is intentionally concerned with government, that is intentionally engaged in or consciously takes sides in politics."[1] It should be emphasised

here that my article deliberately focuses on political puppetry in the service of resistance to existing conventions and systems. I will therefore include examples that serve protest rather than propaganda, although these too can be considered part of political puppetry.

We can speak of the beginnings of political puppetry in the modern sense only from the 1960s. However, let us first mention some older examples of the puppet's political involvement as crucial reference points for future political puppetry. The political role of puppets originated in revolutionary England of the 17th century with its most famous puppet character, Punch. He was a variation of the character Pulcinella from the Italian commedia dell'arte and was considered the king of puppets in 17th and 18th century England. Punch's theatres emphasised vulgar jokes, satirised local events, spread rumours, and acted as a message service for the people. Punch is a hero of the common man who breaks all the rules with the help of satire, at a time when conformism was enforced in all spheres of life. According to Henryk Jurkowski in his History of European Puppetry, Punch was "an anarchist who killed the rulers and representatives of social institutions. In this way, he enabled a means of catharsis for all unhappy people living under the oppressive regime of the Victorian era."[2] In the 17th century, Punch became a political puppet hero of the anthology. This was largely due to the fact that when theatres were banned, puppetry was often disregarded because it seemed insignificant to the authorities (e.g., the ban on London theatres in 1642). The puppet Gayant (meaning giant) from the city of Douai developed in a similar way. He first appeared in 1530, when the then Spanish city of Douai held a festival to celebrate the defeat of the French troops. Several guilds of the time made a giant willow puppet representing the guardian of the city. Gayant quickly acquired a family, and the July festival in his honour became the town's most important traditional event. When Douai was annexed by France in 1667, the festival was banned. Until the end of the World

1 | Kirby, Michael. "On Political Theatre", ed. Michael Kirby. *The Drama Review*, l. 19, No. 2, 1975, p. 130.

2 | Jurkowski, Henryk. *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva*. Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998, p. 285–286.

AIDS: *The people and puppets who're spreading the message of safety. By JOHN PERLMAN*

65 000 condoms later - still a lot to be done

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS ... Nyanga Tshabalala and puppet give a lesson in Zululand
Photo: JOHN PERLMAN

FIVE weeks, 30 towns and 65 000 condoms later, Nyanga Tshabalala, Rosie Fiore and Gary Friedman have reason to feel that they've done some work.

They have put on 60 performances of their show, *Puppets Against Aids*, and travelled 10 000 km, heading northwards from Durban and criss-crossing Zululand on their route. They have been seen by some 50 000 people, handed out 40 000 Aids education pamphlets, dispensed thousands of condoms and answered countless questions.

The trio has come away with a sobering sense of the enormous task ahead if South Africa's rural areas are to be effectively educated and protected against Aids.

Natal, urban and rural, is one of the areas where the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV, the virus that causes Aids) has made deepest inroads. In some areas blood-transfusion services no longer collect blood because of the risks.

And yet the large crowd gathered outside the bottle store in Jozini — a small hilltop town not far from the point where Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa meet — are getting from the puppets the first comprehensive Aids education they've had.

"Everywhere we have found that people have heard about Aids, but they know nothing about how it is transmitted — even some of the nurses we've met," says Tshabalala, who narrates the show. "But people are very eager to get the knowledge."

The crowd tap its feet to the music that gets the show started and laugh at the lusty antics of the main character, Joe, who just can't get enough. There are some grunts of approval when a member of the audience yells "*inyama enyameni*" ("flesh to flesh") after Joe's friend, Harry, suggests that he start using a condom. But when Joe becomes sick and dies — having also infected his wife and newborn child — the crowd becomes silent and pensive.

That mood finds release in the question-and-answer session, which runs for nearly an hour.

"Can you get Aids from mosquitoes? From kissing? How can I use condoms when it's so much better without them?" — it's a familiar mix of resistance to the things that can protect you and deep fear of the things that can't hurt at all.

But there is progress. Piles of pamphlets are handed out and men and women wait patiently for a handful of condoms. A couple of people ask if the show can be done again for some people who arrived late, but it's time to move on — another village or town, and another audience is waiting.

Puppets Against Aids, a project of the African Research and Educational Puppetry Programme, seems to get the key messages across.

"The show gets through because it is dramatic," says a health worker. "Many people here say that if Aids is such a big thing, why do we never see anybody suffering from it. If you are just a nurse alone, people don't really listen to you."

After two years in the field, Tshabalala and the others know that while they are effective, they can only do so much. After they leave Jozini, and the next town and the next, what next?

Health workers say more people come to them for condoms after the show, but often they don't have any to give them. "If condoms are not available, people will just go back to the very same things," says Tshabalala. "The puppets really act as a pathbreaker — after that the messages need to be reinforced."

Says a health worker: "We don't have any pamphlets to give people. We managed to get hold of some videos privately, but with the big distances here it is hard to get the information to people."

"This is our biggest frustration," says Friedman, who created the show and does the puppeteering. "We try to do workshops as well, to teach people in the area to do their own back-up work, but we just don't have the resources. When you get any distance — no pamphlets and often no condoms. We have found a lot of ignorance and a lot of fear."

The social circumstances of many people make Aids education all the more difficult. "A lot of the guys in Jozini were road workers moving from place to place," says Tshabalala. "Many expressed fear of losing their jobs because they are far from clinics — they don't have a mobile clinic — and they would have to take time off work to go for treatment. Getting condoms is also difficult: by the time they knock off, the clinics are usually closed."

Friedman adds: "Families being split up creates all kinds of problems. It is very hard, for example, for a woman just to get her husband to start using condoms. You have to reach both partners and that's difficult when they are living separate lives."

Fiore, who does the sound mixing and the music, identifies another problem: "You get dismissive statements from a lot of employers and officials who say, 'we have tried Aids education and giving out condoms, and it just doesn't work'. I think it's just their attitude, because that hasn't been our experience. At one place, workers had to go to the manager's office if they wanted condoms.

"There have also been signs that whites don't think Aids affects them. It has been very noticeable that while employers make it obligatory for black workers to attend our show, white workers can come if they want. They hardly ever do," Fiore says.

"People have resisted condoms in the past because they have been told about them in the wrong way, without any understanding about their lives," says Tshabalala. "When they say they find sex 'flesh to flesh' more enjoyable, I don't condemn them for that.

"But then we discuss things like the fact that they may be sleeping around now, but will want families later. We talk about the fact that they risk taking Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases back to their wives at home. They seem to understand that kind of approach."

The puppets' tour of Natal was organised by the Natal Parks Board and the Progressive Primary Healthcare Network, and was sponsored by two South African corporations and a foreign-aid organisation. For more shows, and the necessary back-up, further resources will have to be

But senior officials in the region have indicated that available resources are already stretched.

KwaZulu Health Minister Dr Frank Mdlalose spoke of "the ever-increasing threat of Aids" while delivering his budget speech recently. Mdlalose said 450 cases of HIV infection had been found in 1990, three times as many as the combined totals from 1986 to 1989.

EXPO'S Gary Friedman and one of his puppets take it with a smile.

Picture: Sheralee Clarke

Expo's big-hit puppeteer
Gary takes one on the chin

Daily News Reporter

ONE of South Africa's foremost puppeteers, Gary Friedman, was punched on the chin by an irate Expo 85 patron at the end of a performance of his latest production, Peewee for King, on Tuesday.

His Royal Puppet Company has proved to be a big hit at Expo, but after the Tuesday night's performance at the Food Boulevard, Mr Friedman was attacked by an unnamed man.

He said today "a giant of a man", close to two metres tall and weighing about 100 kilograms, struck him on the jaw. He thanked his attacker for a "positive response."

Talking about the incident Mr Friedman, no more than 1,07 metres tall and weighing 63 kilograms, said he was none the worse for the attack and that he would continue with his "adult puppet" show which pokes fun at politicians, including the State President, Mr P.W. Botha.

He features South Africa as a monarchy with Mr Botha as king.

"The man told me that South Africa did not need 'all this politics' and struck me on the chin. The people standing around me were so shocked that they just stood and looked."

Mr Friedman said his reply to the man after he struck him was: "Thank you, Sir — we appreciate your positive reaction."

Mr Friedman did not complain to the police and was laughing off the incident today.

War II, Gayant and his family were repeatedly restored and banned; the Nazis even burned the puppets. However, they were permanently restored and are now symbols of the city. Although not a political example in the contemporary anti-authoritarian sense, this supporter of the guilds signalled the rise of the new "middle" class and thus a robust political campaign at the time of the redefinition of social structures.

In this context, mention should be made of the legendary 18th century Polish beggar Barani Kożuszek, who was a regular political player on the streets of Warsaw with his hard-hitting puppet campaigns. He achieved the greatest fame with his Kożuszek Uprising (1794) miniatures, in which puppets representing the Quislings were beheaded by means of a small guillotine. Although this is a simple example, it perhaps most clearly demonstrates the fundamental political characteristic of a puppet, namely its ability to replace the unattainable body of a public figure with its material appearance.

Speaking of key examples of the political tradition of the puppet, one must mention the undisputed leaders of puppetry in Europe: the Czechs. The role of the puppet in the Czech national spring is particularly evident in the 18th and 19th centuries when the Czechs tried to establish themselves as an autonomous nation freed from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At this time, most citizens felt that German should no longer be the state language and that activities such as theatre should be performed in Czech. This is where the puppet shows came in, which had always been performed by (itinerant) puppeteers in their mother tongue. Like Punch and Judy in England, the Czech Kašpárek could tell in his own language what others dared not and call for revolution and uprising. The puppeteers thus became representatives of the Czech national spring, cultural icons, and an essential part of Czech heritage. After the founding of the first republic in 1918, puppetry experienced a great boom and became an important pillar of Czech culture. One such example was the founding of the Říše Loutek Puppet Theatre in Prague in 1920, which was based on the principle that children should be educated *with* puppets rather than *into* puppets.[3] One of the most influential puppeteers of the time was Josef Skupa, the founder of the Divadlo Spejbl a Hurvínek in Prague, one of the most famous Czech puppet theatres. It was Skupa who turned out to be a very politically engaged puppeteer during the World War II. He began to incorporate subtle satire and criticism of the Nazi regime into his shows, which he performed throughout occupied

Czechoslovakia. In 1944 he was arrested by the Nazis and imprisoned in Dresden but managed to escape during the Allied bombing of the prison. Many other Czech puppeteers died in concentration camps or during the five days of street fighting before the liberation of Prague (in May 1945). It is clear that the Nazis were aware of the power of traditional culture to bring people together in times of crisis and therefore strained all their nerves to crush it relentlessly.

Almost simultaneously, the Partisan Puppet Theatre was created by the puppeteer and sculptor Lojze Lavrič in 1944 in the liberated area of Bela Krajina in Slovenia. The first puppet show, *Jurček and the Three Bandits* (Jurček in trije razbojniki), was performed on New Year's Eve 1944, and the puppets were made from materials available during the war. With its performances, the theatre satirised the enemy and encouraged its own population. It toured the entire liberated territory, clearly showing the positions they aspired to as fighters for the nation.

During and after the war, puppetry was further politicised by economics and global politics. New theatre movements were inspired by the sense that theatre was a contemporary art full of activist zeal inspired by Marxist ideas, and not just a means of entertainment. In this zeal, puppets and processional figures played an important role in the public expression of left political positions. This led to an upsurge of protest puppets whose views were inspired by figures like Punch and Gayant. However, the need for economic survival after the World War II and the general atmosphere of the Cold War silenced the political expression of the puppets for a while. In the 1940s and 1950s, puppet theatre moved along the path of children's theatre and entertainment until the social upheavals of the 1960s brought it back to life. This was the beginning of the political puppetry movement as we know it, when Peter Schumann, the most important representative of radical and political puppetry, also emerged. Schumann, who was of German descent, moved to the US in 1961 and founded the ground-breaking Bread and Puppet Theater in 1963 on the Lower East Side, New York. Initially, the theatre dealt with issues of police control and rising rents. They took their shows to the streets of New York to raise awareness of the problem among the local population. Schumann designed his first shows with the simplest means, allowing everyone to participate regardless of their abilities. In this way, he made sensitive issues attractive to audiences, who in turn listened to them. As Holland Cotter wrote

---

3 | McPharlin, Paul, editor. *Puppetry: A Yearbook of Puppetry and Marionettes.* Puppetry Imprints, 1933, p. 63.

in *The New York Times*, Schumann created a theatre that continues to "live an ideal of art as collective enterprise, a free or low-cost alternative voice outside the profit system".[4] The central works of this theatre are the anti-war shows with which they protested the Vietnam War (this includes the 1968 show *Fire*). The shows, which could be described as pure protest campaigns, put Bread and Puppet Theater on the global cultural map. In 1975, the group moved to a farm in Vermont, where they continue to put on the annual socially engaged festival Our Domestic Resurrection Circus, a mix of wit, politics and spectacle that spawned a whole generation of puppeteers and continues to exert a powerful influence on the world of political puppetry.

Similarly, the San Francisco Mime Troupe emerged on the West Coast of the USA, ushering in the beginnings of so-called guerrilla theatre. Founded in 1959 by Ronald G. Davis, it began performing street theatre plays in 1961, modelled on commedia dell'arte, in response to searing political oppression, the American civil rights movement and military and clandestine interventions abroad. Between the 1960s and 1990s, a veritable movement of political puppet groups developed along the lines of Schumann and Davis, of which In the Heart of the Beast, Arm-of-the-Sea and Wise Fool Puppet are the most striking. Still in existence, these theatre companies actively address local and global issues, generally taking an anti-war stance and calling for a more sustainable lifestyle.

Similarly, in 1981, South African puppeteer Gary Friedman created a finger puppet show, *Puns en Dodie* (Gary Friedman Productions), a socio-political satire on apartheid. In the tradition of street puppetry, he travelled around South Africa with the show for five years, adapting the basic theme to burning current issues. In addition to the protagonists Puns and Dodie, puppets portraying President P. W. Both, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ronald Reagan, and Margaret Thatcher appeared in several performances. In 1987, he helped found the African Research and Educational Puppetry Programme (AREPP), which used street art with puppets as a non-threatening medium to address sensitive issues. On World AIDS Day in 1988, they staged the travelling exhibition *Puppets Against AIDS* to raise awareness of the disease. The show marked the beginning of an important form of their work, which continues to provide complementary social and health education and promote self-reliance living in areas with limited opportunities.

A new turning point for political and protest puppetry followed in the late 20th century, during the 1999 protests in Seattle. This was a carnival of revolt, full of puppets, masks, dancers, creative street barricades, banners, and music. Members of the groups Art & Revolution, Bread and Puppet Theater, Wise Fool Puppet and many others gathered to participate in the protests with their giant puppets. Together they built puppets that were the central motif of the gatherings, photos, and subsequent media frenzy. Participation in the protests formed the basis for the term (and movement) *puppetista* (composed of the English word "puppet" and Zapatista). The neologism refers to puppets and puppetry groups that focus on protests and demonstrations. The group Itinerant Garbage Theatre for Cultural Insurrection writes in the *Puppetista Manifesto*:

> By rescuing puppet theater from the shiny black boxes, by returning it to its roots as a theater of action, we are able to reimagine the possibility of life instead of mere survival inside of the system. The authorities of the media/cop state have been uncharacteristically correct in their portrayal of the puppet as a weapon, for the puppet is indeed a powerful tool to reshape individual minds, and by extension, an entire society.[5]

This event could be seen as a kind of foundation of protest puppetry as a genre in puppetry art. In the second half of the 20th century, puppets followed the example of Bread and Puppet Theater, but they had their place within certain theatrical conventions. The protest puppets of the 21st century, however, clearly focused on political expression in the streets. Nowadays, the short puppet shows at protest gatherings create new spaces of their own. The street is transformed into a playground where puppets and puppeteers take control for a moment while spectators gather and watch the action. In this simple but effective way, a puppet show interrupts the constraints of the sanctioned march and creates tensions between what is allowed (by the police, local authorities, and social conventions) and what exceeds expectations. The puppets thus reinforce what is at the core of the protests: the conflict between the conventional *status quo* and the future as imagined by the protesters. In Slovenia, the medium of the puppet is used in this way by the puppeteer Brane Solce, who brings giant puppets to almost all protests in Ljubljana (which have parallels to Bread and Puppet Theater in aesthetics and content).

4 | Cotter, H. *Spectacle for the Heart and Soul*. The New York Times, August 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/theater/05cott.html.

5 | Winslow, Lulu. "Puppets and Protest: Street Theater, Art, and Vigil in the 21st Century", ed. Michael K. Stone. *Whole Earth*. No. 109, 2002, p. 54

At the beginning of the last decade, there was an upsurge in the development of puppet shows that focused on the artist's own war experiences. One such example is *And Here I am* (directed by Zoe Lafferty, 2017), a co-production between British Developing Artists and Palestinian Freedom Theatre. Palestinian actor Ahmed Tobasi illustrates his story, written for the stage by Iraqi-British writer Hassan Abdulrazzak, with various objects on stage. The story focuses on Tobasi's transformation from an Islamic jihadist to an actor. A painful autobiographical experience becomes political in its educational sense, as contemplation of the consequences of war becomes the leitmotif. Similar considerations underlie the performance *Smooth Life* (Snadný život), which the Palestinian artist Husam Abed created for the Czech DAMU in 2015. This is a documentary puppet show about growing up in a Jordanian refugee camp, which presents the political events of the last 30 years in that country in a larger context.

Another important and quite recent example of such puppet engagement is *The Walk* (2021), produced by The Walk Productions, Handspring Puppet Company, and Good Chance. With this political gesture, three animators took the almost four-metre-tall puppet named Little Amal on a five-month journey across Europe from the Syrian-Turkish border to the UK to highlight the problem of human migration. During the megalomaniac odyssey, covering over 8000 kilometres between July and November 2021, they urged people on the streets to support them and ask their countries to help with the growing refugee crisis.

Finally, what needs to be mentioned is the political puppet satire, examples of which can be seen regularly on TV. *The XYZ Show* is a Kenyan satirical puppet show created in 2009 by Godfrey Mwampembwa, modelled on a similar French show, *The News Puppets* (Les Guignols de l'Info). The weekly satirical show is presented by latex puppets who use sharp humour to discuss burning political issues ranging from poverty on the streets of Nairobi to Kenyan politicians indicted by the International Criminal Court. Almost simultaneously and along the same lines, South Africa pro-

duced *Zanews*, a satirical chronicle of everyday South African politics featuring puppets of some of the country's most prominent figures (Nelson Mandela's puppet was the first to appear in the show). Such puppet shows are an important outlet for people to express their anger and collective trauma in a satirical and grotesque but peaceful way. Almost a decade later, *Bisha TV* emerged in Sudan. Based on outdoor and recorded puppet shows, it satirised, mocked, and criticised the country's leading political parties. *Bisha TV* was modelled on the aforementioned shows, and although the two existing predecessors are similarly rebellious, *Bisha TV* was much more radical, pervasive, and direct, as its "protagonists" included the then ruling Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir and his accomplices. During his presidency, such an action was an important act of revolt against censorship and the violation of human rights. It disseminated information that otherwise would not have made it out of Sudan and gave local citizens the opportunity to engage (artistically) against the regime. The anarchic connotation of such shows is the deepest level of regaining one's freedom.

The history of political puppetry proves that this field of art is rich and varied, and that it became so because it was not considered a serious form of art for a long time. Thus, throughout its history, it has been able to follow social changes, sometimes quietly, sometimes louder, to provide people with the knowledge of current events and to participate in the struggle for a better society. In essence, puppetry became a symbol of solidarity between performers and puppets, and thus of solidarity with the puppetry audience. Puppets became a means to experience collectivism and social change, and thus a mechanism for people to participate in achieving the common goal. It must be emphasised that the humorous aspect of the puppet cuts into the dead carcass of social discourse and, through its visuality, demands a rethinking of what is given and taken for granted. Humour as a bodily sensation has the power to directly activate the body politic, which is particularly evident in the 21st century as irony and artistic expression are common companions of the bourgeois revolt against the unimagined structures of globalisation.

ABSTRACT

The article "The Political and Radical Through the Eyes of a Puppet" provides a historical review of the major political, protest, rebellion and radical campaigns that took place in different parts of the world. Since the 17th century, this diverse field has followed major social changes, sometimes quietly, sometimes more loudly, and participated in the struggle for a better society. Throughout its history, the puppet has become a symbolic vehicle for protests, national spring in different countries and anti-authoritarian campaigns. The article covers traditional puppet heroes such as the English Punch and Judy, groups from the turbulent 1960s and contemporary examples of engaged puppetry.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Zajc is a playwright, dramaturg, critic, and performer. In 2022 he completed a master's degree in Dramaturgy and Performance Arts at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television at the University of Ljubljana. His dramaturgical practise is focused on the puppetry production and original performances. He has published his insights into performance arts in various journals, compendia, and theatre programmes; his reviews can be found on several web portals and are currently also published in the Delo. His dramatic works have won several awards, and his drama triptych *Poslednji let čebel* was published as a book in 2021 by MC Kotlovnica.

KEY WORDS

theatre, puppet, puppetry, political theatre, radical puppetry

Bibliography

Cotter, H. *Spectacle for the Heart and Soul.* The New York Times, august 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/theater/05cott.html. | **Jurkowski, Henryk.** *Zgodovina evropskega lutkarstva.* Kulturno umetniško društvo Klemenčičevi dnevi, 1998. | **Kirby, Michael.** »On Political Theatre«, ed. Michael Kirby. *The Drama Review,* l. 19, no. 2, 1975. | **McPharlin, Paul**, editor. *Puppetry: A Yearbook of Puppetry and Marionettes.* Puppetry Imprints, 1933. | **Schumann, Peter.** *The Radicality of the Puppet Theatre.* Routledge, 2003. | **Winslow, Lulu.** »Puppets and Protest: Street Theater, Art, and Vigil in the 21st Century«, ed. Michael K. Stone. *Whole Earth.* No. 109, 2002.

WARRIOR WOMAN PUPPET (1992) | PHOTO COURTESY OF K. RUBY/WISE FOOL PUPPET INTERVENTION

ZALA DOBOVŠEK

THREE VERSIONS OF ENGAGED PRACTICE: COLLECTIVE, LUDIC, AND PROTEST-ORIENTED

The breaking points in the development of a performance segment are reflected in three basic assumptions that enable (an aesthetic) turn within the framework of existing practises, often derived from tangible traditions, verified content and audience expectations. The establishment of a redundant authorial language is subject to the presence of at least one of the three essential conditions: the affirmation of marginalised themes, innovative representation, and intervention in public space. "Marginalised topics" are contents that are suppressed, stereotyped and undesirable in public and artistic discourse, but also analytically unexplored, i.e. not reflected upon. Therefore, in a possible stage interpretation – if they are staged at all – these topics are usually generalised, idealised and sympathetically presented. "Innovative representation" is a broad term, but somehow, we can always recognise it as it refers to examples of staged and animated/performative productions that stand out from entrenched methodological patterns for two reasons: the establishment of a new politics of stage practise and a critical reflection on previous politics. The concept of "intervention in public space" or in the public sphere as such also encompasses a wide range of factors involved, but we focus on artistic aesthetics that – parallel to critical research in the primary field (performing arts) – already comment on and address the politics of society, i.e. the world beyond "performing fiction". The critique encompasses pedagogical/school concepts, but also internalised behavioural mechanisms in relation to the generally accepted regulation of what is normative. The aforementioned ruptures in development depend for their realisation on the autonomous ideas of the authors, their persistence, adherence to principles and integrity, but also on the trust of the employer institutions. In this context, artistic engagement considers not only its political role of social critique, but any critique, which of course is not a critique in the strict sense of the word, but can be a lucid rupture with existing forms, but rather an experiment, a subversive playfulness, a reflection, or a profound change of the existing value system on all possible levels (creative processes, performative roles, repertoire, hierarchy, etc.).

In this article, socially engaged puppet/animation theatre is presented through the lens of the work of three Slovenian puppeteers: **Tin Grabnar**, **Matija Solce** and **Brane Solce**. The three key artists in the field of animated forms practises are characterised by three autonomous authorial aesthetics that are completely different but internally driven by related communicative attributes, namely the redefinition of meanings, uses and effects of puppetry materials; including traditional puppets, objects, materials, light, sound and banners, always embedded in a strong authorial poetics underlined by engagement, de-tabooing, non-normativity and various forms of (critical) response. The analysis of their artistic expressions will not be read in the light of generationality, as the labelling of generations too often slips into generalisations and the ways in which individuals stand out can be completely overlooked. A more important indicator than generational context is the environment in which the artists were trained and in which they worked – first informally ("unprofessionally") and then professionally. Brane Solce's home is the independent stages (with occasional detours into institutions). Matija Solce began and developed his career in the non-institutional sector, where he worked for many years. A versatile creator, he then moved on to professional puppet theatres, where he works regularly. Compared to his two colleagues, Tin Grabnar managed to break into institutional puppet theatres as a director very early on, where he refines the potential of his independent interpretation of the puppet/animation medium year after year.

For at least the last decade, there has been a strong tendency in the Slovenian theatre scene to mix non-institutional aesthetics with institutional aesthetics. The most recognisable and obvious is the format of the "original project", which emerged in the avant-garde and post-drama period mainly in the context of non-state production collectivity, which was an absent artistic approach at the time – at least in most professional theatres. The equal entry of original projects into repertory plans led to a restructuring of the mentality of the authorial teams involved, as the ensemble, which had pre-

viously followed a clearly defined path and role, expanded the space of cooperative dynamics. The shackles of tradition were loosened by policies aimed at valorising the function of authorship (especially original authorship), which suddenly allowed infinite freedom to adapt and reinterpret original texts, plays and stories. Devised theatre is a broad umbrella term that denotes different performance genres or styles and is defined by the end result, which is the product of the entire creative team. It is about creating a new work where creative processes are continually adapted, explored, and invented. This form of theatre is necessarily defined by "process (finding the ways and means to share an artistic journey together), collaboration (working with others), multiple visions (integrating various views, beliefs, life experiences, and attitudes to changing world event), and the creation of an artistic product. [T]he emphasis [is] on eclectic process requiring innovation, invention, imagination, risk, and above all, an overall group commitment to the developing work."[1]

The principle of devised theatre seems to be the central point of contact between innovation and engaged creativity, which have been particularly characteristic of the work of Matija Solce and Tin Grabnar over the last ten years, but obviously in quite different communicative contours. Devised theatre, as reflected in their projects, is not only based on the conversion of traditional or established creative methods (development of study processes), but also on a renewed mirroring and critical attitude towards the chosen subject, in which the communicative focus is often clearly and meaningfully emphasised. Their engagement is thus always (at least) twofold; it either takes place on the level of renewing general directorial procedures practised today or is a "radical" reinterpretation of a well-known, sometimes even classical literary work. Since this contribution is not a comprehensive overview, but rather a reflection on the most outstanding segments of the poetics of the authors mentioned, the approach of the analysis will be based on a subjective selection of individual works from their oeuvres, which at the same time already attempts to form a kind of representative sample of the whole.

Tin Grabnar: Detabooization and Collectivity in Institutions

Director Tin Grabnar's practises in puppetry are marked by two fundamental approaches to creativity: the gesture of detabooization and the establishment of collectivity. Both components, even though at first glance they may seem (already) self-evident and established in the context of institutional or repertory (puppet) theatres, are still in the phase of development and (self-)reflection and were still in their early stages when Grabnar paved the way for them to enter the institutional realm. Grabnar brought a clear tendency towards the collective creative process to Ljubljana Puppet Theatre's productions *Somewhere Else* (Nekje drugje, 2017) and *Still Life* (Tihožitje, 2020), and in a perhaps more specific sense also in the performances *Martin Krpan* (2018), *The Snow Queen* (Snežna kraljica, Maribor Puppet Theatre, 2018) and *The Silent Boy* (Tihi dečak, Pozorište za decu Kragujevac, 2019). Since the spectrum of collectivity is always a multi-layered category, it appears in the first three performances on the level of text preparation, but also in the subsequent learning process, while in the other two performances it appears mainly in the form of group dynamics on stage.

The central socially engaged gesture in the performances *Somewhere Else* and *Still Life* is a critical reflection on some of the prevailing structures that manifest themselves in man's relationship to ontological questions about being and in relationships with *others*. The animated story *Somewhere Else*, told through chalk drawings, shows the relationship with other nationalities, while in *Still Life* the focus is on the relationship with animals as socially other (or even second-class) beings. From a cultural point of view, the face of the Other always threatens us and awakens in us a sense of weakness that can unconsciously "prompt us to violence, to domination, to political discourse we vs. them, to a hostile view of the field beyond ourselves, to the struggle for supremacy. The other part of our self awakens, wanting to dominate and harm."[2] The theming in both performances does not involve direct address and single-layered presentation of themes, but uses a paraphrase – a reinvented plot or concept. The themes of *Somewhere Else* and *Still Life* are war and taxidermy respectively. Both projects explore the sensibility and, more importantly, the complexity of motifs through the incisive concept of directorial process

1 | Oddey, Alison. *Devising theatre: a practical and theoretical handbook.* Routledge, 2007, pp. 1–3.

2 | Grošelj, Jon. Levinas. *Od obličja do odgovornosti.* Društvo psihologov Slovenije, 2014, p. 245.

and thematic source. They raise fundamental ethical questions about deep-rooted social and political hierarchies, the category of superiority, anthropocentrism, (self-)deconstruction and the impact of the documentary approach in art. The piece *Somewhere Else* presents the phenomenon of war through the eyes of a child, thus multiplying the levels of its absurdity while creating a universal view of war that is independent of geographical, political, and cultural elements due to the neutrality of the child. In this way, as a social commentary, the piece avoids the moralising note and, through its communicative power, conveys the message to the primary target audience (7+) but also to the adult population. The story, which is both documentary and fictional, contains a strong metaphorical component and an element of flexibility on a concrete and associative level. The multi-layered character is also characteristic of the production *Still Life*, subtitled "Nine Attempts to Preserve Life", which features animated stuffed rabbits. The concept of the engaged idea – which attempts to "revive what was once alive" by aestheticizing the form of puppetry – simultaneously opens up a series of references not only to questionable principles of biopolitics, recycling and the ecosystem, but also to the representation of the animal biotope in puppetry productions, in which animals are always anthropomorphised, often typified and designed exclusively from a human perspective of understanding. *Still Life* functions as contemplation but is spiritually charged and stylistically lies somewhere between theatre and visual art, between performance and installation, between event and exhibition. Perhaps precisely because of its genre vagueness and multidisciplinarity, it conveys one of the fundamental views needed in today's world: what can the forms of animated practises achieve and how far can they reach.

Grabnar also brings a distinctly authorial attitude to the material in the performance *Martin Krpan*, in which he decisively departs from the traditional interpretation of the national hero, and in the projects *The Snow Queen* and *The Silent Boy*, which were created by implementing innovative scenic and staging approaches. Grabnar's recognisable authorship is always reflected in a thorough examination of the approach to the "classic texts" and to all works in which the danger of their predictable – but above all – their expected interpretation lurks. The twist in understanding such source material lies not only in the transformation of the usual interpretation, but also and above all in the extremely personal attitude towards the subject. Despite his clear writerly views, Grabnar deliberately undermines the thesis potential of the events by establishing them in some ways as relatively "instructive" projects, but no less

committed and primarily with an eye to the late present or future and only rarely to a safe, nostalgic past. The political character of *Martin Krpan* lay in the subversion of the production on the level of animation methods and the performing constellation. The plot was animated by three actresses/animators who individually and collectively took a critical distance from this popular Slovenian fairy tale. By playing with the techniques of puppetry, employing sexual shifts and changes in the original emphasis of the story, and breaking free from the influential tradition, the production simultaneously triggered a series of meaningful and sharp subtexts that addressed not only Slovenian literary history as such, but also the attitude of Slovenian puppet theatre towards it.

The adaptation or recontextualisation of *The Snow Queen* and the original plot of *The Silent Boy* created a unique version of the "collective play" despite very different parameters in terms of events and themes at the level of staging. The technologically and imaginatively sophisticated idea behind the reinterpretation of *The Snow Queen* introduced additional metaphysical dimensions to the story full of magical realism and penetrated deep into psychological archetypes, while showing the high scenic potential offered by the use of very ordinary, everyday objects. The main component used to create the sense of drama was sound dramaturgy, i.e. the dramaturgy of sound effects created or recorded in real time using elemental materials (water, wood, metal, etc.). In *The Silent Boy*, the premise of using everyday life, which takes on a superfluous importance on stage, thrives even more as the narrative of the animation is radically shrunk to a single staging material – the body. Fingers, palms, and hands became a central code of performance through a series of different combinations that simultaneously commented on the human body as the original material of puppetry and entered into the modern principle of direction, where language was shaped with mathematical precision and a detailed trajectory of meanings through gesture, choreography, movement compositions and body collectivity.

Indeed, the group dynamics of the performers on stage and the superimposition of signs are part of all Grabnar's projects, in which the performers alternately narrate, animate, act and even change the scenography so that this action permeates the movement on stage. Grabnar's directorial poetics is perhaps less to be seen on the level of content than in the transformation and redefinition of the contemporary function of the animators, who are not limited to the practise of puppetry methodology but have the op-

portunity to unfold in the multidisciplinarity of stage presence. This, on the one hand, generously expands the actors' performing potential and, on the other hand, expands the semiotic meaning from the audience's point of view. This is where the fundamental innovation in Grabnar's perception of (puppet) theatre becomes apparent, as he redefines its role on a pedagogical, artistic, and historical level, but also from an engaged perspective.

Matija Solce: Experimentation with Ludic Elements is / as a Critique of the System

In the case of Matija Solce's impressive artistic corpus, the selection of puppetry performances is also based on the idea of representative projects that offer an insight into his extremely multi-layered yet coherent authorial poetics. Solce's artistic identity is largely linked to music, which is almost always reflected in his puppet shows and animation projects, alongside his independent work in this field. All of his productions are characterised by a particular "sound dramaturgy" that encompasses a conglomerate of sound processes ranging from instrumental music, singing, polyphony, cacophony and rhythmising of sounds (e.g. pops, crackles, beeps, drums) to vocal/speech interludes in modified form. Matija Solce – who was of course also influenced by Czech culture – introduced the prevailing aesthetic of puppet theatre in Slovenia, driven by the "ideology of everyday life" and by a critical insight into the subtexts of canonical texts or stories. With the animation of everyday objects, the chamber format and direct contact with the audience, he has significantly changed the Slovenian perspective of understanding puppets and their staging power, but also their political influence. Undoubtedly, he has had an extraordinary impact on redefining the purpose of animators, but more importantly on broadening the understanding of their role and semiotics. The representational essence of his concepts and performances lies in the aesthetic fusion of symbolic meanings on stage and through expressive means, among which the performers represent the point of multi-layered meanings and multi-disciplinary skills. The performance of puppet animation in its basic sense is only one of the subcategories of staging; sometimes it is the basis for everything else, and on some occasions, it complements or completes another main action on stage. Multitasking is a necessary dimension in performance as it triggers the lucid complexity of execution and perception and introduces unpredictability, liveliness as well as an explosion of signs and their meanings into the action through a mixture of act-

ing, animation, narration, and improvised elements, thus introducing the vulnerability and risk factor in the process of creating the atmosphere. For this reason, it makes more sense to understand Solce's productions as events and not so much as performances that – depending on the particular place, audience, and related circumstances – build their actual and autonomous dramaturgy of relationship with the audience or the public. One of his first productions was the solo performance *Happy Bones* (Vesele kosti, Teatro Matita, 2011), in which he animated bones from different parts of the world while a stuffed panda toy represented his alter ego. Metaphysics and absolute simplicity merged into one event, underlined by a strong note of multiculturalism that is always explicit or implicit in Solce's performances. This is not only due to the use of different languages, but also due to the internalised sense of the universality of the language of the stage, capable of blending and at the same time transcending all cultural barriers.

Finding the universal in what at first sight seems extremely specific also offered potential for his interpretation of Kafka's famous novel *The Trial*. The Maribor Puppet Theatre's production *The Trial or The Sad Story of Josef K.* (Proces ali Žalostna zgodba Josefa K., 2012) is conceived in an extremely fragmented structural format, looking back at what at the time of the premiere seemed rather non-normative in the context of the puppetry scene. The hectic accumulation of different stage techniques – from puppet animation, acting, reading to musical experiments, playing with voices, multilingualism, and sexual twists – formed seemingly uncontrolled different levels of performance, the end effect of which created a complex atmosphere of inexplicability. A somehow obsessive and manic performance chose as its territory modest scenic means (finger puppets, light/shadow animation) and a constructivist theatrical structure. The constant presence of repetitions, momentary interruptions of thought, the play with sentences (ludic elements), the intrusion of harsh German phrases, questions that dissolve into nothingness, quasi-dialogues and acousmatic voices created a "verbal terror" that functioned as a metaphorical reflection of the protagonist's state of mind. The quality of the author's range is later proven in the production *Turlututu* (Puppet Theatre Ljubljana, 2013), based on the picture book by Hervé Tullet, but set on stage with an eccentric narrative language, as the words accompanying the actions consist exclusively of one syllable (tur-lu-tu-tu) and are intended for an audience of two years and older. Undoubtedly, such a principle of communication with the youngest audience is a commentary on language itself, as established perception, and observation – which in most

cases are based on rich descriptions, excessive illustration and classical plot structure – are masterfully replaced by fictional language that is also modulated according to a kind of principle of primary communication. With the ironic argument that "meaningless" words or their fragments can suffice to construct meaning, he has found his inner logic and apprehended (himself) every time.

At the Maribor Puppet Theatre, Solce staged the play *Timescope* (Časoskop, 2014), subtitled "A Dynamic Tribute to the City on the Occasion" of its respectable 850th Anniversary. From the perspective of content and staging procedures, this was certainly a project that stands out from Solce's oeuvre due to its documentary genre and its particular need and commitment to celebrate the anniversary. Regardless of the given orientations and conditions/expectations, Solce cleverly incorporated documentary dimensions and elements of real history into his own poetics, synchronising the collective with the individual. The production was performed in the exhibition depot of the Maribor Regional Museum and was characterised by a strong "site-specific" effect.

A fundamental shift in perception through the specificity of space can also be observed in the ambitious project *Devil's Triptych* / Vražji triptih (part of *The Master and Margarita* / Mojster in Margareta, 2018), in which Solce's poetics seem to culminate in all their nuances and non-normative potential. Conceived as an atmospheric journey through Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, the concept opened up intriguing questions about the performance potential of the theatre building's "civil" spaces in an innovative and ironic authorial tone. Moreover, Solce sought the feeling of drama in the most traversed places and behind the scenes, in spaces invisible and inaccessible to the audience. His final piece, *Session Bulgakov* (Seansa Bulgakov, originally staged in the tunnel of the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre) or The Object and Puppet Brainstorming Based on the Motifs of The Master and Margarita, subsequently evolved into a stand-alone performance that continues to be shown. As with *The Trial or The Sad Story of Josef K.*, the concept was based on a satirical deconstruction of the canonical source material, from which Solce extracted the most important philosophical and fantastic accents and refined the polarisation between good and evil with rich visual, playful, musical, sonic, and performative skills.

Solce introduced topical dilemmas about the meaning of art in contemporary times in the performance Being Don Quixote (Biti Don Kihot, Teatro Matita and International Centre for Puppetry Arts Koper, 2019), a reinterpretation of Cervantes's novel that (following the original author) is largely an autobiographical project. The dystopian nature of Quixotism is constantly permeated by a wide range of expressive devices and subversive "conflicts" in terms of content and execution, paraphrasing in the style of irony and parody the dialogue or misunderstandings between different binary relations within artistic genres, between the understanding of animation and material, between tradition and its deconstruction. The performance, like many others, eludes a clear definition of genre. The permanent fluidity in the way it views art, the world and ultimately itself is undoubtedly Solce's core component, constantly (self-)reflecting, destroying, and restoring. He shakes her own convictions and casts doubt on everything that is seemingly stable – including or especially art, society, the public sphere, and politics.[3]

A sense of dystopia pervades most of Solce's productions for adult audiences. This assertion may seem paradoxical given the sharp parody, (auto)cynicism and caricature often found in his projects, overlaid with lucid humour and comic predicaments, but these recognisable narratives often conceal a deeper critique that perceives social structures in all their destructiveness and toxicity. This poetic approach is clearly visible in the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre's recent production *Darkroom* (Temnica, 2022) which takes the form of an object-music cabaret that draws its themes from *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* by Hans Christian Andersen. The narrative structure of *Darkroom* is remarkably eclectic and unpredictable in terms of plot dynamics, but in addition to dramaturgical dynamics, it also features a constant shift between different means of expression: live music, improvisation, interaction with the audience, experimentation with objects, idiosyncratic dramaturgy of light and sound, orchestration, insistent repetition of key lines from the original fairy tale and a masterful choreography of materials. The continuous effect of this rotation of different performance elements creates a *luden* of direction and performance that is clearly Solce's and often built on the principles of free association, ad-libbing and a fragmented narrative arc. There is a sense of absolute freedom, almost

---

3 | This personal statement is largely complemented by his involvement in the organisation of the festivals *HISTeRIA* (now discontinued) and *Floating Castle* (still held), which in line with the collective summer mood are always conceived as a creative dislocated unit, where new rules of living are created in order to escape as much as possible from the established patterns dictated by our everyday routine. The idea of the festivals is non-aggressively aimed at the minimal use of everyday technological devices designed for guaranteeing our comfort and facilitating our lives; this urges us to thoroughly embrace the laws of nature, but also to cleverly alternate between enjoyment and relaxation, difficulties and sometimes even physical exertion.

anarchy (in terms of art and animation), and although this has a soothing effect as an attraction, a distant view (both in perception and time) reveals much darker and more painful layers of content and meaning in this chaos. With the current tangible presence of war in our immediate surroundings, in all its brutal reality, the chaotic representation that characterises *Darkroom*, definitely perceived differently (the introduction of a Ukrainian folk song into the action on stage also contributes to this impression) – the martial theme and the numerous personifications of soldiers, as well as the echo of jumps and screams, no longer function as a liberated space of arbitrary expression and existence, but as a territory of constant uncertainty, interruptions, incompleteness, noise, instability and aggression. It is this polarisation in relation to signs and symbols that gives *Darkroom* its specificity and vulnerability, as it demonstrates its deep sensitivity to the complexity of a particular social condition. The latter is poetically inscribed in the performance, which consequently reflects the absence of a comprehensible conventional logic.

Brane Solce: Puppetry Carnivalization of Protests (Protestival)

Founder of the puppet theatre Papelito (1982) and renowned film animator, set designer, musician and puppeteer Brane Solce is constantly accompanied and inspired by one material – paper. From the very beginning, his design of this ubiquitous material has been in a sense "political", recognising its many new meanings, hidden potentials, overlooked values and its imaginary, not only non-fictional value. His projects are often devoid of language, which gives the individual paper artefacts even greater symbolic power and a wide range of interpretations. It is important to see this relationship between non-verbal and communicative power in the context of his activist participation in demonstrations throughout Slovenia. His megalomaniac paper puppets, fragile in terms of material but monstrous in terms of meaning, left a distinctive impression in mobilising people to participate in public demonstrations, bringing with them an aesthetic of activism that goes beyond mere words and slogans. In 2013, when a popular uprising began across the country, he and Sanja Fidler (who called themselves Protestival) brought their writerly poetics to protest rallies for the first time in the form of giant paper dolls whose parodic demonic image was based on political reality. His rebellious scenography plays a key political role, opening up but above all modernising the existing communication between the people and the au-

thorities, and on the level of phenomenological perception it goes even deeper, as the visual message can remain in the consciousness much longer and becomes part of the unconscious. With this approach, Brane Solce has established the carnivalization of events that also serve as a "mental outlet", resisting the oppression of everyday life that can be caused by the general society, the system or the dominant ideology. For the audience, this approach holds the potential of a restorative function and rebirth also suggested by art as such, while banners also clearly tend towards a format of (popular) spectacle charged with the aesthetics of *commedia dell'arte*, parades and fairs.

Protestival group found its initial inspiration for the design of the protest puppets and scenography in the statement of the then Prime Minister Janez Janša, who called the protests a "zombie uprising".[4] The image of the zombie as a creature caught between life and death, between here and there, between human and apparition, became the central image of the protests as an aesthetic impulse, as the Protestival "performatively appropriated" the prime minister's contemptuous statement. The theme of the living dead thus encouraged the formation of collective choreographies and the animation of oversized puppets that represented the living dead as a sign of protest. Although elements of entertainment and carnival accompanied the demonstrations because of the visual humour, which despite its nature was no less direct and political, they were nevertheless "important political protests, where people demonstrated their determination to demand changes and fight for them, but also represented completely spontaneous eruptions of 'folk culture'."[5] The tendency towards public display that springs from the artistic gesture model was already demonstrated in the 1960s by the German "Figurentheater" and the American theatre troupe Bread and Puppet Theater (as well as Living Theatre, Diggers, Art Workers' Coalition, Guerrilla Art Action, San Francisco Mime Troupe, etc.), which remain a strong reference for many artists for hybrid forms of political and street theatre with sardonic, satirical and bitter undertones.

---

4 | Milohnić, Aldo. *Gledališče upora*. FF UL in AGRFT UL, 2021, str. 9. "The improvised 'street theatre' of insurgent zombies is a hybrid form of performative events that are highly political, and the aesthetic dimension serves to strengthen the communication channel through which protesters send critical messages to the authorities." (ibid.)
5 | Ibid.

Such public performances can be defined as "conscious, stylised tactics for staging singing, plays, parades, protests and other spectacles in public places where no entrance fee is charged, and spectators are often invited to participate. It also transmits symbolic messages about political and social issues to an audience that would not be reached through more traditional channels."[6] Protestival's actions use stage elements (scenography and puppets) ironically as a symbolic means of propaganda and agitation. As such, it can be considered guerrilla theatre, i.e. "[t]heatre that sees itself as militant and committed to political life or to the radical struggle for liberation of a people or group."[7] Therefore, the Protestival actions are a bidirectional commentary on the current situation, because by commenting on political reality through stage practises in public space, they also address the (im)potency of political content in stage practises, because this potential can enable a multi-directional flow of engagement and activism with real impact and long-term effect.

Brief conclusion

As the concept of engaged theatre is already almost frighteningly broad and complex, it would be difficult to determine the common denominator that unites the selected artists active in the Slovenian puppetry scene. By cultivating an autonomous rhetoric of engagement on a professional and social level, they most effectively reinforce the idea that any competent social engagement draws its essence and foothold from one's own relationship and worldview and is only then restructured into an artistic act. But it is undoubtedly evident that all three of the presented protagonists of animated practises are united by the need to establish the concept of community, which is reflected in different aesthetic forms and practical approaches of the three artists. But the common thread, regardless of the divergence of their poetics, is clear and evident: connect, empower, persevere.

6 | Bradford, D. Martin. *The theater is in the street. Politics and public performance in sixties in America.* University of Massachusetts Press, 2004, p. 4.
7 | Pavis, Patrice. *Gledališki slovar.* Knjižnica MGL, 2007, str. 323.

ABSTRACT

This article presents socially engaged puppet/animation theatre through the lens of the work of three Slovenian puppeteers: Tin Grabnar, Matija Solce and Brane Solce. The three main actors in the field of animated forms are characterised by three autonomous authorial aesthetics that are completely different but internally driven by related communicative attributes, namely the redefinition of the meanings, uses and effects of puppetry materials. The analyses of their artistic expressions are not read in the light of generational affiliation. A more important indicator is the environment in which the artists were trained and in which they worked – first informally ("non-professionally") and then professionally. Director Tin Grabnar's practises in animation are characterised by two basic approaches to creativity, namely the gesture detabooization and the establishment of collectivity. Matija Solce's productions are always driven by a particular "sound dramaturgy" that encompasses a conglomerate of sound processes ranging from instrumental music, singing, polyphony, cacophony and rhythmising of sounds, to voice/speech inclusions in modified form. The megalomaniac paper dolls and Brane Solce's rebellious scenography play a key political role, opening up but above all modernising the existing communication between the people and the authorities, which goes even deeper at the level of phenomenological perception, as the visual message can remain in the consciousness for much longer and becomes part of the unconscious.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zala Dobovšek is a dramaturge, theatre critic, theatrologist, and assistant professor in the field of dramaturgy and performing arts studies at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television (AGRFT). She graduated from AGRFT with a degree in dramaturgy. During her studies, she also attended the DAMU Theatre Academy in Prague (Divadelní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze). In 2019, she received her PhD from AGRFT (study field *Performing Arts Studies*) with the dissertation T*heatre and War: Fundamental Relations between Performing Arts and the Wars on the Territory of Former Yugoslavia in the 1990's*. She is the current president of the Association of Theatre Critics and Researchers of Slovenia. In the period 2016–2021, she was the mentor of the year-round seminar School of Criticism. She works as a practical dramaturge, reviewer, critical writing mentor and pedagogue.

KEY WORDS

engaged theatre, animated forms, community, public space, experiment, Matija Solce, Tin Grabnar, Brane Solce

Bibliography

Bradford, D. Martin. *The theater is in the street. Politics and public performance in sixties in America.* University of Massachusetts Press, 2004. │ **Grošelj, Jon. Levinas.** *Od obličja do odgovornosti.* Društvo psihologov Slovenije, 2014. │ **Milohnić, Aldo.** *Gledališče upora.* Faculty of arts, University of Ljubljana, and AGRFT, University of Ljubljana, 2021. Oddey, Alison. Devising theatre: a practical and theoretical handbook. Routledge, 2007. │ **Pavis, Patrice.** *Gledališki slovar.* MGL Library, 2007.

NIKA ŠVAB

FOURTH CURTAIN WALL

The fourth wall in theatre is younger than the process of breaking it – both in drama and puppet theatre. The originator of the concept – or at least the term – is usually considered to be the enlightened critic, playwright and philosopher Denis Diderot, who was active throughout most of the 18th century. Before that, especially in ancient times, creators mainly adopted practises that have become mainstream again today; we speak of narrative processes or storytelling. In recent years, the biggest names in theatre have created productions with the awareness that the community is co-created by the audience. As a result, the audience is no longer hidden in the dark, and not even necessarily in the auditorium, but increasingly takes an active role in the performance. This should not be confused or equated with interactive or participatory theatre practises, because acknowledging the interlocutor or addressee (storytelling) is not the same as depending on their decisions (participation). Audience participation is often (but not always) manipulated to such an extent that it does not matter what the audience does, as the makers are protected in advance from their 'wrong' choices. If we look at some of the most prominent performances of Slovenian theatre in recent years, we can see that storytelling is "the thing" at the moment, and the same is true abroad. We refer to the performances that have received the most prizes, the most critical acclaim and the most interest from the audience.

When we talk about breaking the fourth wall, we often express the awareness that the performance is in a theatre in front of a live and responsive audience; virtually every monologue on the ramp counts, even if the words "audience, this is for you" (or some other phrase that conveys that message) are not uttered. This is particularly ironic in the context of puppet theatre, which has its origins in travelling performances that were in fact driven by audience response. Later, it was fully internalised as a medium for children, based on the assumption that a certain amount of direct address is crucial to follow and experience the action in its fullness. The central problem with puppet theatre is that it is mostly interpreted as a medium for children. As such, it tends largely to patronise the audience, and a significant percent-

age of productions are based on the concept of a story within a story: an animator comes on stage and announces that he is going to tell us a fairy tale, or a character is introduced in the role of narrator to lead us from scene to scene. This is the end of the play, the fourth wall has been broken and a review of the productions that break the fourth wall in this way would be more like a list than an analysis.

Therefore, it can hardly be said that the proscenium stage in the children's puppet theatre has completely taken over the particular field. At the very least, the performances usually end with the audience singing about the happy lives of the puppet characters. As a result of the shifts that affected staging procedures, structures and the recontextualization of puppet theatre into a theatre with animated objects, as well as the revision of the concept of puppets and the blurring of boundaries between finished objects and objects produced ad hoc for a particular performance, our perception of puppet theatre as theatre for children has transcended these frames, at least to some extent, and the target audience is less and less equated with the identity of the medium. These changes have been followed simultaneously by the disappearance of screens and black costumes, which include gloves and rubber slippers for the purpose of intense concealment. None of this would be possible, of course, without decisive changes in the understanding of the puppet or animator as an actor and the incorporation of elements of puppetry into dramatic theatre. This began (at least in Europe) in the first half of the 20th century (if we do not consider the ancient device of *Deus ex machina*) in the works of Bertolt Brecht and through the introduction of the Verfremdungseffekt, Craig's *Übermarionette* and Kantor's experimentation with the relationship between animate and inanimate actors, i.e. actors and puppets.

For the analytical interpretation of the absence of the fourth wall in contemporary puppet theatre, it is also necessary to clarify the terms, since the fourth wall in puppet theatre has not undergone such extreme changes as in dramatic theatre, and the canonical performances that can serve as study examples are mostly classified as dramatic performances

with puppetry elements. Moreover, from a theoretical point of view, puppetry has not yet been described or analysed in such a rich, regular, and consistent professional manner. However, if we consider any performance that contains puppetry elements (even if they only appear occasionally) as puppetry, the situation looks quite different, and we suddenly see many examples of more advanced puppetry or animation practises that have been implemented in the field of performance arts over the last hundred years. The question that nevertheless remains is how we understand the word "contemporary". Does it refer to performances created in the present, i.e. in the present time, or to performances created in the present time that use updated practises and technologies? We will look at the understanding of contemporary puppet theatre that needs to consider and include the present time as the era we live in (and not some universal fairy tale time where little bears live in the forest), the present time as a progressive, unconventional artistic period, and the present time as a period that does not ignore or deny social changes and technological progress. With this in mind, the analysis excludes all performances that deal with universal themes such as hate, love and friendship and do not in any way include examples from the present; performances that do not experiment with the media of puppetry; and performances that break the fourth wall only in the most conventional way in puppetry – through the final song mentioned earlier. In the review we will see different ways of breaking the fourth wall, i.e. by building a community with the audience, revealing what is hidden and addressing the audience directly through storytelling.

Husam Abed: *Smooth Life* (Snadný život)

In 2014, puppeteer Husam Abed began to break the fourth wall in his master performance at Prague's DAMU Academy, co-produced with Dafa Puppet Theatre, by forming a small community with the audience. The content itself is extremely politically motivated and thematic, as the performance depicts the author's experiences as a refugee in the Middle East and growing up in a refugee camp. The performance is designed for a small group of about ten people who symbolically sit down at a table with the artist. So, the fourth wall is almost non-existent, but Abed does not stop there. Throughout the narrative, he uses storytelling processes to present the story of his life. The process involves the animation of various objects, video projections and the use of various props, while the audience is also involved in creating the performance. Following Abed's

instructions on the use of certain animated objects, the audience helps shape the performance while Abed animates it with sounds (for example, when the locomotive is moving, someone in the audience moves a puppet and Abed imitates the sound of the locomotive). At the end, the artist serves the audience the food he cooked during the performance, and they eat it together while talking about the show, the food, his work or something else – depending on what topic arises during the conversation. He can break the fourth wall through the structure of the performance itself – not once or twice, but three times – creating a community (carefully selecting a manageable number of viewers so that everyone has an equal chance to be included) in which hierarchical positions blur.

Manual Cinema: *The End of TV*

One of the ways to break the fourth wall is to show what is hidden, such as the technicians remaining invisible in the technical booth behind the audience, or the scene change that takes place in the dark during an intermission, for example. By showing the work of all the staff involved, or at least making the majority of the performance elements visible, we break the illusion that theatre light has the properties of the sun rising and setting on its own and emphasise the fact that the sound recorded and reproduced in the theatre is produced by people (before or during the performance).

The collective Manual Cinema was founded in 2010 with the intention of modernising shadow theatre. Their performance *The End of TV*, which premiered in June 2017 and was part of last year's edition of the Scottish *Manipulate* Festival, combines drama, puppet animation, film camera and music orchestra in an attempt to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The plot focuses primarily on the intimate stories of two women – one older and one young, one Caucasian and one African American, one customer and one employee – who meet by chance and develop a friendly bond. The title itself symbolises a change that has taken place over time, a generational leap, as television no longer occupies the same place in young people's households as it did a few decades ago. The meaning of television or its place in society is changing, and this is true of all changes: Theatre as a medium is constantly evolving, as is the perception of animated objects. Scenes are interrupted by the insertion of commercials (which are also a relic of previous generations), helped along by the orchestra, puppet animators and actors who are both on stage and in view of the audience. The final product is captured by the camera,

Nika Švab **Fourth Curtain Wall**

which translates and, in some ways, combines the elements projected onto the screen that are also on stage. By shifting the focus among these elements, creators and performers communicate directly with the audience, albeit not with words, but through processes that aim to make the performance accessible to the audience in the broadest sense. It is also interesting to note that despite the large number of contributors, only the shadow puppets speak words – the rest communicate with gestures and less articulate sounds. By showing the creation of the different elements of the performance, the audience gets an insight into the process that they normally do not have. The audience becomes more involved because the makers are not only concerned with what we do, but also how we do it.

Amit Drori: *Gulliver – The Journey to Lilliput*

In his artistic work, director, author of adaptations and performer Amit Drori regularly explores and revisits the role of the animator, the puppet or animated object and the Other through the use of various theatrical processes. In his adaptation and staging of *Gulliver – The Journey to Lilliput*, produced by The Train Theater in 2011 and based on Jonathan Swift's cult work about encountering the Other, the artist breaks the fourth wall in the adaptation itself, which is conceived as a journey through memories that are discovered and revealed, and it is meant for only one actor. Interestingly, the audience does not take on or interpret the role of the inhabitants of Lilliput Island during the journey, but instead takes on the role of Gulliver's superiors, financiers of his expedition or readers of his diary, as he recounts the events, experiences, and progress of his expedition within the narrative. It is desirable for the audience to take the opportunity to follow the animator/narrator from scene to scene, with each scene presenting a new story taking place on the island of Lilliput. Some puppets are designed as automata that the animator finds in cube-shaped memory boxes, while others are animated by the animator during the storytelling, just as he is constantly setting up or preparing the stage set during the performance. This interdisciplinary and interactive performance, which in a way could be interpreted as a literary and guided exhibition tour, also offers an interesting contrast between larger, more abstract objects (cubes that serve multiple functions) and smaller, elaborately made puppets that are used for specific purposes.

Jaha Koo: Cuckoo and The History of Western Korean Theatre

The second and third parts of Koo's trilogy *Hamartia*, premiered in 2017 (*Cuckoo*) and 2020 (*The History of Western Korean Theatre*) and produced by Ghent-based independent producer Campo, feature an interesting twist on the role reversal between author, narrator, title character and central motif. The trilogy explores and presents the (contemporary) history of South Korea, its westernisation, and its own cultural heritage. In the white man's view of the Far East, South Korea is first and foremost a dislocated unit of Japan, a modern and technologically advanced country whose inhabitants have a wonderful complexion and who actually compare their nation to Japan. According to Aristotle, *hamartia* is a fatal flaw that leads to the downfall of the character and, in the case of Koo's trilogy, the downfall of South Korea. Cuckoo is the brand name of the best-selling rice cooker that uses high pressure and high temperatures and serves as a metaphor for modern capitalist society. At the same time, Cuckoo, a South Korean product, is a symbol of internalised neo-colonialism or internalised colonialism, as it is an improved rice cooker that South Korea imported from Japan in the 1980s. As a musician and interdisciplinary artist, Koo begins to play with technology not only on a symbolic level, but he also sees it as the basis for artificial intelligence, effectively a robot that can be used in a similar way to the digital assistants Siri and Alexa. Cuckoo later became the most famous rice cooker (at least in the performing arts) and initially took on the role of a symbol of modern Korean society. It tells the story of its own importance to South Koreans, highlighting the similarities between the average person and a rice cooker, as both tend to be extremely effective under extreme pressure. After touring the world for several years, Cuckoo is re-engaged as an actor in the final performance of the trilogy, sharing the role of narrator with his user/director/co-star Koo, but this time also acknowledging his position; first by giving reasons for his re-engagement (the aforementioned extraordinary and sometimes unexpected success) and later by mentioning his position as narrator/actor/animated object. In each case, the author has made the interesting decision to introduce a hybrid between an object that actually makes sounds and is therefore in a sense already alive but is not yet a robot or humanoid (although it does speak). Both performances are documentary and narrative, so that despite their partially closed form, they show an awareness of the audience's presence and importance, breaking the barrier between the spectators and the two actors, while responding to the surrounding world and acknowledging the capacity and perception of their representational media.

The above examples show that there are many methods to break the fourth wall and involve the audience in puppet theatre. No doubt there are many more similar examples of theatres that, due to insufficient budgets and inequality between countries, do not enjoy the same number of productions in different venues, international reviews, and similar privileges that the average European producer understands as his basic right. Because of the position of puppet theatre or theatre of animated objects, which are sometimes marginalised, the procedures used in practise tend to be the most conventional, although productions that put more thought and creativity into the procedures prove to be more successful at the international level and at festivals, and receive greater critical acclaim. It is also necessary to point out the fact that within the community of creators engaged in the contemporary performing arts, an increasing degree of fluidity can be perceived in terms of the procedures used and the functions of the creators, which are no longer divided into theoretical and practical, dramatic and puppetry, but are increasingly united and intertwined. This is one of the reasons why there are even more examples of backstage revelation, storytelling and community building than might at first appear. Many of these lie in the use of technology, robotics and mechatronics in the performing arts and their integration into this field. A new level of breaking the fourth wall can be observed in pandemic production, which has shifted mainly to the medium of film. As a result, many creators took the opportunity to play with conventions and rules and mix them in both media. *The End of TV* is both a live performance and a television show; it is a theatre performance that is also a film. The live music of the orchestra, the work of the animators and the final product, which is a synthesis of both components, form the central dramatic action on stage that appears on the central scenic element, television. Koo's two performances could also function as a combination of performance and film, since a large and important part of his performances consists of videos. Moreover, the concept of storytelling allows for different levels or modes of approach and realisation. Of course, much depends on the concept of the performance itself, its content and the artists' knowledge or perception of what kind of audience they want, expect, or intend to address. The choice to tell stories is not always political in the sense of breaking with theatrical conventions – at this point, storytelling is a convention. Nowadays, storytelling and switching between the roles of narrator, actor and dramatic character are what the box stage was a few decades ago. Much more courageous and progressive is the decision to actually cre-ate a community in which the positions of power are at least partially exchanged. Most importantly, we become aware of the importance of collectivity and the impact of our decisions on others and vice versa, which is particularly necessary in individualistic capitalism, but also in small bubbles of creation due to the particularly competitive nature of the current system. Through such processes, art prepares us, at least to some degree, for life and for engagement in communities of which everyone is a part. Unfortunately, these are less profitable and opportunities to visit are rare, although they do provide valuable experience.

ABSTRACT

The fourth wall in both drama and puppet theatre is an invention of the Enlightenment, present in the performing arts for much less time than it was absent. In the article, the author presents the artists and their works in which they break the fourth wall or establish contact with the audience in different ways. The article looks for parallels and differences between them, what impact they have on the audience and on the message or content of the performance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nika Švab is a literary comparatist and dramaturge. She studied at the University of Ljubljana and at the DAMU Academy in Prague. As a freelancer in the cultural field, she works as a dramaturge, playwright, and critic. She mainly writes reviews, reflections, plays, analyses, articles for theatre magazines and educational material. She occasionally acts as a performer, presenter, editor, and executive producer of festivals. She is co-author of the projects *S*S*, *Home, sweet home* (Ljubo doma, kdor ga ima), and *TRANS-plant*. Since 2014, she has regularly followed puppetry production. In 2017 she received the Young Playwright Award at the festival Week of Slovenian Drama and in 2021 she was nominated for the Slavko Grum Award.

KEY WORDS

fourth wall, box stage, community, animated objects, audience

Bibliography

Levitan, Olga. »The Puppet as an Instrument of Thought«, eds. Jurkowski, H., Radonjić, M. *Theatre for children: artistic phenomenon.* Theatre Museum of Vojvodina, International Festival of Children's Theatres, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/6005294/THE_PUPPET_AS_AN_INSTRUMENT_OF_THOUGHT.%201..%20april%202022

Schumann, Peter. *The Radicality of Puppet Theatre.* The Drama Review, 1990

YNGVILD ASPELI

"FOR ME PUPPETRY IS A WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD" EXTENDED LANGUAGE AND ITS BORDERS

The so-called "expanded language" is a fundamental principle of the work of the French-Norwegian director, performer, and puppeteer Yngvild Aspeli, who has staged six works with the international group of actors, puppeteers, and musicians Plexus Polaire as artistic director since 2008: *Signals* (Signaux, 2011), *The Opaque Opera* (Opéra opaque, 2013), *Ashes* (Cendres, 2014), *The Black Room* (Chambre Noire, 2017), *Moby Dick* (2020) and *Dracula* (2022).

Plexus Polaire's artistic direction under Aspeli is characterised by the use of human-sized puppets, a theatrical language that emerges at the intersection of different performance elements that equally converge in a multi-sensory puppet performance, and themes that deal with boundaries – between reality and illusion, sanity and madness, and life and death. The group's name is the first clue to this kind of artistic orientation: the plexus is the space in which emotions reside, while polaire denotes the polarity that emotions always carry. According to Aspeli, puppets have the wonderful ability to constantly shake up the relationships and borderlines of this kind of bipolarity.

By extending language, the puppet and the puppeteer appear as fundamental postulates. More specifically, their dual presence opens many semiotic and allegorical meanings, while the puppet as a stylised representation of a human being offers the possibility of introspection from a distance. At the same time, instead of words, it can function as a medium for things that cannot necessarily be seen or rationalised but can still be felt.

According to Aspeli, puppetry is a moving centre, a gaze, a way of looking at the world. It is something that is redefined with each story (with each new, individual gaze). Something that can transcend fixed genres and styles and fearlessly cross the boundaries of other forms of artistic expression.

In this kind of vertical dramaturgy of expanding language, puppet, actor, puppeteer, space, light, and sound become equal means of expression. But the perfect illusion is not an uncompromising goal, but a means or a tool that allows for self-contradiction or self-denial.

The modernist paradigm that the artist must also invent a new form for his work of art in relation to its content has influenced most artistic productions of the 20th century. This is a 19th century paradigm. The relationship between form and content is even more accentuated in puppetry. How do you explore this relationship yourself? For me, form is very closely related to content. For me, the use of puppetry is not only an aesthetic decision but is closely related to dramaturgical decisions. The relationship between the puppets and the performer and everything in between really depends on the theme or is in service of trying to capture the theme. A theme can often be something that is difficult to explain or visualise, and I think that puppetry – if used in the right place – can be used as a tool to visualise the more abstract themes.

To what extent did the ESNAM (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette) in Charleville-Mézières, which is very focused on original and imaginative forms and exploring the dimensions of puppetry, influence your artistic approaches? Charleville was an important time for me to develop my own language. The good thing about Charleville is that you can try out many different possibilities and you are never limited to one particular way or technique. You have a broad overview of the work of different artists and are educated to find your own way and develop your language. For example, my language is a visual language. A visual storytelling where all the senses are active and help to convey a story. All the things and impulses that come through the text or the actors' work are strongly perceived through the atmosphere of the music, the light and the space – it's like trying to create a physical experience through a visual translation of the story. Somehow capturing these things that you can not necessarily explain, but that you can still understand on a deeper level.

How do you put these elements, which are very abstract by nature, into practise? Atmosphere and feelings are abstract, but they are also very concrete. They are something that is very recognisable to everyone – you cannot explain them, you have to feel them. This is where puppetry comes into play and has a unique quality, because it manages to realise something that is difficult to explain or put into words. It is not the words but the feeling that we can all recognise and understand. A feeling is more concrete than words. It is like a body or a heart. An important thing for me is also literature and the meaning of a story. The goal is to tell that story and communicate it to the public. That is something that has always been important to me – even if I choose a different way to tell a story, the goal is still to tell that story... I cannot

control how it's translated or whether the audience has their own opinion, but for me the awareness of the audience is very important. This means that when I produce the show, I must be aware that I am not doing it for me, but for others.

In an interview for the Some Small Magic podcast,[1] you said that you like to change things after the premiere based on audience feedback. Does that influence how you develop future shows? You always try to make each show a little bit better and with each new show you understand a little bit more of what needs to be done until eventually it becomes a set form. But even then, I think with each new space or culture there are differences. I think that's the beauty of our expression and of live art – it's something that changes and adapts to the reality in which it appears. *Moby Dick*, for example, is about this monomaniac who drives the crew to ruin, which can apply to a lot of situations. I think that's why this story has survived all these years. It touches on many different levels. There is a reason why *Moby Dick* has become a classic. It speaks to something we can all recognise, even if we live in completely different times and cultural contexts.

In the podcast mentioned above, you also said that you do not take a literary work as the basis for an adaptation, but that you choose a literary work as the structure for a theme you want to work on. So how do you choose the topics you want to present to your audience and how do you finally decide on a literary work? Initially I thought I would deal with a different theme in each show, but I have since realised that it is always the same theme that takes different forms and that I look at from different angles. It is definitely about the inner struggle and complexity of being human. It interests me in all forms; how we struggle between good and evil or with our dark sides and how this fragility of being human is also our strength. I am interested in how we are always in a kind of balance between being in control or being controlled by the forces that surround us or work within us. And when you look at that, that is the basis of being human, which opens up the possibility of looking at more concrete stories that come out of that.

Many of your works – for example *Moby Dick*, *Ashes, Black Room* – also deal with the theme of madness or other psychological borderline states. How do you portray someone who is demonised (e.g. a manic whaler, arsonist or assassin) in depth, not in a one-dimensional way, but as a human being with his own fears and frustrations?

1 | *2.5 Yngvild Aspeli, Some Small Magic/Fletcher Pierson, 2017.*

I am most interested in why they have this extreme side, because we all have the potential. I like to look at what makes someone cross the line and what makes someone else not cross it. Stories like that are an extreme mirror of each and every one of us. I am more interested in how each individual fights for their life and place in society and how our identity and connection to what we do as individuals affects the society or group of people, we surround ourselves with. It may be the decision of one person, but that one decision can affect many people – I like to look at this never-ending balance between individuality and society.

I think it also works in reverse: social conditions can produce (extreme) individual choices, for example in *Black Room*, which is about Valerie Jean Solanas (1936–1988), a North American writer, promising psychology student and radical feminist known for the manifesto *SCUM* (Society for Cutting Up Men) and the shooting of Andy Warhol. Yes, I think *Black Room* and *Moby Dick* are quite antithetical. In *Black Room* we have an individual who behaves in an extreme way, but you can see that she is the result of a society that did not care for her, a society that abandoned her as a child. And in *Moby Dick* we have another extreme of Ahab driving his little micro-society to ruin. I like to explore the connections between the individual and the group in different ways.

The authors of literary classics that you often bring to the stage usually have a very distinctive and particular style of writing – they also choose the form that suits their subject. In the case of *Moby Dick*, for example, it is Herman Melville's style that has made the novel a canonical classic of American literature. So, if a literary work provides a structure for the chosen subject, how do you transfer the writing style and form into your own form, i.e. into a visual form? I am very attentive to the use of language. It is something that touches me. Therefore, one of my tasks is to capture a style of writing and translate it into my own language, the language of the stage. For this translation, it is important to know how a literary work is structured. For example, *Black Room*, as Sara Stridsberg[2] writes it, is like pieces that go back and forth in time. When translating it into stage language, it was obvious that the structure of the show should resemble a kind of hallucination. With *Moby Dick*, which is an epic story, it was also necessary to create a form… Herman Melville's writing also mixes many different styles, and that had to be expressed in the show. I try to respect the way the story is told while adapting it to my own language.

You often emphasise that you are interested in the dual presence of the puppeteer and the puppet in your work. If we assume that these two presences are something separate, I wonder how they differ? The puppeteer is never neutral, and this allows us to play with different possibilities of the relationship between puppet and puppeteer. Sometimes they are like one entity – although physically they are two separate beings. The puppeteer is in the service of the puppet and represents something that is the same. This is something we can play with – for example, what happens when we do not see the puppeteers to create an illusion, and what happens when we see them and assume someone is manipulating the other person or character. We can take this even further, to the point where they are characters in interaction. So, there are three different ways to approach this in the dramaturgy of the performance.

In contemporary puppetry, there is often an attempt to expose the illusion. Exposing the production processes becomes the strategy of the performance. But in your performances, you build on the "perfect" illusion to the point where we can no longer distinguish between puppets and puppeteers. For me, it's not so much about building a perfect and stable illusion, but about creating an illusion that I can then play with. For example, sometimes we do not see the puppeteers, but when we do, it has a stronger effect than if we had seen them from the beginning. I like to use the breaking of the illusion as part of the narrative.

At the same time, your works also relate to the tradition of puppetry. In art today, the relationship to tradition is ambivalent. New forms are created in opposition to it, and it is sometimes easy to feel an antagonistic attitude, but at the same time tradition is the first condition for the contemporary. How do you experience the relationship between tradition and modernity, convention, and alternative in puppetry? I think this is where puppetry is interesting, because it has a really strong tradition and techniques that are valuable. For me, it's important that the performers are good animators. The technique is traditional, it's a craft that is learned. It's something you can build on… For example, I am very fascinated by marionettes, and I always use some kind of traditional marionette – but I use them in a different way. I work mainly with the relationship between puppeteer and puppet and there are other techniques that are useful in exploring that relationship. So, I would not put contemporary in opposition to tradition. I think it's more a question of evolution, of adapting to a time that is changing. I think it's a great strength to have traditions and techniques and see where we can use them to move forward.

2 | The performance *Black Room* is inspired by Sara Stridsberg's novel *The Dream Faculty* (Drömfakulteten, 2006).

The theme of this issue of *Lutka* Journal is "Puppets on the Edge". Do you think that the "openness of vision" in finding the right form can take puppetry away from what it actually is (and turn it into an inarticulate mixture of "a little bit of everything")? It's a question of what you call puppetry. I think puppetry goes beyond the puppet itself. It can be used as a technique or, as in my case, as a way of looking at the world. It is like a way of looking or telling a story, which can take many different forms. For me, any form of puppetry represents a focus outside of the human being. It is like a triangular communication instead of just two sides, which then puts everything in the service of something other than itself. For this reason, puppetry takes many different forms for me.

Can you give examples of artists whose work expands the understanding of puppetry? Yes, there is a French artist, Alice Laloy. In her last exhibition, for example, she transformed children into a very creepy, impressive but beautiful form of living puppets while working with *Pinocchio*. Elise Vigneron works a lot with materials like ice and how this material can be used as a means of storytelling. Renaud Herbin, who uses everyday objects in interaction with the human body. It may be a simple object, but he explores the way we use it to create different dimensions. Agnès Limbos also works with object theatre and has a very different way of telling a story and giving a different perspective... They all do interesting and strong work in their own way.

Your hyper-realistic, life-size puppets are often described as creepy, haunting, and uncanny. What do you think contributes to this experience? One of the reasons I like puppets is that they can function like a medium between life and death and I think that gives me the opportunity to communicate between the two worlds. It's a natural theme for puppets because they already have these two worlds in them, in their form. They are an object that comes alive because we believe in them or bring them to life. I think the use of puppets is similar to a séance where everyone has a glass with letters underneath, and everyone puts their fingers on the glass and it somehow connects and moves with the spirits. Everyone knows that it is one of us who has moved the glass, but we do not know who. There is still a doubt or belief that perhaps the glass is being moved by 'something else'. The use of group puppetry, which I often use, is an extreme version of this myth and how we believe in something that is not true. So in their natural form, puppets already offer the opportunity to explore existential questions, and when we say existential questions, I mean the themes of life and death. We all have a relationship to these issues. We may fear them or be

haunted by them, but the puppets have the ability to tap into this, even if it is not in a concrete way, but only through their form or phantom-like presence.

In your last performance, *Dracula* (which premiered in December 2021), which also deals with the boundaries between life and death, you chose a slightly more feminist interpretation of the old story and the vampire motif. Can you tell us more about that? *Dracula* as a book (or as a character) is impossible to grasp. He's a myth, one that hides in the shadows, which is his strength. It's hard to capture that because it's the doubt of whether he's there or not that makes him real. In working on the piece, it was important for me not to do a contemporary version, because I believe in the power of things set in the time in which they were created. By telling it today, we have to create a kind of mirror between two times and so I realised that I wanted to focus on Lucy, one of Dracula's first victims. Her story touched me because it often stays on the surface, and I wanted to shift things, tell the story from a woman's perspective, and see what other issues this decision could reveal – issues that are self-evident today, but still important to highlight.

What themes did you discover when looking at the story from a female perspective? *Dracula* is about sexuality, innocence, lust, and the illegal liberation from prescribed roles that you have to play as a woman – that you should be pretty, sexy, attractive and liberated, but at the same time innocent and not too liberated, because then you become too free and someone who is no longer respected. The boundaries for women are very blurred... A lot of it is about abuse and wanting something but being afraid of it at the same time. That's something that comes up a lot in the book – not just in relation to women, but as a general desire or lust, which is also terrifying. I think that's what the vampire is all about as well. It's an internal struggle about what's right or wrong, what to do or not to do, and all the complex issues around sexuality, the body, image, power, and abuse of that power.

Finally, a question about your future career – in the autumn you will become the artistic director of Nordland Visual Theatre in Stamsund, Norway. What does this mean for your future work as artistic director of Plexus Polaire and as a performer? I will wear two hats – my work with Plexus Polaire will continue while I will also be the artistic director of Nordland Visual Theatre. This is a very special and exciting place in the north of Norway that specialises in having different international theatre companies produce their shows. As artistic director I will be working to broaden the understanding of what puppet theatre is, what possibil-

ities it offers and what a brilliant form of expression it is, while continuing to develop my work with Plexus Polaire. The company will continue to tour and after *Dracula* I will do a new show that will see me return to the stage as a performer. It will be a solo show again, dealing with that old Norwegian classic, *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.

MOJCA REDJKO

LIKE CAKE DUNKED IN TEA
ABOUT MATERIAL THEATRE

Material theatre is a contemporary puppetry practise that places material, with its characteristic physical properties, before form. The material speaks as an abstract sign rich in semantic layers connected to the personal experiences of the performers and spectators.

The Meaning of Material

As an autonomous phenomenon at the intersection of different artistic practises, contemporary puppetry art questions its own medium and seeks new semantic layers and a new aesthetic in the act of animation. Animation is not (any longer) a mere act of animating the inanimate, but rather a search for actants and relational possibilities within this act. The perspectives for entering into these artistic processes are based on the perception of a sign in relation to the material (the substance) and not exclusively in relation to the form. The puppet as a technologically sophisticated product requiring craft animation skills is no longer of interest. It has been replaced by objects, spaces, bodies, sounds, tones, voices, shadows, projections, light, etc.,[1] while the act of animation includes elements of various performance practises, movement, dance, clowning, acrobatics, music, singing, etc. The methods of animation are not fixed *a priori*, they are anchored in the character of the material – either in its physical and chemical properties or in its original material context – which uses met-

aphors, metonymy, humour, poetics, etc. is used to dictate the semantic transmission to the abstract level and to take the spectator out of his position of passive observer who, by associating, reading, connecting, *corresponding*, makes all his life energies available and participates in an equal dialogue to actively co-create (his own) performance.[2]

The Form of Material

As far as the relationship (and approach) to the material is concerned, object theatre and material theatre have much in common, as they are both characterised by a certain degree of abstraction. In object theatre, the material that is included in the performance usually (still) has a fixed form. By deviating from the traditional logic of *technological* puppetry and approaching the message of the *nature* of the material, this form becomes ephemeral, while its perceived transience makes it *arbitrary* in relation to the performance. In a very concrete sense, an object can be used as a ready-made puppet. The Barbie doll, for example, represents contemporary aesthetic ideals and socio-economic values that are fully transferred into the artistic concept, similar to the performance *Viktorija 2.0* (Moment, directed by Zoran Petrovič, 2016); the stuffed rabbits in the performance *Still Life* (Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, directed by Tin Grabnar, 2020) are animated and move *as if they were alive*; they are brought to life *in the traditional way* as fabricated puppets in animal form, while the audience watches the performance with an undeniable awareness of their material and actual *lifelessness*.

1 | At the same time, the performing process typical of animation has been entering *non-puppetry* theatre genres, e. g. sensorial, immersive, visual theatre etc.
2 | Rancière, Jacques. *Emancipirani gledalec*. Maska, 2010, p. 13–14.

An object as a clear sign can stand metonymically for a broader semantic field (*totality*), for example, a shirt with a tie on a hanger becomes a lawyer, a personification of the justice system (*The Trial or The Woeful Story of Joseph K.*, Maribor Puppet Theatre, directed by Matija Solce, 2012), or the bones in the performance *Happy Bones* (Koper International Centre for Puppetry Arts, Teatro Matita, directed by Matija Solce, 2012), which are animated in a scene with different animation approaches in dialogue with the animator's hand and thus can represent two (whole) persons within the continuity of a single movement of the animator.[3]

Objects can be used in a completely associative way – they move in their own way and take on secondary meanings with the help of the spectator's investment, for example the spinning top in the performance *Darkroom* (Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, directed by Matija Solce, 2022) becomes a ballerina in different lights.[4] The associative use resulting from the inherent totality of the stage illusion, which consists of layers of performance elements, remains on the abstract level, and does not tend towards concreteness. The shift towards letting the material grow naturally into an artistic act that is firmly dictated and given a unique character by the same material is reminiscent of the childlike game of creating (and destroying) that is deeply rooted in myths and fairy tales about the creation of man and the world.

The Possibilities of the Material

Daniel Blanga-Gubbay wonders if God had the possibility to create another word.[5] He refers to the reflections on creation in the work of Thomas Aquinas (1265) entitled De Potentia, which describes how God first chose the material for the creation of the world and then created the best possible world that could have been made from that material. Within the material used to create the world, all potential worlds have the same possibility of creation. A rare example of the depiction of the world just before its creation is the image from the Maciejowski *Bible* manuscript (1240) in which God holds in his right hand a cloud of material and in his left hand a perfect form that will only be visible from the second day within the material. Similarly, in 1582,

Giordano Bruno wrote of creation as "a great chaos, which behaves no differently from a cloud, and is formed by winds from without, and which can take all sorts of shapes because of the differences and properties of the impulses."[6] God, starting from the uniqueness of the amorphous material, creates a single surface of reality. The moment a single real world (image) is chosen, all other possible worlds are designated as possible, as something that could have been but is not, and as something that still exists beneath the surface in the material of the world. Furthermore, Blanga-Gubbay writes about the nature of material and form in a modern and postmodern world, holding to the idea that the material has more than one purpose – instead it reveals uncertainty and invites us to explore the present; the material appears as a possibility to evolve in any form. The From is established as a non-human mediator of creation.

The Nature of Material

At the heart of material theatre is the use of material in a way that takes into account its physical, chemical, technological and other related properties. The material constantly changes shape (during the performance) and thus relentlessly dictates the rhythm, tempo and movement dynamics of the animator that result from its properties. Images with strong associative and symbolic value are created. This value intensifies with the juxtaposition, while the relationships between the generated images produce emptiness and creative contingency. The animator is at the same time the creator: he animates the inanimate material and continuously defines its *forms*. On the other hand, the animator must explore the movement appropriate to the material used. In this way, the material becomes a medium – not only a source of form, but a symbolic and practical sign in one.

This is, for example, the starting point of the performance *Janček the Hedgehog* (Maribor Puppet Theatre, directed by Margrit Gysin, 2012). A small round table, an allusion to the potter's wheel, at which a tiny clay boy awakens from a lump of clay – a material that carries the semantic value of antiquity, of healing and uplifting power – turns into a hedgehog and moves into a clay forest; the cave expands into a bear that grows into a castle, while it also turns into a pencil that draws the way out of the forest and in the end becomes the building material of a happy home. The clay is supported by simple *everyday* objects (branches, sticks, toothpicks,

3 | Sitar Cvetko, Jelena. *Iluzije po točkah*. Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva, March 2022, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/iluzije-po-tockah/.
4 | Ibid.
5 | Blanga-Gubbay, Daniel. »Kot oblak, ki ga oblikujejo svetovi.«, edited by Kraigher A., Rooss A. *Gledališče animiranih form*. Maska no. 179–180/Lutka no. 59, 2016, p. 25–28.

6 | Ibid.

toy parts, birthday candles, sparklers, etc.), while the performance principle includes role-playing (Elena Volpi as Mama, Janček, Bear, King, Rooster, Princess, etc.) and singing, in addition to storytelling and inventing new images, which are then torn down again, setting the stage for a joyful children's play that invites the audience to imitate. Such an approach is very typical of material theatre. The materials are known and accessible and the children's play can develop into a creative act with artistic elements as part of the pedagogical framework and through the introduction of a story.[7]

A Creative Playground

In recent years, director Miha Golob has developed the concept of children's playgrounds as creative polygons in connection with the exploration of materials in children's performances. He started with *little blue and little yellow* by Leo Lionni (Maribor Puppet Theatre, 2015) and continued with his own projects *Aquarium* (Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, 2017) and *Sand Pit* (Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, 2022).

> [...] in this performance (*little blue and little yellow*, AN) I started to think about children's playgrounds as places of first discoveries and fascinations, as unique children's laboratories, spaces where children explore and experience certain laws of this world and at the same time learn about themselves, their imagination, creativity, and logic. I discovered that even a blank sheet of paper can be a playground for children. Even more, I was fascinated by how a blank sheet of paper can be interesting for a child. The child has this great desire to fill it, colour it, roll it, tear it, crumple it... In [...] *Aquarium* I went a step further and explored analogue children's playgrounds, which today are increasingly being replaced by digital play worlds. In its function, Aquarium was a bathtub, which is one of the first spaces for children's play. In this process, the sand pit was the next logical step. Sandpits are elementary spaces for children's play, but you see children in them less and less – instead cats use them for peeing and pooping or children get dirty in them...[8]

None of the three performances insist on direct interactivity. Instead, they dramaturgically cast the principles of dialogic playfulness into an innovative animation of objects and materials in a space that resembles a playground and with game-like approaches. In the performance *little blue and little yellow*, the children's playground is represented by an enlarged piece of paper, while the animated material is paint (in various forms). In the performance Aquarium, the illusion is created in animated relationships between objects and water, while in Sand Pit the puppet appears as sand, "a material that is the opposite of everything traditionally represented by a puppet".[9]

Colour

The performance *little blue and little yellow* is based on a picture book by Leo Lionni, a story that is clearly ambiguous in relation to the title and open to interpretation. The story is presented with coloured shapes torn out on a *blank* background. The text is very short and is mostly at the bottom of the page. Little blue is depicted as a small blue figure torn out of the paper. His parents are represented by two larger blue shapes that are different from each other. Their home is represented by a brown shape on which the family is located, while the park is represented by larger green shapes. In the picture book, movement is represented by the logical arrangement of the shapes in a composition, emphasising the forward movement from left to right. When the two friends meet, they turn green. The scene with the blending colours conveys the issues of interpersonal relationships, identity, acceptance, etc.[10]

In his narrative, Lionni used the great narrative power of colours, shapes and compositional elements and the same method was used by the director who brought a large white screen onto the stage.[11] At first the paint appears fluid and is playfully applied by the two actor/animators with their fingers, brushes, and sprayers. On the vertical surface, the paint takes on undefined (random!) shapes. With the help of a pun, the two dripping spots are named and become individuals. A magic trick takes place and two *random* objects – a yellow plastic capsule made from a Kinder Surprise egg and an inflated blue balloon – are given a place

7 | Volpi, Elena. *Loutkové divadlo jako cesta do dětské duše – Setkání umění a výchovy*. Doctoral theses. Akademija lepih umetnosti v Pragi, Gledališka fakulteta, Alternativna in lutkovna tvorba in njena teorija, 2019, p. 36–49.
8 | Tretinjak, Igor. *Miha Golob: "Za otroke je svet kot lunapark, ki ga opazujejo in nad katerim se navdušujejo brez preračunljivosti"*. Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva, October. 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/miha-golob-za-otroke-je-svet-kot-lunapark-ki-ga-opazujejo-in-nad-katerim-se-navdusujejo-brez-preracunljivosti/.

9 | Ibid.
10 | Haramija, D., Batič, J.. *Teorija slikanice*. Otrok in knjiga no. 89, 2014, p. 5–19.
11 | Upcoming performances section on *little blue and little yellow*: https://youtu.be/4Qfe21bOYms.

in one of the blobs.[12] They move on the canvas along clearly defined lines. As they move, they progress individually and come to life with their own movement (and sound). When they move quickly, the movements are different from those used when they move slowly, and when they are sad, they move differently than when they are happy. In dark scenes, the character marker is a (living) coloured light, while a defined beam of light delimits the space (house and street). The concrete realisation of colour is seen as the current medium of manifestation and the audience deciphers the rather abstract code with their own imagination.[13]

The special feature that has a strong appeal to young viewers in particular is the impression of a certain *independence* of the action, which is not completely controlled by the animators (adults). This relationship gives room for a (welcome) *mistake* that brings the stage action closer to reality. "The mutability of theatre art – that is, that nothing can be done in the same way twice and each event is unique and extraordinary – establishes a resemblance with life, which has the same logic."[14] Therefore, the audience can more easily identify with the tiny colourful characters and the likelihood of the performance plot is enhanced by the power of emotional illusion, which is strengthened by wonder rather than the controlled retelling of (one) story.

Water

The story in the aquatic adventure *Aquarium*[15] is sketched out in images, and the audience is asked to help create their own personal story. Why? The scenes contain elements with a subjective emotional value that is identified in the process of creating the performance: Water (in its various forms), an egg, cups, objects, other liquids, and dyes. The performance, which contains no words (these are *replaced* by music), is based on experiments with water:[16]

Water exists in all three states of aggregation: as steam, which covers the egg when its balloon bursts, as a liquid, which is very good for splashing, and as ice, which floats on the water due to its lower density. You can observe the interesting role played by the density of the liquid and the different polarity levels (oil, water) in cylinders where the coloured liquids do not mix. A real chemical reaction also takes place: Two solids, hydrogen carbonate and citric acid, dissolved in water react and form carbon dioxide, which escapes into the air where it combines with its friends, oxygen, and nitrogen. Carbon dioxide also occurs in the aquarium in a lesser-known form: as dry ice, which is produced by the rapid sublimation of gas. The bubbles at the beginning of the performance illustrate the power of surface tension, due to which the bubble membrane is only a few nanometres thick, while the light interference in it creates wonderful rainbow patterns. Light is a powerful element in the aquarium. When a mirror is immersed in it, the light reflected in it reflects not only the small boat but also, for a moment, the spectators. Gravity and buoyancy cause various objects to float, suspend, or sink in the water. The incredibly low friction enables the small egg to effortlessly push a large chunk of ice onto a thin layer of water and make the chunk of ice rotate around its pivot point for a long time. Powerful, machine-generated waves in the aquarium threaten to swamp the audience.[17]

The material dictates the size and shape of the performance space, the number of performers, the pace, the duration, the atmosphere and – the story. The memory of water surfaces in nature refers to longing, distances, distant horizons, journeys. According to the myths of cosmogony, water separates and brings catharsis. In the past, water was a (transport) link. From a biological point of view, water is life. An interesting encounter of this theme with water takes place (also) in a picture book recommended for children with separation difficulties,[18] where the theme of an adventure story can easily inhibit the watery performance space. The water slows down movement, hinders and makes it impossible to handle the *puppet*, reduces visibility and moves *monotonously* (in waves). An examination of the animation tasks in this process clearly shows that only small amounts of water can be directed (still lacking complete control over the process), while objects cannot be directed in the water (without touching them). Therefore, the performance was based on two methods: a playful

12 | Objects were selected in a workshop where a number of different objects from everyday reality and magnets of various forms and sizes were explored.

13 | Trefalt, Uroš. *Doživljajsko gledališče*. Poročilo selektorja 8. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije, 2015, http://ulu.si/8-bienale/.

14 | Andres, Rok. *Živimo v trdem svetu – nekaj misli h komediji Iluzije*. Gledališki list Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega, year. 66, no. 11 (season 2015/2016), p. 13–15, https://www.mgl.si/assets/Uploads/GL-Iluzije-Andres-Zivimo-v-trdem-svetu.pdf.

15 | Upcoming performances section on *Aquarium*: https://vimeo.com/207000601

16 | *Gledališče in znanost – proces nastajanja*, https://vimeo.com/204527808.

17 | Novak, Saša. *Znanost v Akvariju*. Znanost na cesti, March 2017, https://znc.si/blog/znanost-v-akvariju/.

18 | Steig, William. *Amos & Boris*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971.

dialogue between objects (an egg, a pool of cups, leaves, etc.) and small amounts of water (drops, rivulets, puddles, pieces of ice, etc.) and a tank filled with water with (*slow*) weight, mass, and density, which serves as space, animator, animated and motif. To achieve an immersive experience of both perspectives and to fully respond to the *difference*, it seems essential to be aware of the presence (and absence) of air, especially when the air escapes from the space that fills with water. In this process, the performance space is *raised*, as when stage chambers are raised to reveal the *airless* depths. Floating on the surface gives the performance a completely different character than the happy rippling adventure before it – it becomes uncontrollable and dangerous, and the character seems helpless and fragile.

In fact, another consensus underlies the animation method: the two animators do not reach inside the tank to act until the last scene, when an environmental disaster occurs. The rules are a challenge to a lively creative process that, much like a child playing and exploring, is often on the edge. Indeed, the animators are not entirely sure whether they will succeed or not. Once the egg sinks, it sinks to the bottom; the waves are unstoppable; when the water gets dirty, the damage is irreversible, etc. Accompanied by the characteristic (artistic) play of the material, a sense of the uniqueness of the moment is anchored, reinforcing the authentic experience as a process of translating the artistic message into the viewer's personal experience, forcing them to think independently about their world and create their own story. This emancipated action opens a space for the most genuine human experience, for the experience of the superlative, for human freedom.[19]

Sand

Fine (granular, grainy) material consisting of innumerable tiny stones and minerals. Finer than coarse gravel or crushed stone and larger than fine sand (which is also good to play with). Creative play with sand was introduced in 1837 by the developmental psychologist Friedrich Froebel,[20] the first advocate of play as the most important means of promoting children's overall development (and not as a sign of their laziness and slovenliness), who opened the first *kin-*

dergarten in Blankenburg, where children were educated according to the principles of free, spontaneous, and creative play. When he observed children playing with building blocks, he realised that children connect with materials in innovative ways. Thinking of his childhood spent in the solitude of nature, he offered them sand, clay, balls, and a rope. The sand pit as a creative playground for children promotes cognitive and emotional development processes. The performance[21] illustrates the transition through the children's parallel play from initial individual play to joint associative play with occasional conflicts and from there to communal play with a common goal. The elements that make up the children's play are the basis of the performance logic, which conceptually represents the origin of life and the development of human civilisation – from the construction of physical space to settlement to the establishment of a common system that requires a high degree of creativity, innovation, and cooperation – all in the spirit of lasting harmony. Building a common language as the basis for living together leads us to make agreements, set rules and establish a common flow of life. Playing in a sand pit develops into a metaphor for birth and the balance of existence.[22]

Four actors/animators define the space and the move(ments) within it. Then they animate the sand with their hands and feet by blowing into it, pouring into it, using brooms, rakes, sieves, cups, buckets, etc. They create and destroy images on the floor – the horizontal creative surface. Some images are created mechanically by pouring sand from above, spinning a bucket with a hole in it, etc. Initially, the movement of the actors is automatic, later, as the act progresses, the movement becomes subjective and recognisable interpersonal relationships emerge. The more these relationships are interconnected and layered, the more a complex plan that includes objects (models) asserts itself. The relationship between animator and sand gives way to the relationship between actor and actor, while the sand (puppet) becomes a means and an object (sandcastle). Their action is non-verbal, the performance is supported by music.

Light plays an important role in *Sand Pit*: it animates/transforms sand images, e.g., single-celled organisms into landscapes, landscapes into ice ages. The light also co-creates the atmosphere of the scenes, e.g., the glaring light of uni-

19 | Kroflič, Robi. *Emancipacija skozi umetniško doživetje in pomen hendikepa kot instance drug(ačn)osti.* Časopis za kritiko znanosti, let. 42, no. 255, 2014. p. 117–127.
20 | Friedrich-Fröbel-Museum, https://froebel-museum.de/pages/de/friedrich-froebel.php.

21 | *Sand Pit* upcoming performances section https://vimeo.com/526222381?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=29900398.
22 | Spletni gledališki list, http://www.lgl.si/si/predstave/vse-predstave/904-Peskovnik#.YpOvgKhBwdV.
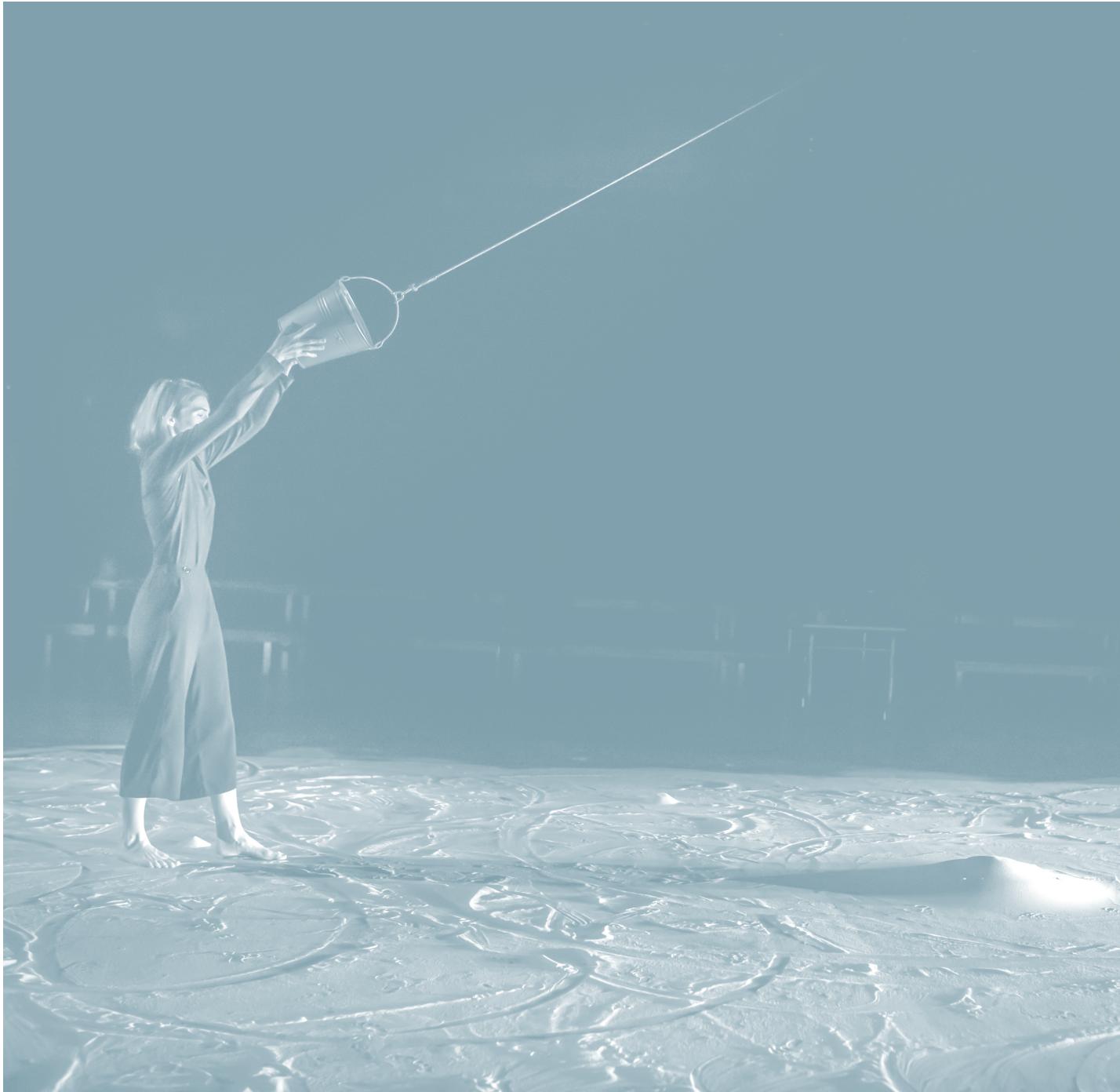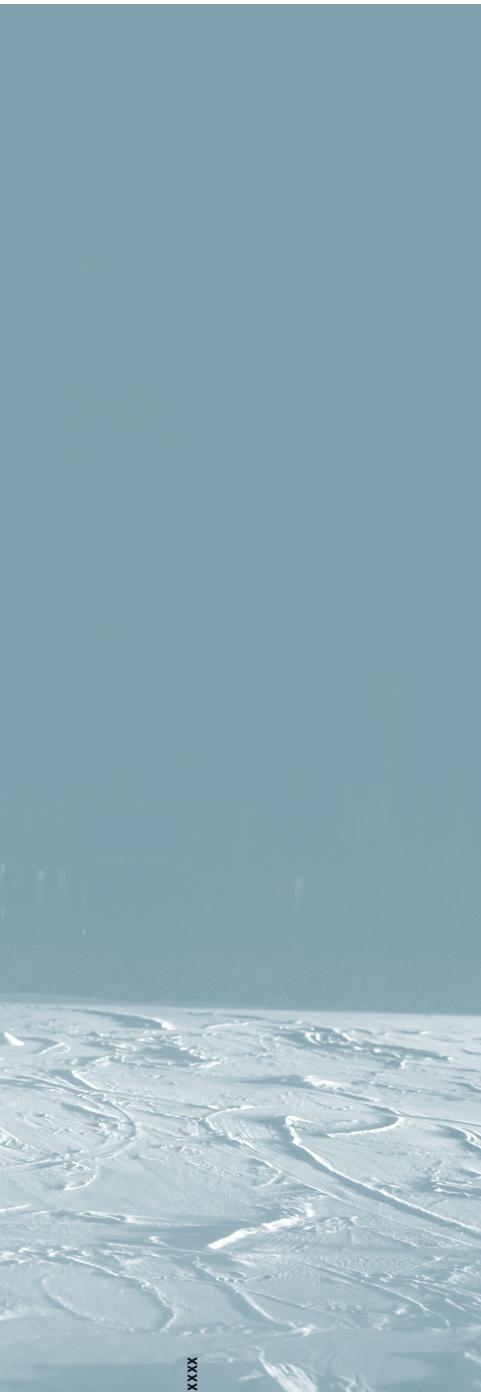
formity, the darkness of nothingness, an uncertain night, etc. Besides fixed and movable reflectors, the performance also includes flashing lights (lights as puppets), a luminous pendulum, a projector. The light intensity and the colour establish an important connection to the theme, which is an important factor for the atmosphere of the performance. The feeling of the playground manifests itself at the end when the young spectators are invited to join in the sand pit.

Material Ephemerality

Material theatre is elusive – it eludes form and is associated with contingency. Behind every work is the constant sense of "what if…". This is reminiscent of children who combine the joy of creating with the joy of tearing down, which is the basis for building something new. On the one hand, a series of possibilities relativises the existing ones, while on the other hand, it speaks to the creative nature of human beings – as artists and as spectators. The material as a possibility in performance (especially for young spectators) is not only a stimulus and a motivation, but also a medium of creative dialogue that constantly involves the spectator as an active creator of his or her mental world.[23]

23 | Piaget, Jean. *The child's conception of the world.* Paladin, 1977.

ABSTRACT

Material theatre is a contemporary puppetry practise that puts material before form and combines it with contingency. Allowing the material to grow naturally into an artistic act recalls children's play with creating and destroying, deeply rooted in myths and fairy tales about creation, where the material has more than one purpose and instead appears as a possibility to take on any form. The choice of material includes its properties, which mercilessly dictate the rhythm, pace and dynamics of the performance. The animator is the creator: he animates the inanimate material and continuously defines its forms. On the other hand, the animator must explore the movement appropriate to the material used. The movement is not always under control, because it allows for mistakes and thus reinforces the sense of independence and contingency that involves the spectator as an active creator of his or her own world of thought.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mojca Redjko, a professor of Slovenian and English language, works in different fields of cultural and art education in theatre. In 1997, she was the co-author and later head (until 2009) of the system for innovative theatre learning: the Theatre School of the Prva gimnazija Grammar School of Maribor. In the period between 2009 and 2016 she was the business and art director of Maribor Puppet Theatre, and between 2016 and 2021 she authored, managed, and developed the project *First Scene: Theatre as a Space for Learning Symbolic Languages* at the Slovenian National Theatre Maribor. Between 2018 and 2022 she worked as a programme associate and producer of the *Maribor Theatre Festival,* where she authored the concept and content of the programme cluster and the Young Theatre training, while between 2019 and 2022 she was an associate of the Borštnik Programme of Social Activation. She organizes discussions, seminars, and other events that bring together art and education. She is an editor (M. Forstnerič Hajnšek, *Planet Carmina*), author, co-author, proofreader, and dramaturge (*Aquarium, VOGP – Music for Survival, Ester and the Festival of Destinies, BABA, The Clown in not Coming, Sand Pit*).

KEY WORDS

Contemporary puppetry art, material theatre, the possibility of form, emotional illusion, creative playground, children's play, active spectator

Bibliography

Andres, Rok. Živimo v trdem svetu – nekaj misli h komediji Iluzije. Gledališki list Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega, let. 66, št. 11 (sezona 2015/2016), https://www.mgl.si/assets/Uploads/GL-Iluzije-Andres-Zivimo-v-trdem-svetu.pdf. | **Blanga-Gubbay, Daniel.** »Kot oblak, ki ga oblikujejo svetovi.«, uredili Kraigher A., Rooss A. *Gledališče animiranih form.* Maska št. 179–180/Lutka št. 59, 2016. | **Friedrich-Fröbel-Museum,** https://froebel-museum.de/pages/de/friedrich-froebel.php. | **Haramija, D., Batič, J.** *Teorija slikanice.* Otrok in knjiga št. 89, 2014. | **Kroflič, Robi.** *Emancipacija skozi umetniško doživetje in pomen hendikepa kot instance drug(ačn)osti.* Časopis za kritiko znanosti, let. 42, št. 255, 2014. | **Lionni, Leo.** *mali modri in mali rumeni.* Miš založba, 2015. | **Novak, Saša.** *Znanost v Akvariju.* Znanost na cesti, 16. marec 2017, https://znc.si/blog/znanost-v-akvariju/. | **Piaget, Jean.** *The child's conception of the world.* Paladin, 1977. | **Rancière, Jacques.** *Emancipirani gledalec.* Maska, 2010. | **Sitar Cvetko, Jelena**. *Iluzije po točkah.* Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva, marec 2022, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/iluzije-po-tockah/. | **Steig, William.** *Amos & Boris.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971. | **Trefalt, Uroš.** *Doživljajsko gledališče.* Poročilo selektorja 8. bienala lutkovnih ustvarjalcev Slovenije, 2015, http://ulu.si/8-bienale/. | **Tretinjak, Igor.** *Miha Golob: »Za otroke je svet kot lunapark, ki ga opazujejo in nad katerim se navdušujejo brez preračunljivosti«.* Kritiška platforma sodobnega lutkarstva, oktober 2021, https://www.contemppuppetry.eu/novice/miha-golob-za-otroke-je-svet-kot-lunapark-ki-ga-opazujejo-in-nad-katerim-se-navdusujejo-brez-preracunljivosti/. | **Volpi, Elena.** *Loutkové divadlo jako cesta do dětské duše – Setkání umění a výchovy.* Doktorska naloga. Akademija lepih umetnosti v Pragi, Gledališka fakulteta, Alternativna in lutkovna tvorba in njena teorija, 2019.

GARETH K. VILE

VISUAL THEATRE AND PUPPETRY

Introduction: The Tyranny of Scripted Theatre

Since the time of Shakespeare, anglophone performance has been dominated by the assumption that the script provides the template for theatre. Despite a period when theatre itself was banned by the Commonwealth government under Cromwell (1642–1660), the playwright has historically been acknowledged in Britain as the focus of theatrical productions, with one of England's state companies named for the nation's most popular playwright and, even as late as the 1990s, scripts were identified as the foundation of experimental or avant-garde movements (in the case of the so-called 'neo-brutalists', including the acclaimed playwrights Sarah Kane and Mark Ravenhill).

While international authors and creators found welcoming audiences during the 20th century – notably Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht during the 1950s – a broad prejudice against continental European theatre, which recognised the importance of visual and physical aesthetics on stage, can be detected as late as 1963, when Kenneth Tynan was encouraged to change the title of his post at the fledgling National Theatre in London from 'dramaturg' to 'literary manager'. In this literary – focused context, theatrical forms which do not conform to a predictable model emphasising words rather than dramaturgy have often found themselves marginalised, dumped into categories that suggest difficulty, provocation or the lack of a popular audience. Both puppetry and visual theatre have experienced this suspicion, with the former often relegated to 'family entertainment', where it thrives, and the latter demanding further definition and suffering from a lack of clarity.

Recent Developments

In the aftermath of the 2nd World War, with the institution of the Edinburgh Festival to 'bring together artists and audiences from all over the world', there has been a trend towards a more inclusive and diverse appreciation of performance genres in the UK. Although the UK's indigenous puppetry had been limited to seaside entertainments and work for young people – in styles borrowed from Italian touring companies of the 18th century – the influx of work from continental Europe and Asia encouraged British artists to adopt different strategies of production. In London, the Little Angel provided a stable home for puppetry, alongside an evangelical touring programme, and international companies are now part of the theatrical landscaping, impressing audiences and inspiring creatives. Scotland's *Manipulate*, curated by Puppet Animation Scotland, established as a visual arts festival in 2008, represents a contemporary curation that juxtaposes local and global productions.

During the 21st century, in line with *Manipulate*'s vision, there has been an increasing association of puppetry with visual theatre: many companies which would predominantly work with marionettes identify as 'visual theatre' and draw on a collection of disciplines that emphasise physicality, musical accompaniment, clowning and a concentration on the image as a vessel that drives the meaning of a production. In addition to *Manipulate*, the Edinburgh Festival *Fringe* has seen an increasing number of companies bringing puppetry-inspired performance to the central belt every August.

Manipulate Festival and Visual Theatre

The programme for *Manipulate* 2022, curated by artistic director Dawn Taylor, speaks to both PAS' aesthetic and a vision seen across Scotland during the 21st century. Like the companies presented by Glasgow's Tramway, going back to the 1990 European City of Culture, through to the recent Dance International Glasgow festival, *Manipulate* has been determinedly international in outlook. Long-standing relationships with European companies and artists, including Gisèle Vienne, Neville Tranter and Sabine Molenaar, lent the festival an expansive and experimental atmosphere, while Scottish companies, supported through the snapshots strand and on the main stage, revealed the influence of these companies in confident adaptations of various genres. It is not only in the presentation of visual performance that PAS demonstrated an alternative vision of theatre: the subject matter shared the bold contemporaneity of the formats, rejecting the apparent isolationism that had informed the mainstream of anglophone dramaturgy in the previous century. Over the past decade, *Manipulate* featured more native artists each year, a testament to its impact on the sector: its current programme operates as a symbol of how far the sector has evolved since the beginning of the century. As Taylor, in an interview with Scottish newspaper *The National*, affirmed: 'Fifteen years ago, 80% of the work was international, but somewhere between 60% and 80% of the work is now from Scotland and the rest of the UK, so it's a very Scottish festival now.'[1]

Nevertheless, the annual announcement of the *Manipulate* programme has been traditionally accompanied by articles in the popular press that, if not bewildered, certainly reflect the more traditional appreciations of theatre. 'Puppetry is not just for children' makes regular headlines,[2] and the relationship between visual theatre and puppetry is rarely addressed. Taylor sees the importance of the international work as a reaction against this parochial vision. 'In a lot of European countries, it's one of the biggest art forms,' she told *The Courier*. 'The themes tend to be a bit thornier and we have quite a lot of risk-taking work – a bit edgy.'[3] The festival's curation promotes choreography, physical theatre

and, in the case of Paper Doll Militia, aerialism, alongside Tranter's marionette puppetry, table top object manipulation and a selection of animated films.

While PAS' other festival (the *Puppet Animation Festival*), which has been running since 1984, is more explicitly focused on puppetry and younger audiences, *Manipulate* advertises itself as a visual theatre event, a category which remains eclectic, broad and evades a simple definition. Yet puppetry remains at the heart of the event, and the discourse between the marionette and the other genres offers a fertile place, both for cross-genre performance and an ongoing analysis of the dramaturgy of puppetry itself.

The Intention of *Puppet Animation Scotland*

Speaking in 2012, then-artistic director of Puppet Animation Scotland Simon Hart explained how *manipulate* was a response to the status of puppetry within Scotland. 'Initially the festival was created to help promote the art form of puppetry – in its many different styles and techniques – to adult audiences interested in innovative visual theatre.' If the *Puppet Animation Festival* concentrates on work for young people, as Hart observed, 'I think many adults lose out on seeing some really unusual and striking contemporary theatre.' The emphasis on innovation, and mature content, continues to shape *manipulate*'s curation: many of the works in the 2022 edition explore queer identity and sexuality, and Taylor is determined to showcase work that addresses serious issues. And part of that innovation is about challenging boundaries of form and technique, connecting the marionette to other dramaturgies and aesthetics.

Visual Theatre is frequently used by companies who clearly work within puppetry to describe their work: from Smoking Apples, who had an Edinburgh *Fringe* success with *Cell* (2014), a marionette show, through *Flabbergast* and Theatre Témoin, who identify as 'physical theatre', to Scotland's Vision Mechanics. All of these companies work with object manipulation or marionettes – in the case of Vision Mechanics, the occasional giant puppet who emerges from the sea – yet claim a more expansive aesthetic. Yet the vagueness of the term can be intimidating: perhaps puppetry itself can offer a route towards a definition.

1 | Spowart, Nan. *Manipulate Boss Heartbroken*. The National, Jan 2022, https://www.thenational.scot/news/19867977.manipulate-boss-heartbroken-40-per-cent-programme-axed/.
2 | Knights, Emma. *Festival Coming*. Eastern Daily Press, Dec 2017, https://www.edp24.co.uk/things-to-do/norwich-puppet-theatre-to-host-manipulate-visual-theatre-festival-1153408.
3 | McLaren, Jennifer. *Discover a Diverse World*. The Courier, Jan 2021, https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/1930363/dawn-taylor-perth-puppetry-festival-manipulate/?plan_id=.

What is Puppetry?

Although there are suggestions of 'moving statues' in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, which Edward Gordon Craig, at the beginning of the 20th century, would imagine as a purer performer than the human actor, it is in Plato's *Republic* that puppetry enters into western philosophy most decisively: in the Allegory of the Cave,[4] it is shadow puppetry which deceives the audience through an imitation of life. While Plato is negative about the deceptive power of the puppet, he nevertheless acknowledges it as a familiar medium. Indeed, during the second century CE, the Greek satirist Lucian would condemn a glove puppet, Glycon,[5] for its operator's pretence that he held a god in his hands. Although a puppeteer was given permission to perform in the famous theatre of Dionysus in Athens during the Roman Era, the Platonic prejudice against puppetry may have contributed to its later marginalisation in European performance. Large marionettes would appear in the church-sponsored medieval public performances of Biblical stories, but the evolution of British puppetry would not begin in earnest until the enlightenment, when Italian booths – which would provide the template for the popular seaside entertainments of Punch and Judy – became a fashionable presence in London and, notably, Bath.

Having been discussed by Plato, however, the puppet has been a legitimate subject of European philosophical investigation – Heinrich von Kleist's 1810 "On the Marionette Theatre" considers issues of free will, grace and agency while observing the elegant choreography of marionettes – and was, ironically, the only form of performance not banned in Cromwell's Commonwealth. However, this follows a chauvinistic Eurocentric version of history. African and Asian puppetry has a long legacy, often passing folklore and mythology through the generations, and bunraku, currently a very fashionable style in the UK, began in 16th century Japan. Because of its international, and possibly ancient ancestry, puppetry is a remarkably diverse medium which includes a wide variety of disciplines.

Many definitions of puppetry concentrate on these various and specific disciplines and their historical development. The shadowgraphy of Drew Colby and the leather plates of Chinese shadow play, the spectacular, huge marionettes of Scotland's Visual Mechanics[6] and The Scottish Falset-

to Sock Puppet Theatre, Punch and Judy and *War horse* (2007), the bunraku, Japanese inspired works of Rouge28 Theatre[7] and the experimental object manipulation of Blind Summit are all categorised together, within a broad definition that unites the inanimate object on stage with a human performer. Yet the format, social context and aesthetic of these puppetries remain distinctive, leaving this definition, at best, immediate but limited.

John Bell and the essential nature of Puppetry

John Bell's *Death and Performing Objects*[8] aims to discover a more materialistic, yet creative definition, by examining the nature of the objects themselves. He concludes that puppetry is fundamentally a spiritual process. He claims that puppetry is founded, rather like Athenian classical tragedy, in religious activity and its use within ritual was the result of the specific qualities of the materials used in its creation.

In a puppetry performance, Bell elaborates, there is a fundamental division between the living (performer) and the inert (object). The performer, by manipulating an inert object, looks towards Death. Citing both von Kleist and Edward Gordon Craig's 1906 "The Actor and the Uber-Marionette", Bell separates object manipulation from theatre that only offers human actors by emphasising how the object can replace the human presence, quoting Craig's sardonic 'the body of man is by nature utterly useless as a material for an art.' Following McLuhan's declaration that the medium is the message, Bell draws attention to the function of puppetry by examining its literal material.

Alongside this lofty vision of puppetry, Bell promotes the medium not as a fantastical medium, but as naturalistic: the 'elevated prop' can work together with the actor to offer a more comprehensive representation of reality, one where the profound question of life against death is implicit in the very fabric of the performance. If Plato uses shadow puppetry as an exemplar in his philosophy, Bell examines the aesthetic philosophy implicit in the materials of the performance.

4 | Plato. *Republic*. 375 BC, 514a – 520a.

5 | Lucian. *Alexander the False Prophet.* Oxford University Press, 2021, 180AD.

6 | Christie, Craig. *STORM comes to Burghead as Findhorn Bay Arts group introduce a 10-metre tall sea goddess to hundreds who turn out in the rain for the spectacle.* Forres Gazette, September 2021, https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/watch-ten-metre-tall-sea-goddess-storm-thrills-hundreds-in-250829/

7 | Jauregui, Helen. *Kwaidan.* Animations Online, September 2015, https://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations-online/reviews/kwaidan-rogue28-theatre

8 | Bell, John. *Death and Performing Objects.* P-Form, 1996, pp 16–20.

Bell elaborates on the difference between actors' theatre which 'can talk about death and show death with living bodies pretending to be dead' and object theatre: 'When puppeteers, maskers, object performers, political demonstrators, machine operators, web site designers, film directors, multi-media producers, and advertising agencies work, they constantly create and modify relationships between living human beings and dead matter: wood, stone, metal, plastic, leather, bone. This makes for a profound reckoning with death on a constant subconscious or symbolic level.'

Bell's definition is excitingly suggestive: does the quickfire, bawdy satire of Boris and Sergey's table-top vaudeville[9] and the quirky parodies of the Falsetto Sock Puppet Theatre provide an ironic commentary on life's self-importance? Do Balinese shadow plays articulate a mythical perspective that acknowledges the inevitable co-mingling of life and death? When Neville Tranter introduces his marionette who performs as Hitler, is he performing a form of séance? Does *The Muppet Show* offer a confrontation with mortality that cannot be found in the scripts of *Hamlet*, *Oresteia* or *Waiting for Godot* unless they, too, are performed by puppets?

In this essential notion of puppetry, Bell clearly opens puppetry into contemporary modes of performance. The mention of 'machine operators' includes computer programmers and animators, bringing film – as used by companies like Paper Cinema – under puppetry's domain. Indeed, all technology can be perceived as a form of object manipulation. And while the inclusion of advertising agencies may appear to be a random selection, it is worth noting that the most successful marketing campaign of the past decade in the UK has featured a cast of puppet meerkats inviting consumers to 'compare the market'. Bell's definition is not bounded by form or aesthetic, but a fundamental orientation towards a particular discourse.

The inclusion of animation has been a feature of *manipulate* since its inauguration, and Bell offers a reason for this alliance: indeed, even masked actors become puppets, encouraging a recognition of clowning within the broader category of the puppet. The connection made in the programming of Scottish physical collective LARDS – a kind of 'supergroup' that draws on a variety of tradition – between clowning, mime and choreography makes sense within Bell's definition, since their diverse techniques become a type of tech-

nology. Indeed. in *The Paradox of the Actor,* Denis Diderot's reflection on the performer's art, the actor is depicted as a puppeteer, manipulating their body as if it were a marionette. Object manipulation, then, becomes a major strand in performance history, neither primitive nor childish but inviting an engagement with the very nature of being.

Visual Theatre

At its most simplistic, visual theatre is any performance that is neither a radio play nor one of the productions that plunge the audience into darkness and frequently use headphones to tell a story (such as Chicago's A Theatre in the Dark or Darkfield's *Séance*, 2017). In practice, it is a contrast to the anglophone preoccupation with scripts and words: this is theatre which uses the image as its primary vessel of communication. As per *manipulate* 2022, this includes posters (Adrien M & Claire and Brest Brest Brest's Fauna), a curated evening meal (hosted by either LARDS or Plutot la Vie) and an eclectic combination of drag, Noh drama, satire and dance (*Short and Sweet*, dir. Daniel Hay-Gordon in Eleanor Perry 2022). In the past, Vox Motus' *Slick* (dir. Jamie Harrison and Candice Edmunds 2008) has placed human heads atop puppet bodies, mirroring their fast-paced humour in the actor's diminished appearance. *Paper Cut* (2010) surrounded Yael Rasooly with fragments of the magazines that inform her character's fertile fantasies. Cloud Eye Control offered a triple bill in 2013 that explored the contemporary interface between human and technology surrounded by projections and software that speaks directly to Bell's notion of puppetry as technology.

Puppetry as Visual Theatre

The reading of puppetry in visual terms is, predictably, easy. Blind Summit's *The Puppeteer* (previously called Henry – *A Puppet Possessed*, 2018) repurposes dustbin bags for a powerful demonstration of the suggestiveness of inanimate material and captures the artist's dysfunctional relationships through immediate, simple imagery. The same company's *The Table* (2013) had little more than a Moses puppet, yet conveyed the character's bewilderment – and amused recognition of his existential isolation – through a minimalist visual regime.

Neville Tranter's *Schicklgruber* (Stuffed Puppet Theatre), which appeared at *manipulate* in 2013, presented Adolf Hitler as a puppet. Indeed, even the puppet was reluctant to

9 | Vile, Gareth. *Boris and Sergey's One Man Dramaturgy*. The Vile Blog, June 2017, https://vilearts.blogspot.com/2017/06/boris-and-sergeys-one-man-dramaturgy.html.

take the role: the rather charming introduction shows Tranter trying to assuage the puppet's doubts. Throughout the production, it is the appearance of the puppet that defines the character. In a sharp contrast with many depictions of the dictator, Tranter's Hitler fails to terrify or inspire, even failing to deliver a coherent final speech and relying on Goebbels and Eva Braun to bolster his self-esteem.

Tranter sets an effective tone from the tentative start. The appearance of familiar Nazis as puppets softens their usual horrifying savagery: without feeling the need to dramatise the inhumanity of the Nazis, Tranter tells a story that is melancholic and about a defeated ideology. There is no attempt to justify Hitler's conduct, but it is cast as abject failure. Bell's theory that the actor and the puppet together become an inevitable meditation on death is made more immediate by the arrival of a playful Grim Reaper.

Although Tranter's script is an intelligent and incisive series of episodes that expose Nazism's roots in human failings, it is the crest-fallen puppet that conveys most immediately the depth of Tranter's critique. The hunched body, facing away from the audience, conveys weakness in a way that is only emphasised by the mood swings and angry rants. In a manner that would delight Craig, the human actor is less expressive than the inanimate material.

Visual Theatre as Puppetry

If the boundary between visual theatre and puppetry has become porous in the 21st century, puppetry increasingly provides a critical perspective on performance that asks serious questions about the role and presence of the human body on the stage. Setting aside the preoccupation with the words or script, the theories of Bell or von Kleist emphasise the relationship between performer and scenography, props, costume and movement: a potential vocabulary for the discussion of the physical aspects of theatre can be folded into the kind of wider analysis of performance invoked by Richard Schechner's Performance Theory of the 1990s, which suggested that theatre studies would be replaced by the application of dramaturgical theory to sports, religious ritual, political protests and most forms of human activity.

Unsurprisingly, it is dance that reveals the most consistent connection to puppetry. Following the pattern of ballet, which frequently features a choreography (choreographer?) making work on the body of a company of performers, the analogy between choreographer and puppeteer is clear and

immediate. Indeed, von Kleist sees the puppeteer themselves as a choreographer who is not challenged by any slippage between the idea of a movement and its execution. Les Ballets C. de la B. presented *VSPRS* (dir. Alain Platel, 2007) with an ensemble of dancers drawn from multiple traditions to simultaneously take advantage of diverse movement vocabularies and reveal the unfamiliarity of each discipline's normative training: both the ballerina and the gymnast recast as marionettes. One of *VSPRS*' themes is the power of music on the body, with a wild gypsy band reworking Monteverdi. The dancers are drawn into the relentless, psychedelic repetitions, their gestures inspired both by dance traditions and tics of stress and anxiety, until their reactions as precise as if they were pulled by strings.

Editta Braun Company's *Luvos*[10] series (*Planet Luvos* 2014 and *Close Up* 2016) sits clearly within the familiar definition of dance: human bodies moving in space to music. However, Braun's choreography contorted the female performers into apparently impossible shapes, hiding human features and building alien creatures from human flesh. In contrast to the marionette, which appears in human form without its agency, Braun's dancers distort themselves to variously appear headless and limbless, or connect hands to torsos in uncanny, uncomfortably beautiful configurations. The strangeness of these bodies describes an otherness, alluding to other evolutions that draw on science-fiction's depictions of aliens. Their movement is an evocation of different consciousnesses, different responses to gravity, sharing the same combination of familiarity and estrangement as the puppet.

Conclusion

The use of the term 'visual theatre' is often used as a way to sell performance: suggestive of exoticism, a step away from the anglophone obsession with the script and Shakespeare. Although it may sound vague, and include apparently conflicting genres, visual theatre expands the definition of what puppetry can be, offers new ways to criticise and consider aesthetics and is grounded in a philosophical appreciation of puppetry that can be seen as far back as in Plato's *Republic*. Far from merely categorising a range of styles, such as physical theatre, dance and marionettes, it encourages an appreciation of performance from a new perspective, and even poses questions about the relationship of the human to the inhuman, consciousness and death.

10 | Latimer, Andrew. *Luvos review* 2012. The Wee Review, March 2012, https://theweereview.com/review/luvos/.

For British theatre, this does involve an openness to more international strands of performance – with a limited indigenous puppetry tradition, many of the most startling visual theatre productions have appeared from continental Europe or, in the case of *War horse*, from South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company. But this rejection of a parochial triumphalism, based on a belief in Shakespeare's superiority, provoked a wild, imaginative inclusion of art forms, an opportunity to discover new ways to play. Puppetry, far from being marginalised, is set within a glittering constellation of genres, shedding light on experimental forms while being illuminated by their restless imaginations.

ABSTRACT

British Theatre has traditionally privileged the script as the essence of a theatre production, yet in recent years, an influx of international performance has encouraged a more eclectic foundation. Puppetry has become a concern in Scottish performance: it is often associated with visual theatre, a broad category that challenges definition. Using John Bell's expansive definition of puppetry, the article explores whether it is puppetry that defines visual theatre, rather than the more familiar approach that subsumes puppetry into the wide genre. It is suggested that puppetry provides a potential source for a discourse about the nature of the body in performance, enhancing the critical discussion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gareth K Vile has been at the forefront of Scottish theatre criticism for over a decade, having been theatre editor of *The Skinny* and *The List* and an independent critic through *The Vile Blog*, *Tempo House* and *Hit The North*. He is a candidate for a PhD at Glasgow University in Dramaturgy and Comic Book Superheroes, and Head of Classics at Loretto School. He is the Sottish editor for the EU Contemporary Puppetry Critical Platform. As a restless innovator, his major concern is with the public understanding of performance and criticism, blending academic interests and a commitment to accessibility: recognising the shift in discourse encouraged by the internet, he experiments with form and frequently works with companies including the National Theatre of Scotland, Puppet Animation Scotland and Youth Theatre Arts Scot-land to champion and develop opportunities for emerging critics. His academic background in Classics, Theatre Studies and Sequential Art place him at a unique intersection of the traditional and the contemporary: his critical practice emphasises the potential for assimilating this knowledge into a conversation about the purpose of performance.

KEY WORDS

Bibliography

Bell, John. *Death and Performing Objects*. P-Form, 1996 | **Bell, Peter.** *Death and Performing Objects*. P-Form 41, Fall 1996 | **Christie, Craig.** *STORM comes to Burghead as Findhorn Bay Arts group introduce a 10-metre tall sea goddess to hundreds who turn out in the rain for the spectacle*. Forres Gazette, September 2021, https://www.forres-gazette.co.uk/news/watch-ten-metre-tall-sea-goddess-storm-thrills-hundreds-in-250829/ | **Craig, Edward Gordon.** *On The Art of Theatre*. Taylor and Francis, 2007 | **Jauregui, Helen.** *Kwaidan*. Animations Online, September 2015, https://www.puppetcentre.org.uk/animations-online/reviews/kwaidan-rogue28-theatre | **Knights, Emma.** F*estival Coming*. Eastern Daily Press, Dec 2017, https://www.edp24.co.uk/things-to-do/norwich-puppet-theatre-to-host-manipulate-visual-theatre-festival-1153408. | **Lucian.** *Alexander or The False Prophet*. Oxford University Press, 2021 | **Latimer, Andrew.** *Luvos review 2012*. The Wee Review, March 2012, https://theweereview.com/review/luvos/. | **McLaren, Jennifer.** *Discover a Diverse World*. The Courier, Jan 2021, https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/entertainment/1930363/dawn-taylor-perth-puppetry-festival-manipulate/?plan_id= | **Plato.** *Republic*. Penguin, 2007 | **Spowart, Nan.** *Manipulate Boss Heartbroken*. The National, Jan 2022, https://www.thenational.scot/news/19867977.manipulate-boss-heartbroken-40-per-cent-programme-axed/ | **Vile, Gareth.** *Boris and Sergey's One Man Dramaturgy*. The Vile Blog, June 2017, https://vilearts.blogspot.com/2017/06/boris-and-sergeys-one-man-dramaturgy.html

LORNA IRVINE

STRUNG UP:
PUPPETRY AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

Since the 1980s in the UK, physical theatre has been of increasing interest to both theatre-makers and audiences. Influenced by performances from central and eastern Europe, the fusion of choreography and text--based performances was championed by DV8, Frantic Assembly and Complicité, and an influx of performers trained at L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq has encouraged the appearance of independent solo shows and seen the integration of mime into mainstream British productions. In Scotland, festivals such as Dance International Glasgow, the late and lamented *New Moves* and *National Review of Live Art* and *manipulate* have included physical theatre work within their broader curatorial programmes, reflecting movements across continental Europe.

Perhaps due to Richard Demarco's trail-blazing curation at the *Edinburgh Festival* and *Fringe* and, latterly, the Berlin-based Aurora Nova, physical theatre from Europe, has become a familiar presence in Scotland during August: Polish companies such as Song of the Goat have frequently returned home from the *Fringe* laden with awards and critical acclaim. Breaking down the boundaries between dance, performance art, musical theatre, mime and clowning, as well as puppetry, physical theatre is simultaneously an inclusive and complex category that is responsible for some of the most exciting and provocative performance in the 21st century.

What is Physical Theatre?

Physical theatre can be a challenge to define: it is purely external in so far as it derives its narrative or thematic thrust from the body and the movement, or choreography, of the body. Movement-based performance can also include, but isn't limited to, mime, dance and clowning and physical theatre bears a familial resemblance to 'performance art', the more anarchic theatre that has emerged since the 1960s which emphasises the challenging of boundaries between genres, and the expected formalities and pieties of performance itself.

A wild, animalistic contortion of the body, a graceful extension of limbs, or slightest flick of the wrist can often illustrate part of a narrative more vividly than a line of text or any impressive scenography. As long as gestures are comprehensive and fluid, the audience will respond to the visual messages and codes being conveyed. This can take subtle or extreme forms: grotesque, funny, sexually suggestive, creepy, absurd or romantic, drawing attention to both artifice of theatricality and the skills of the performers.

Some physical theatre performers, such as Red Bastard or Clout Theatre, use bouffon training to effectively 'other' their own bodies, performing in masks and prosthetics yet always highly aware of the space between performer and audience. This a highly complex and specialist form of performance has come from Jacques Lecoq's famous European technique. According to Lecoq himself: 'Essentially, the mask opens up the actor to the space around him. It puts him in a state of discovery, of openness, of freedom to receive... You take on a neutral mask as you might take on a character, with the difference that here there is no character, only a neutral generic being.'[1]

This is perhaps why physical theatre is often seen as distinct from 'traditional' theatre – it is often looser or has a more improvisational structure than scripted theatre. As a hall of mirrors in a fairground both distorts and draws attention to various parts of the body, so the physical theatre performer seeks to provide a heightened experience of theatre, by using their body as a literal frame for the action on the stage, and reinforces the themes, concepts or universal truths contained within the piece.

What Is Puppetry?

When puppetry is mentioned, many people tend to assume that the main types of puppets are stringed representational human figures carved out of wood and hand operated, or hand puppets like the familiar British seaside attraction, Punch and Judy. Of course, puppetry's roots go much deeper. The use of puppets for storytelling can be traced back as far as the 5th century BCE, and they have been ubiquitous across Asia and Central Europe. Native Americans used puppets as part of ritual magic, Africans used masks more so than puppets to similar ends. The traditions associated with the western puppetry scene only tell half the story. Puppets can be abstract, as well as taking human or animal forms, and are generally hand operated.

Japanese bunraku theatre, which first appeared over four hundred years ago, incorporates storytelling, puppetry and music. It has developed from its Edo heyday in 1603–1868 to receiving Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity status from UNESCO in 2008, but is not as popular as it once was, considered more a period piece these days.[2] Similarly, Chinese puppetry, said to have originated in the Han Dynasty two thousand years ago, and which slowly developed into a beloved folk art form, was brought to a UK audience in the 1920s, but is also a less popular form because of the rise of new technology and urbanisation.[3]

The evolution of puppetry in its myriad forms is rapidly shifting, and what was once considered a theatre format aimed primarily at children has seen more sophisticated genres take over, particularly in festivals such as the *Chicago International Puppet Theatre Festival*, and *Manipulate* in Edinburgh. 'Adult' puppet shows taking on taboo themes such as racism, politics and sexism, like the all-conquering *Avenue Q* (Robyn Goodman and Jeffrey Seller, dir. Jason Moore, 2003), are selling out massive theatres worldwide, and the last seven years has seen a rise in what American audiences are calling 'late night puppet slams', swapping poetry for idiosyncratic puppet shows for adults.[4]

2 | Jōji, Harano. *The Rich History and Uncertain Future of Bunraku Puppet Theater.* Nippon.com, November 2014, https://www.nippon.com/en/column/g00219/.
3 | Katsura Rollins, Annie. *Chinese Shadow Puppetry.* April 2013, https://www.chineseshadowpuppetry.com/current-events.
4 | Tietse-Mietz, Sarah. *'You Can Be Anything': Myra Su's Puppet Worlds.* American Theatre Journal, July 2020, https://www.americantheatre.org/2020/07/21/you-can-be-anything-myra-sus-puppet-worlds/.

1 | Gordan, Robert. *The Purpose of Playing.* University of Michigan, 2006, p38.

Acts like ventriloquist Nina Conti take a cheekier, but no less foul-mouthed, approach to the format with her Monk puppet, a kind of conduit as a teller of truths she wouldn't dare to utter. Meanwhile companies such as Paper Cinema and Manual Cinema bring shadow play to crowds with their imaginative and beautiful live shows, Melbourne's Bunk Puppets create magic from junk, as they make their puppets from recycled rubbish, and companies like Blind Summit, Familie Flöz and Vélo Théâtre are recalibrating the limitations of what puppetry can do with their emotionally charged, narrative-driven shows. In the UK, *War Horse* by Handspring Puppet Company (dir. Marianne Elliot and Tom Morris, 2007), has brought puppetry to a new generation of audiences in a production that is both family-friendly and a serious exploration of war and inter-species friendship.

Puppetry In Physical Theatre

There are many physical theatre companies who use puppetry as part of their wider choreography. Puppets often stand in for actors, when it would be inappropriate to use a child, or simply to enhance certain concepts within the piece.

Emma Rice's recent adaptation of Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (Old Vic and Wise Children, 2018), which is also the name of Rice's latest theatre company, used two small puppets to represent the youthful playfulness and innocence of the twin sisters Nora and Dora Chance in flashback scenes. This reinforced the toxic nature of corruption as the girls got older and were exposed to the seamier side of showbiz.

A series of plays, in this case, a trilogy – Rona Munro's *The James Plays* (National Theatre of Scotland, 2016) deployed a puppet to represent the young King James. This time the nature of how far he had fallen since getting older was the main thrust of the piece, and the puppet represented youthful folly, as well as vulnerability. It felt a little ill-fitting within the wider context of the play, which suggested a desire to reimagine Shakespearean history plays in a Scottish context, but it seems that other critics did not agree with my misgivings.[5]

Familie Floz, on the other hand, blur boundaries altogether between actors and puppets, by acting in full masks and costumes, effectively transforming themselves into a kind

of human puppet. The overarching feeling was at once a little otherworldly, but strangely touching. The expressionless faces they wore, conversely, added more expression to the characters, as the acting, with a simple gesture like a tilt of the head, or lift of a hand, said more than any script. The audience was right there with them in their rich interior worlds, sharing pain or joy. *Teatro Delusio* (Familia Floz and Theaterhaus, dir. Michael Vogel, 2004) was like a bizarre behind the scenes ballet where even a tech staff member of a ballet company could have their time in the spotlight. Jacques Lecoq's ideal of the neutral mask seemed apposite here, as a limited cast played multiple characters. lending each one an emotional narrative arc.

Other physical theatre companies allude to the tropes and techniques of puppetry, without directly using puppets. Silvia Gallerano's masterpiece monologue *La Merda* (Frida Kahlo productions and Richard Jordan productions, 2012) is an incendiary exercise in physical theatre, where her character, an actor, sits naked engulfed by a massive chair (a metaphor perhaps for the infantilisation of women in contemporary Italy) and whined, pouted, and screamed her way through the monologue, but with, it emerged, good reason. She initially seemed too much, with her wild bulging eyes and wide slash of lipstick, but the slow drip-feed of information made her become a more sympathetic character as her speech went on, a 'puppet' of the system, used, manipulated and abused by toxic men for much of her life. Long before the Weinstein incident, her 'puppet' in a chair became a potent symbol of resistance – a totem of patriarchal violence, a survivor, and the chair like a therapist's chair.

Clout Theatre's *Feast* (2019) was a brilliant study in how far bouffon clowns can go, in terms of physicality and sheer lunacy. It wasn't for the squeamish. Alluding to work by the genius Czech puppeteer, film maker and animator Jan Švankmajer, the trio of Sacha Plaige, Jenny Swingler and George Ramsay used his grotesque puppets as a framework to lean into exploring human greed, poverty, and consumption. The three maniacs, done up like Renaissance waifs, dribbled their food, fought in a bizarre pasta slapping dance, and used a camera to get right down into their insides. There were a couple of walkouts, and equally, a lot of squeals of laughter – just as it should be, as puppetry within physical theatre will divide an audience almost as much as naked performance art or twee musical theatre can.

Ivor MacAskill and Rosana Cade's *The Making Of Pinocchio* (Artsadmin, 2018) is a beautiful piece of physical theatre that alluded to perhaps the best loved of all the pup-

5 | Clapp, Susannah. *The James Plays review – Rona Munro's timely game of thrones.* The Observer, August 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/aug/17/james-plays-edinburgh-sofie-grabol-observer-review.

pets – Pinocchio himself. By using parts of his classic story to address MacAskill's real-life gender transitioning, asking 'what makes a real boy?' the pair created a tender, funny (and definitely adult) take on identity, trans rights and love, with some wooden kink thrown in. What emerged was a thoughtful, insightful play-within-a-play about how relationships can be further complicated when society wants to impose roles, labels and conditions. Disney it certainly was not, but it was profound and moving, and an intelligent way of alluding to puppetry.

Puppetry and Physical Theatre

The relationship between physical theatre and puppetry is an enduring one, and one that is always expanding and becoming more sophisticated. From the teaching of biblical tales to the dissemination of political messages, the European tradition of puppetry first arguably peaked in the Middle Ages along with *vox populi* literature, and across European cities, particularly in Italy and France, the popularity of puppetry for children and adults alike was increasing, as both a means of fun storytelling and exploring deeper themes of morality and religion.

As the use of puppetry alongside actors became more widespread in physical theatre productions, it often provided an antidote to troubles in times of conflict – for example, Samuel Beckett's work in puppet form provided inspiration for the former Yugoslavia, while fables like *Doctor Faustus*, and propaganda pieces meant that stories centred around war and theatre were not mutually exclusive, with puppets becoming totems of agitation or resistance.[6]

As Miriam Gillinson writes, with reference to Cornwall's Kneehigh Theatre and their critically-lauded piece *A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings* (2005), adapted from Gabriel Garcia Marquez' book, the combination of the simplicity of storytelling and technique is what most captivates, but it also has to really emotionally resonate with the audience: 'Puppeteers might carve their characters out of wood, but they need a peculiarly deep understanding of their puppets' inner lives. After all, a decent actor has a huge range of expressions with which to unlock a role. A puppeteer only has one.'[7]

Puppetry and physical theatre do not always work together in synthesis, though. The craft of live puppetry can often be distinct from physical theatre, and vice versa. Pure puppetry relies entirely on the suspension of disbelief from the spectators, of not watching the people manipulating strings or making objects appear to fly or move independently on the stage. Companies like Tortoise In A Nutshell, Handspring, and Bread and Puppet Theater, are solely focused on puppetry; whereas physical theatre companies such as Zen Zen Zo, Ontroerend Goed, Gob Squad and Theater Grottesco rely on the sheer visceral nature of human physicality, the immediacy of actors performing in the moment. A puppet is fixed, it cannot get ill and have an understudy come in; similarly, a puppet cannot cry or sweat, dance, talk, sing or move independently.

With the rise in advanced technology and design, it seems there will always be a big audience for puppet theatre, as evinced by the massive success recently of shows like *War Horse; King Kong, Little Shop of Horrors* and *The Lion King*, but physical theatre isn't going away anytime soon. Smaller budget shows have their own charm and are anathema to shows which play in larger venues, but feel soulless in comparison to puppet shows which are all about the homemade craft.

This isn't always as exciting perhaps as the flashy, whizz bang technology and impressive, expensive sets and puppets. But witness the small scale, up close delight in puppet shows or physical theatre shows for kids, best watched alongside squealing children during the run-up to Christmas. It's like the difference between spectating and participating – small, intimate shows mean taking in every little detail, big-budget shows are a little bit distancing, removing the audience members from the action, further away in their seats.

Strung Up

The synthesis between puppetry and physical theatre is irrefutable, with theatre companies using puppets as they look towards creating innovative techniques and forward-thinking concepts. This is especially true of theatre created for children and family audiences. There are a few examples of theatre which worked on many levels and fused both. Scamp Theatre combined fun physical theatre for little ones with puppetry in their celebrated show *Stick Man* (Freckle Productions, dir. Sally Cookson, 2021), and Dominic Hill's recent Citizens Theatre production of *Pinocchio* (2019) drew upon the melancholy of an ageing Geppetto,

6 | Stojanov, Divna. *Theatre Puppets Through the Ages*. The Theatre Times, June 2020, https://thetheatretimes.com/theatre-puppets-through-the-ages/.
7 | Gillinson, Miriam, *Puppet theatre: why it's anything but wooden*. The Guardian, June 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/dec/19/puppet-theatre-kneehigh.

even as it took a playful foray into the world of puppets and toys. The bittersweet coming of age story *Kes* (2019) was recently adapted for the stage by Jonathan Watkins and featured impressive performances, dance and puppetry.

But it's not always exclusively for small children, or even family-oriented. Darker themes and storylines can weave intoxicating spells too. This is certainly the case when companies take a more experimental, esoteric approach to the genre. Oliver Emanuel's gorgeous show *Dragon* (2015) explored the loss of a parent and one teenage boy's coming to terms with his grief, in the form of dragon puppets that he had to confront – a clear visual metaphor for overcoming the different stages of grief. Sammy J and Randy, operated by Heath McIvor, are familiar (felt) faces to Edinburgh Festival audiences, and generally focus on existential crises and meta theatrical gags. Meanwhile, Ramesh Meyyappan's heart-breaking *Butterfly* (Gillian Garrity, 2014) had lovely puppets created by Gavin Glover and a pretty, antique strewn set from Neil Warmington, but focused on the legacy of damage done in toxic relationships, based as it was on Vladimir Nabokov's research into lepidoptera and themed around Puccini's opera *Madam Butterfly*.

Conclusion

Physical theatre can inform the critique of puppetry by drawing upon its innate limitations. Lecoq spoke of the multiple meanings arising within silence, and intention of the miming/moving performer as a key factor in understanding his techniques, stating: 'when no words are spoken, one is in a state of modesty which allows words to be born out of silence.'[8] Put simply, there are things puppetry cannot achieve that a moving body can.

The uses of improvisation and play as keys to unlocking potential within physical theatre is just one main facet of technique espoused by both Lecoq, and his fellow clown practitioner, Philippe Gaulier, who understood the need for flowing into (human) roles, following instincts. As Gaulier says, it's about "finding your idiot... A clown is a special kind of idiot, absolutely different and innocent. A marvellous idiot".[9]

Ken Campbell, who left all his puppets to ventriloquist and ex-partner, Nina Conti, was a master of physical theatre improvisation and famously theorised that saying yes to everything, no matter how bizarre, was the most liberating means of working in theatre. This iconoclastic style was his legacy, from shows which ran over 22 hours (his adaptation of *The Warp*, 1979) to nudity and fights, to actors losing the thread through sleep deprivation. He once said of ventriloquism being considered passé: "You've got to bear in mind that we're a culture (in the UK) that decided not to have ventriloquism. But in the US, it's a scandal over there if you're a father or an uncle and you can't do a bit of ventriloquising... It has been shown that a lot of folk get the message sharper from a ventriloquist's doll than they do from some berk talking to them."[10]

Nina Conti herself has said that she feels puppets often freak people out, so she has a technique to put people at ease: "I always start with an apology... I wouldn't want to go on stage looking proud to be a ventriloquist."[11]

Conversely, puppetry can inform physical theatre in a variety of ways, as it is an ever-changing art form. It can fill spaces within the narrative and provide new textures in productions. Many companies that use puppets see puppetry's infinite potential in providing tonal shifts, despite its inanimate nature. As puppet director Sarah Wright, whose work includes puppetry with Kneehigh, and the recent production of *Wise Children*, says: "I love puppetry for its otherness, for containing all our passions but being outside of us. I get excited by 'seeing' into it and by the material nature of it."[12]

Ideas are fundamentally what drive the artistic process when it comes to creating puppetry for a show. It sometimes only takes one strong idea centred around puppets as a jumping-off point to create a whole show. Jeff Achtem from Scamp Theatre explained: "Usually I start with a simple idea, or an image. I think of the mechanics or changes in movement. Then I pull out bits of equipment and I begin to play with simple materials or simple tools like soap bubbles or a fog machine. And then after that it's really just

8 | Lecoq, Jaques. *The Moving Body*. Methuen drama, 1997, p 29.
9 | Zinoman, Jason. *The Dumbledore of Clowning*. The New York Times, January 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/18/arts/television/philippe-gaulier-clowns.html.

10 | Campbell, Ken. *Gastromancy and other animals*. The Guardian, August 200, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/aug/29/artsfeatures2.
11 | Jones, Alice. *Monkey is a weapon against my father, a version of me who can stand up to him*. The I, November 2021, https://inews.co.uk/culture/comedy/nina-conti-dating-show-tour-tickets-monkey-masks-tom-conti-1282730.
12 | Windsor, Emma. *A Life Fantastic*. Puppet Place News, August, 2019, https://puppetplace.wordpress.com/2019/08/21/a-life-fantastic-an-interview-with-sarah-wright/.

play time. Hours and hours of bending, twisting and exploring the limits of what the tools will produce."[13] With innovation at the centre of puppetry and physical theatre, both will remain inextricably linked as long as both can exist, and travel across any route the imagination can go. Anything, when manipulated expertly by the performer, can be considered a puppet. This is key to understanding the unique and particular relationship – a complex, multi-faceted one, with nothing off-limits, and no strings attached.

ABSTRACT

In British performance, physical theatre is both fashionable and popular: as attested by the audiences at the Edinburgh Festivals, companies from around the world have discovered commercial and critical success. Yet many physical theatre companies include puppetry, whether as the dominant medium or as part of a wider dramaturgy. Their fusion offers ways to critique and appreciate both art-forms, but their synthesis reveals a shared preoccupation with innovation and a consideration of how the inanimate relates to the human body, allowing a complex engagement with difficult topics that is both emotional and intellectual.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For over the past decade Lorna Irvine have been an arts critic, covering everything from popular music, through wild bloody performance art to sedate lunchtime theatre. Her work has been featured in *The List, Fjord Review, The Skinny, TYCI, The Stage, Snack, The Wee Review, Exeunt* and in her own blogs *The Tempo House* and *Hit The North,* and displays her enthusiasm for experimental choreography, expressive theatre and vibrant rock.

KEY WORDS

physical theatre, puppetry, Edinburgh Festival, experimental theatre, performance art, Scottish performers, clown, Lecoq

Bibliography

Campbell, Ken. *Gastromancy and other animals.* The Guardian, August 200, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2000/aug/29/artsfeatures2 | **Clapp, Susannah,** *The James Plays review – Rona Munro's timely game of thrones,* The Observer August 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/aug/17/james-plays-edinburgh-sofie-grabol-observer-review | **Dawson, Julie.** *Edinburgh Fringe Interview: Jeff Achtem.* Edinburgh Reporter, August 2012, https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2012/08/edinburgh-fringe-interview-jeff-achtem/ | **Gillinson, Miriam.** *Puppet theatre: why it's anything but wooden.* The Guardian, June 2011, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/dec/19/puppet-theatre-kneehigh | **Gordan, Robert.** *The Purpose of Playing.* University of Michigan, 2006 | **Jones, Alice.** *Monkey is a weapon against my father, a version of me who can stand up to him.* The I, November 2021, https://inews.co.uk/culture/comedy/nina-conti-dating-show-tour-tickets-monkey-masks-tom-conti-1282730 | **Jōji, Harano.** *The Rich History and Uncertain Future of Bunraku Puppet Theater* Nippon.com, November 2014, https://www.nippon.com/en/column/g00219/ | **Katsura Rollins, Annie.** *Chinese Shadow Puppetry,* April 2013, https://www.chineseshadowpuppetry.com/current-events | **Lecoq, Jaques.** *The Moving Body.* Methuen drama, 1997 | **Stojanov, Divna.** *Theatre Puppets Through the Ages.* The Theatre Times, June 2020, https://thetheatretimes.com/theatre-puppets-through-the-ages/ | **Tietse-Mietz, Sarah.** *'You Can Be Anything': Myra Su's Puppet Worlds.* American Theatre Journal, July 2020, https://www.americantheatre.org/2020/07/21/you-can-be-anything-myra-sus-puppet-worlds/ | **Windsor, Emma.** *A Life Fantastic.* Puppet Place News, August, 2019, https://puppetplace.wordpress.com/2019/08/21/a-life-fantastic-an-interview-with-sarah-wright/ | **Zinoman, Jason.** *The Dumbledore of Clowning.* The New York Times, January, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/18/arts/television/philippe-gaulier-clowns.html

13 | Dawson, Julie. *Edinburgh Fringe Interview: Jeff Achtem.* Edinburgh Reporter, August 2012, https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2012/08/edinburgh-fringe-interview-jeff-achtem/.

KRISTINA STEIBLYTĖ,
RAMUNĖ BALEVIČIŪTĖ

A CONSTANTLY REDISCOVERED PUPPET THEATRE
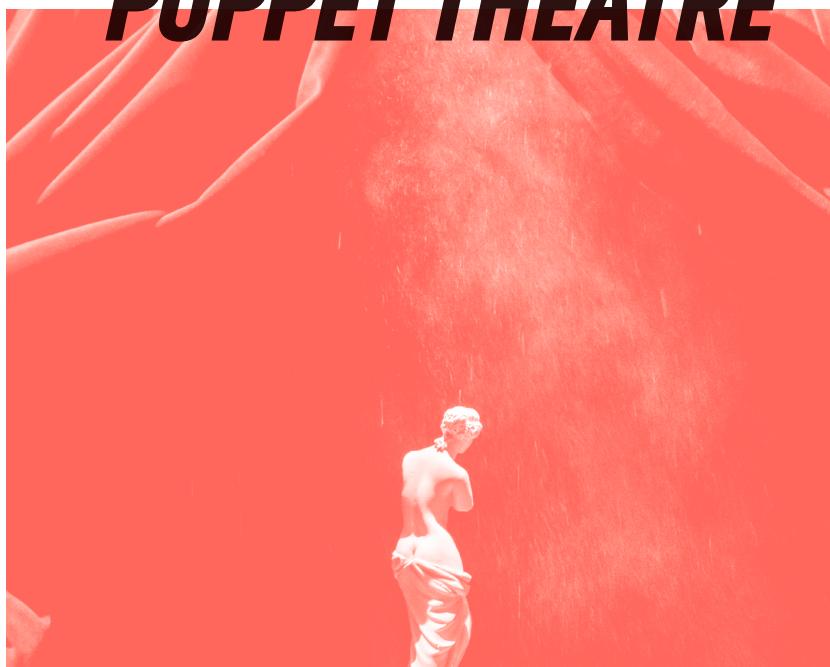
Currently Lithuania's only regular puppet theatre festival, *Materia Magica*, has been held in the port city of Klaipėda since 1997. It is hard to think of a more fitting name for a puppet theatre event, as matter and magic are the two key words that describe the essence and power of puppetry. In contemporary culture, puppet theatre manifests itself as education, as therapy, as contemporary interdisciplinary art and, indeed, as magic. The uniqueness of the stage art form could be largely determined by the alloy of perceived archaism and modernity. Even when watching a performance based on the most modern technologies, the feeling of touching something from a very distant past while encountering oneself as a child remains. Therefore, the influence of puppet theatre on adults is no less than on children, although there is still a prevailing opinion in Lithuania that this form of performing art is only suitable for children, as puppet theatre is ideally suited for their world view due to the perceptual characteristics of a growing individual, i.e., the belief in the vividness of the surrounding objects or the possibility of them coming to life. It is in the nature of puppet theatre that it reflects and plays with the dialectic of animate and inanimate objects. They can manifest as a creative analysis of the performer's relationship with the puppet, a revelation of the link between live performance and mechanisation, and finally, at the level of themes, the proximity of life and death. The most interesting examples of performances show how puppet theatre can become a space for artistic experimentation that can foster the development not only of this form but of the performing arts in general. On the other hand, the disappearance of boundaries between the different forms and the simultaneous expansion of the concept of puppet theatre can be observed. For example, the penetration of film art into the field of puppet theatre can be observed, while the influence of puppet theatre is evident in the mastery of stop animation films for children and adults.

From the very first attempts, Lithuanian puppet theatre was inseparable from experimentation. The artist and stage designer Stasys Ušinskas (1905–1974), who had assembled a team of like-minded people in the interwar period who, like himself, had no experience in puppetry, experimented by creating puppets and searching for more diverse means of expression. He also transferred puppet theatre to the screen by creating the first Lithuanian stop-motion film *The Fat Man's Dream* (Storulio sapnas, dir. Henrikas Kačinskas and Stasys Ušinskas 1938). Currently, Stasys Ušinskas' experiments rest in a museum and have little to no influence on modern Lithuanian puppet theatre. However, the influence of Vitalijus Mazūras (b. 1934), one of the most important puppet theatre experimenters of the second half of the 20th century, on puppeteers working today who are looking for innovations is still felt. After resisting the prevailing trend in puppet theatre towards realistic representation, Vitalijus Mazūras experimented not only with increasingly abstract forms, but also with distancing the content from realism. The space of an open and experimental puppet theatre also emerged in the late 20th century in the Lithuanian port city of Klaipėda. Jūratė Januškevičiūtė, together with like-minded people, began to build not only a theatre but also a school of puppetry.

Distinctive Schools – Distinctive Experiments

At the very end of the 20ᵗʰ century, Jūratė Januškevičiūtė and her colleagues in Klaipėda not only founded the KU-KŪ puppet theatre, but also created a unique training programme for puppeteers. Its effectiveness is obvious: the graduates of this programme, led by director Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė, are perhaps the most prominent experimental puppeteers in Lithuania.

After graduating from Klaipėda University in 2004, **Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė** won the debut prize of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture for her performance *The Only One* (Vienintelė) for adults, created at Klaipėda Puppet Theatre in the same year. Already in this work, which combined puppets, masks and the actor's body sculpture, the director's inclination to experiment with forms and materials was evident. After her successful debut at the Klaipėda Puppet Theatre, she staged several lively performances for children and families, using various puppets and objects as theatrical devices. In 2008, she came to critical attention after directing another performance for adults at the Klaipėda Puppet Theatre. The political puppet ballet *Ubu* (Juoba), based on Alfred Jarry's play *King Ubu*, confirmed Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė as one of the most interesting experimenters in the performing arts, searching for new, more expressive forms with each performance, often unique to Lithuanian puppetry.

For the *Ubu* performance, the director used household utensils, food, parts of a mannequin or limbs that function separately from the rest of the actor's body to reveal the absurdity of the drama. Here, in the small acting space that resembled a box or an aquarium, the associatively connected objects, the content of the play and the performance itself alluded to an absurd play. In 2014, Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė presented her modern concept of puppet theatre, which includes contemporary dance, masks, puppets and acting, to the Lithuanian audience with her performance *Sandman* (Smėlio žmogus), based on the work of Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann. An interesting dialogue emerged with the Lithuanian vision of puppet theatre as sculpture theatre, represented by Lithuania's most famous puppeteer Vitalijus Mazūras, who has created a unique stage world enriched with original visions for more than half a century.

In the performance *Sandman*, Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė, together with set designer Renata Valčik, choreographer and performer Sigita Mikalauskaitė and composer Rita Mačiliūnaitė, tells the story of a creator, his contradicto-

ry and divided inner world and his relationship with his beloved. The creators of the puppet theatre "Lėlė" have reshaped the romantic creation by compressing it, removing all romantic excesses, and noticeably adjusting the plot, but preserving the essence – the core of the story about a man touched by madness and the atmosphere of horror. However, the order of the episodes in the performance was not determined by the development of the narrative, as the audience had to construct the story themselves, but rather by the technical and visual possibilities. As the plot progressed, the visuals of the performance became more and more condensed, the images, such as the figures of the dreaded Sandman, multiplied and appeared not only in the movements of the actors but also in the rich musical background and the interplay of lights. This shift further condensed the uneasy, dreamlike atmosphere and immersed the audience even deeper in a certain audiovisual fog. This performance confirmed that Radvilavičiūtė is an active experimenter who likes to try out new ways of communication between the actor and the puppet and/or the mask, incorporating elements of dance and circus, as well as different ways of existence of the actor and the puppet at different points of the three-dimensional space.

When staging *The Picture of Dorian Grey* (Doriano Grėjaus portretas) at the Vilnius Puppet Theatre "Lėlė" in 2018, the director experimented further with the relationship between actor and puppet, body, and object. The play is performed in a small space for a small number of spectators. Similar to *Ubu* ten years ago, the action of the performance takes place in a golden picture frame. In this frame, people, and their body parts act, only not with kitchen utensils and vegetables, but with miniature copies of famous sculptures. As in most of the director's other works for children or adults, the narrative in this performance is mainly constructed through images. Compared to *Ubu* or *Sandman*, however, *The Picture of Dorian Grey* is rather static. It attracts the viewer not so much with the unexpected transformations of the body, the mask and the puppet resulting from their interaction, but rather with the spatial compositions on the small stage behind the golden frame. Here, most of the transformations are realised through the manipulation of the actors' bodies using mirrors and their reflections, which become the portraits of the characters' souls in the performance.

The images created by the director always move away from literary works. In *Ubu*, for example, after a short audio introduction of the plot fragments, the audience was presented with a dance-like jumble of different objects. In *Sandman*, there were more actors and live acting, but

also transformed bodies. It captured the audience's attention with unrecognisable shapes and movement sequences, luring them into an abstract space where everyone could face their inner world. It needed neither text nor action. In the performance *Moominpappa by the Sea* (Tėtis ir jūra, Klaipėda Puppet Theatre, 2017), created for children aged four and up, Tove Jansson's characters are replaced by the abstract, meditative narrative of light and shadow and the story about the mysteries of the sea told by a cello. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is more in line with other works by the director, which focus much more on the plot. However, despite some means to flesh out the plot on stage, this performance, like all other works by Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė, affects the audience mainly through images, atmosphere, and materiality. The director's world of images and visions challenges the audience's mind and emotions, because by forgoing text and often plot, one must rely on personal associations, intuitions, and interpretations. Or one simply surrenders to the hypnotically precise form.

Even if one can identify in Klaipėda a bright mind with a penchant for experimentation, Radvilavičiūtė's works do not eclipse the other interesting creators of the port city and their works. These mainly refer to the graduates of the 2012–2016 course for puppet theatre directors and actors at the University of Klaipėda. After a slight adaptation of the programme prepared by Jūratė Januškevičiūtė, this course was led by a large team of professionals. Among them was the director and student of Jūratė Januškevičiūtė, **Karolina Jurkštaitė**. Under her direction, the young puppeteers of Klaipėda created the play *Love, Don't Stop* (Meile, Don't Stop, Troupe 495, 2015), which was awarded the most important Lithuanian theatre prize – the Golden Stage Cross. Eight boxes of miniatures on the theme of love were presented one after the other to a single spectator. In this work, not only the intimate, personal encounter with a differently interpreted theme of love was experimental, but also the different artistic means of expression and materials of each box – from miniature puppets to water or the eyes of the actress staring at the spectator.

Part of this small but particularly creative class of puppeteers has taken up residence at the Klaipėda Puppet Theatre. At present, the works of director **Aušra Bakanaitė** are probably the most interesting to watch. Although they are not yet complete, they convey Klaipėda's spirit of experimentation by combining different types of performing arts and playing with different materials. In the performance *Malina* (Klaipėda Puppet Theatre, 2017), for example, puppet theatre was combined with movement art, masks, objects, needles, mirrors and even the heart of an animal.

Experiments in the Capital

Involving and encouraging young artists is one of the most important tools to bring about change in a particular field of art. In Vilnius, young puppeteers are very rarely trained. Until the beginning of the 21st century, the last time a specially trained puppeteer course joined the team of the Puppet Theatre "Lėlė" was in 1979. Therefore, the course for actors and puppeteers established at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre at the beginning of the 21st century raised many hopes. At least some of them were justified: Several actors of the younger generation established themselves at the Vilnius Puppet Theatre "Lėlė" and at the Kaunas State Puppet Theatre, where they brought younger blood into the troupes and more life into the creative work of the theatres. Two directors and experimenters also emerged from this course: Karolina Žernytė and Šarūnas Datenis. Their first experimental works were created outside of puppet theatre, but Šarūnas Datenis eventually managed to form his identity as a director of children's theatre, while Karolina Žernytė established herself in the non-governmental sector as a creator of socially sensitive theatre and educational projects.

With his very first directorial work *Rooster the Money-booster* (Gaidelis pinigautojas, 2012), actor **Šarūnas Datenis** revealed a preference for visual and interactive theatre. Together with the artist Antanas Dubra, the puppeteer dispensed with the usual tools of puppetry and created his performance with live animated images and sound material. The latter was also created by Datenis directly on stage with the help of the audience. In the director's second work *The Little Match Girl* (Mergaite su degtukais, 2014), visuality and images brought to life directly on stage also played an important role. This performance was also a film created right before the eyes of the audience. They could either see the performance of three actors or a film projected simultaneously on the backstage. The manipulation of different art forms and interactivity that became evident in the first performances staged by Datenis remained important for him in his further directing work at the Vilnius "Lėlė" Theatre. Probably the most obvious was the 2020 performance of *Cipollino* (Čipolinas), which was also adapted for television. The performance not only conveys the plot of Gianni Rodari's fairy tale, but invites the audience to explore different spaces of the theatre inhabited by fairy tale characters. Datenis' experiments do not change the entire field of puppet theatre, or at least the face of puppetry in the Vilnius region. However, his work contributes significantly to paving the way for new creative directions and experiments in the public sphere.

Šarūnas Datenis' fellow student **Karolina Žernytė** is involved in somewhat more radical creative experiments. In 2010, while completing her studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, she began to realise her idea of a then seemingly not very realistic theatre for blind people. Together with her colleagues and in consultation with the community of visually impaired people, the puppeteer created the performance *Tales of a Bee for Six Senses* (Bitinėlio pasakos šešiems pojūčiams). Today, more than ten years after the premiere of this performance, Karolina Žernytė has founded the Theatre of the Senses, gathered a small group of like-minded people around her, staged performances in Lithuania, Latvia, and Russia, and developed and implemented educational programmes for children and adults with various learning difficulties. She is still exploring the possibilities of theatre and learning based on all senses except sight. In such a theatre it is impossible to remain just a spectator: The Theatre of the Senses makes both sighted and blind spectators, as well as those who dare to cover their eyes, participants in the performances.

The director's first work *Tales of a Bee for Six Senses* was based on fairy tales of Lithuanians and Eastern, African, and Northern nations. The content was less important in this performance than creating a dramaturgy of the senses, so quite simple stories were chosen to allow the interplay of different atmospheres and spaces. Sounds and props were experimented with to give the non-sighted participants the impression that they were sailing, walking in the forest, or visiting a temple. The makers of the performance explored how to touch the audience to convey encounters with different creatures or plants whose tastes and smells could be influential. They also tried to find out if it was possible to balance serving several visually impaired spectators with the visual appeal of the performance to spectators watching from outside to ensure the success of the performance.

Tales of a Bee for Six Senses paved the way for Žernytė to adapt and improve her method in professional theatres. In 2013, she was invited to create a performance in Moscow, for which she was nominated for the "Golden Mask" award in the Social Experiment category. This success guaranteed new commissions in Russia until the director returned to work in Lithuania in 2015. The works created in Russia, like her first work during her studies, were based on existing texts: Gogol's *May Night* (Mayskaya noch, Moscow Puppet Theatre, 2013), the stories *Hedgehog in the Fog* (Ežiukas ir rūkas, Naberezhnye Chelny State Puppet Theatre, 2014) and *Caliph Stork* (Kalifas gandras, Irkutsk Regional Puppet Theatre, 2015). The 2015 performance

Stone Water Sting (Akmuo vanduo geluonis) at the Klaipėda Youth Theatre shows that during her work in Russia, the director not only improved the form of her invented theatre, but also thought about the possibilities of expanding the range of stories and means of expression.

Stone Water Sting was Žernytė's first work created without the use of a pre-formulated or selected text or story. In collaboration with philosopher Kristupas Sabolius and artist Eglė Lekevičiūtė and in a creative laboratory with actors from the Klaipėda Youth Theatre, Žernytė created an abstract narrative based on Lithuanian mythology. In this performance, speaking and literary narration were almost completely dispensed with. Only a few folk songs were sung, and more space was used to create and perform sounds directly on stage, but not to illustrate the plot but to create a certain atmosphere. Žernytė and her team continue this work. In the performance *Before Seeing the Light* (Prieš išvystant šviesą, Theatre of the Senses, 2015), which tells the story of the state before birth, in the ever-changing performance *Tense in Sense* (Theatre of the Senses, 2015) about childhood memories, in the performance *Primordial* (Pirmapradis, Lithuanian National Drama Theatre, 2016), which is based on the theory of Carl Gustav Jung, and in the performance installation *Weight. Pull* (Svoris. Trauka, Theatre of the Senses, 2017), participants have to listen less to the stories being told and instead create their own actions based on acoustic, tactile or action references.

Experiments with Puppets and Objects by Non-puppeteers

The interdisciplinary means that transcend the boundaries of puppet theatre, or the interdisciplinarity of drama theatre, are nothing new. Recently, however, inspired by modern technologies and in search of new visual expressions, the creators of puppetry and drama theatre have been converging. Puppets appearing in non-puppet theatre performances are even making it to the major European theatre festivals. And sometimes performances dispense with actors altogether, relying on animated or static spatial objects and their communicative powers.

When thinking about how puppet theatre in Lithuania transcends its boundaries, the creators of the performing arts who became active in the 1980s and 1990s come to mind first and foremost. At the end of the 20th century, **Jonas Vaitkus** (b. 1944), who actively collaborated with set designer Jonas Arčikauskas, established himself as a creator who

reflected on the place of the individual in society, often portraying the individual as a victim of circumstances, society, or the gods. To this end, he chose both the dramatic works and the means of expression that emphasised this theme. Therefore, at the turn of the 21st century, this director's productions used the acting method of transforming actors into puppets of the director, as well as masks and costumes that expanded or deformed the human body or animated objects that supplemented or destroyed the lives of the psychologically realistic characters. One of the most significant creators of visual theatre in Lithuania, Eimuntas Nekrošius (1952–2018), often gave objects the status of independent characters in his performances. His visual communication, his play with materials and objects sometimes even recalled Vitalijus Mazūra's theatre. But perhaps the most vivid and daring means of puppet theatre were and are used by director **Gintaras Varnas** (b. 1961). The beginning of his creative path relates to "Šėpa" – Theatre of Puppetry Satire. Even after he had established himself in the drama theatre, Gintaras Varnas often used puppets in his performances. They were created by Julija Skuratova and appeared in the performances *Doña Rosita the Spinster or The Language of Flowers* (Donja Rosita, arba Gėlių kalba, Kaunas State Drama Theatre, 2003), *Crime and Punishment* (Nusikaltimas ir bausmė, Kaunas State Drama Theatre, 2004), *Audience* (Publika, Utopia Theatre, 2010), *Ghetto* (Getas, Kaunas National Drama Theatre, 2018). And perhaps the most impressive Varnas' use of puppets was in the staging of Claudio Monteverdi's operas *The Duel of Tancred and Clorinda* (Tankredžio ir Klorindos dvikova, 2008) and *The Ballet of the Female Ingrates* (Nedėkingųjų šokis, project *Baroque Dialogs*, Vilnius – European Cultural Capital, 2008).

Olga Lapina, the director who works on particularly interesting performances for children, has also demonstrated her ability to communicate with objects, atmospheres, and space, sometimes resorting to the means of puppetry. In 2015, Lapina directed the performance *On How Kolka Pankin Flew to Brazil and Marčius Nepankin Did Not Believe in Anything* (Apie tai, kaip Kolka Pankinas skrido į Braziliją, o Marčius Nepankinas niekuo netikėjo, arba Ga ra rar) at the Vilnius Puppet Theatre "Lėlė", based on a work by Daniil Charms (design by Julija Skuratova). In 2016, in collaboration with the artist Renata Valčik, the director staged the play *The Long Pause* (Ilgoji pertrauka) at the Keistuolių Theatre and a performance play for adults *Code: HAMLET* (Kodas: HAMLET) at the Russian Drama Theatre. In these two performances, she creatively combined the actors' acting with refined storytelling, using transformable or space- and character-changing objects. Continuing

her collaboration with the same artist, Lapina directed the performance installation *About Fears* (Apie baimes, State Youth Theatre, 2017). Here, the actors' acting was almost completely abandoned, while the audience travelled through skilfully and sensitively specially arranged spaces and communication took place through sound recordings.

Birutė Banevičiūtė, a choreographer who creates for children and babies, approached puppet and object theatre during her artistic research on creating for the youngest audiences at Dansema Dance Theatre. Her performances gradually incorporated things and objects that were not only shown to the young audience, but also served to invite the babies to play along. From the visually impressive objects in *Mosaic* (Mozaika, Dansema, 2012) that children could not touch, Banevičiūtė's theatre gradually grew into impressive installations in *Meadow* (Pievelė, Dansema, 2019), where children could move and explore undisturbed. No wonder Banevičiūtė has recently started creating puppet theatre in collaboration with designer Medilė Šiaulytytė: In 2020 she staged the performance *Little Worlds* (Pasaulėliai, Kaunas State Puppet Theatre) and in 2022 – *Without End, Without Edge* (Be galo, be krašto, Klaipėda Puppet Theatre), revealing the lesser-known combination of puppets and objects theatre and dance in Lithuania and adapting it to the youngest audience.

Constantly Renewed and Renewing

Since its emergence in Lithuania, puppet theatre has been characterised by its willingness to experiment. By rethinking the puppet constructions, the materials used on stage and the relationship between the actor and the object – puppets, masks and props – creative directors and artists give this archaic art form unexpectedly modern nuances. But even as it transcends the boundaries of puppet theatre and helps other performing arts to renew themselves, puppet theatre itself, especially for adults, remains on the fringes of the performing arts in Lithuania. It may seem sad that this extremely interesting type of performing art receives little to no attention from audiences, critics and institutions. On the other hand, such a marginal status opens up a larger space for artistic research with less responsibility towards the audience and the institution funding the production of the performance. And even after a commercial or artistic failure, the proposed new approach to creating puppet and object theatre can still take root. Therefore, these open spaces and creative freedom are still attractive for puppeteers and other performing arts artists.

ABSTRACT

The most interesting examples of performances show how puppet theatre can become a space for artistic experimentation that can foster the development not only of this theatre form but of the performing arts in general. The text analyses the manifestation of these processes in contemporary Lithuanian puppet theatre. Taking into account the two main venues of puppet experiments – Klaipėda and Vilnius – the works of the creators of the Klaipėda Puppet Theatre, Gintarė Radvilavičiūtė, Šarūnas Datenis, who works at the Vilnius Theatre "Lėlė", and the founder and director of the Theatre of the Senses Karolina Žernytė are presented and analysed. The text also looks at experiments that go beyond puppet theatre.
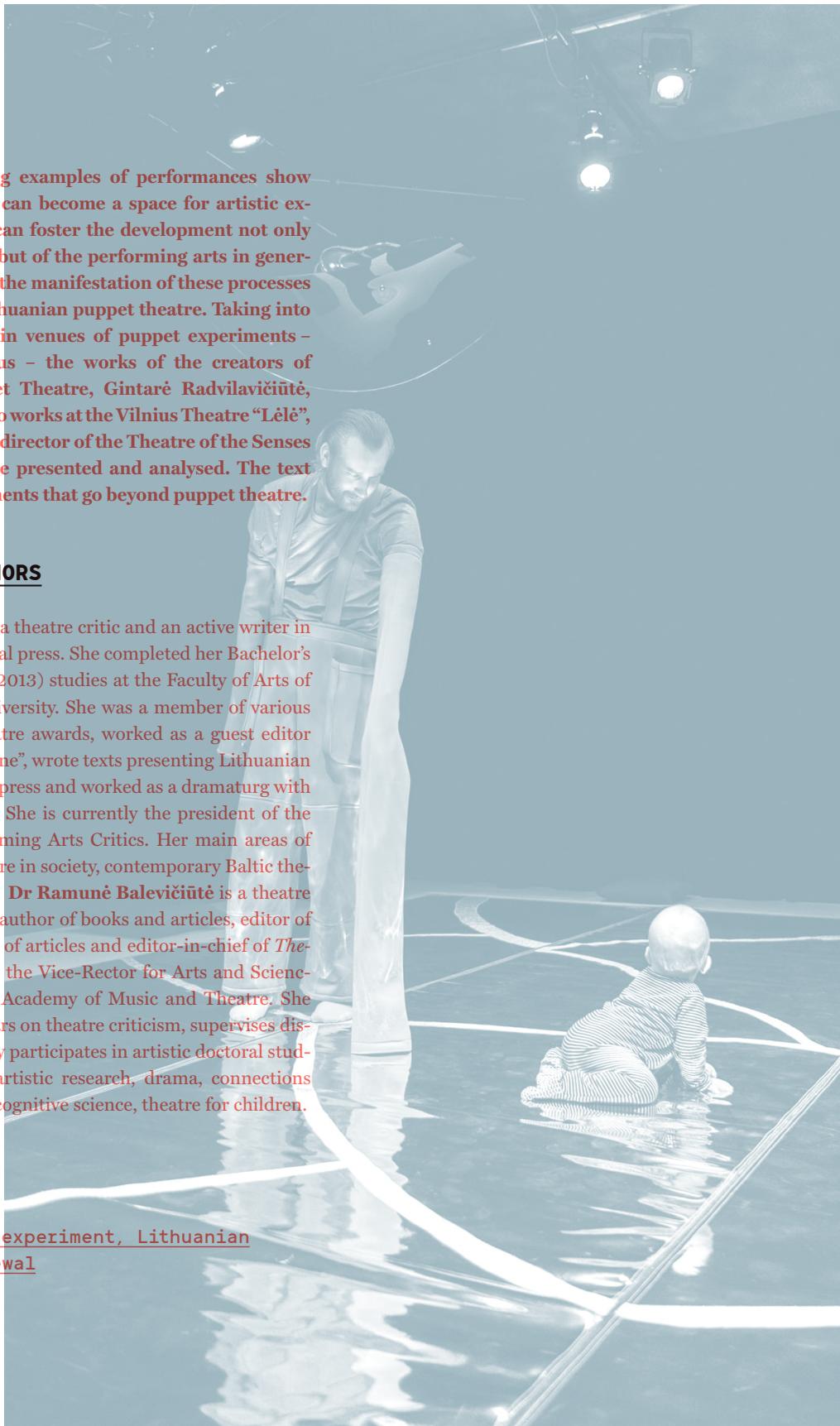
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kristina Steiblytė is a theatre critic and an active writer in the Lithuanian cultural press. She completed her Bachelor's (2011) and Master's (2013) studies at the Faculty of Arts of Vytautas Magnus University. She was a member of various commissions for theatre awards, worked as a guest editor with "Theatre Magazine", wrote texts presenting Lithuanian theatre in the foreign press and worked as a dramaturg with theatre professionals. She is currently the president of the Association of Performing Arts Critics. Her main areas of interest: Role of theatre in society, contemporary Baltic theatre, puppet theatre. | **Dr Ramunė Balevičiūtė** is a theatre critic and researcher, author of books and articles, editor of books and collections of articles and editor-in-chief of *Theatre Magazine*. She is the Vice-Rector for Arts and Sciences at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. She lectures, leads seminars on theatre criticism, supervises dissertations and actively participates in artistic doctoral studies. Main interests: artistic research, drama, connections between theatre and cognitive science, theatre for children.

KEY WORDS

puppet theatre, experiment, Lithuanian puppeteers, renewal