

# NARRATING FEAR THROUGH MOVEMENT THE POSSIBILITIES OF STUDYING PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY FEARS ON THE EXAMPLE OF THEATER AMATEURISM

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*The article focuses on the verbal limitations and non-verbal possibilities of narrating fear through movement on the example of theater amateurism. The goal is also to examine the modes of approaching the narrations of unpleasant and painful emotions and their silences with a focus on movement and its narrative and research potential in ethnology, cultural anthropology and folklore research. The complexity of the relationship between verbal language and fear, along with the complexity of the relationship between fear and body, demands new insights, new methodologies and new boundaries between the artistic, the scientific, the performative and the textual in ethnography. For that purpose, the author examines the possibilities of performance ethnography that has been influenced the most by Dwight Conquergood, who shifted the focus from the ethnography of performance to contemporary qualitative research methods surrounding performance ethnography.*  
Keywords: *narrating fear, autoethnography, performance ethnography, ethnography of war, theater amateurism, dr INAT, Pula*

*Članek se na primeru predstav amaterskega gledališča osredinja na omejitve govora in neverbalno možnost izražanja strahu z gibanjem. Namen je tudi preučiti načine približevanja k pripovedim o neprijetnih in bolečih čustvih in molka o njih s pozornostjo na gibanje in njegovo izražanje, s tem pa tudi premisliti raziskovalno moč etnologije, kulturne antropologije in folkloristike. Kompleksnost razmerja med verbalnim jezikom in strahom, skupaj s kompleksnostjo razmerja med strahom in telesom, zahteva nove premisleke, nove metodologije in nove razmejitve med umetniškim, znanstvenim, performativnim in besednim v etnografiji. Avtorica zato preučuje možnosti uporabe etnografije uprizarjanja/izražanja, na katero je najbolj vplival Dwight Conquergood, ko je premaknil fokus z etnografije izvedbe/uprizoritve na sodobne kvalitativne raziskovalne metode, ki so blizu performativni etnografiji. Ključne besede: *izražanje strahu, avtoetnografija, performativna etnografija, etnografija vojne, amatersko gledališče, dr INAT, Pulj**

## INTRODUCTION

This paper<sup>1</sup> is based on a case study about verbal limitations and non-verbal possibilities of narrating, as well as communicating fear in general, but also about researching individual and community-shared fears through movement. The goal is also to examine the modes of approaching the narration of unpleasant and painful emotions and silence, which is often the only narrative mode of communicating these emotions, with a focus on movement and its narrative and research potential. The possibilities for communicating and researching fears through movement will be examined in the context of “passionate amateurism” (Ridout 2013) as the possible way of carrying out theatrical activities, methodological possibilities and the limitations of researching the narrations of fear in

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humanities, especially ethnology, cultural anthropology and folkloristics, as well as in the context of (anti)therapeutic properties of such a way of communicating fears. The goal is to investigate the possibilities of new methodological insight into the cognitive, affective and therapeutic roles of narrating emotions beyond verbal linguistic competencies to the fullest extent of the human ability to communicate.

For this purpose, I will compare, where such a comparison is possible, two discourses – that of science and that of art. I will be comparing some of the features of the amateur play *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* by the INAT Drama Workshop from Pula (Lambalow 2009) with the specific field of Croatian ethnography of war (Čale Feldman, Prica and Senjković 1993; Jambrešić Kirin and Povržanović 1996; *Narodna umjetnost* 1992). These two discourses are verbal and non-verbal at the point of their creation, but differ in how they present the result of their research process, having both been marked by the extreme experience of war. My goal is to study these two discourses from a perspective which would take into account their autonomy and uniqueness, but also their common features and overlaps. The focus here is not on the autonomy of art, but rather on its symbolic and somatic value. Likewise, instead of looking at the autonomy of scientific discourse, the issue at hand is its limited nature, stemming from the canonization of thought, writing, emotional stimuli and the associated responses to said activities.

At the same time when *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* was being made, Croatian ethnography of war was being emerged at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research. These two events, while completely independent and unconnected, are in many ways similar and relatable. In reality, the two are only connected by the fact that they deal with the same war and the same human need to communicate one's fears and find a way to act within the community, to resist and stop the silence, to work towards self-help, heal from trauma and leave a trace.

Anthropologist Deborah Kapchan noticed that ethnography and performance can work as complementary activities and that performance has much in common with the enterprise of ethnography.

Both are framed activities concerned with giving meaning to experience. Both may use strategies of mimetic reproduction to effect a 'natural' context that makes the audience forget the staging of artifice. [...] Performance, like ethnography, is palpable, arising in worlds of sense and symbol. Ethnography, like performance, is intersubjective, depending on an audience, a community or group to which it is responsible, however heterogeneous the participants may be. (Kapchan 1995: 483–484)

In this paper, I will attempt to study this connection in more detail.

The deliberations presented in this paper are located on the margins of disciplines, methodologies, the everyday, artistic and therapeutic, verbal and non-verbal narration and

communication of emotions in general, all in order to attempt to understand verbal and non-verbal narrations of fear and trauma that aim for understanding the fullness of the human existence beyond the semiotic concepts of representation and identity construction.

My position as an author is in many ways that of an outsider. My primary research interest is everyday narration, while the study itself was motivated by observations on how fear creates an environment of silence, devoid of verbalization. This, however, does not mean that silence means an absence of communication. I see silence as a powerful form of communication – if, perhaps, specifically “tuned” in a semantic sense. Furthermore, the incentive for the observations that follow was provided by the experience of amateur narration of fear through movement, which to me, from today’s perspective, seems to be the most complete, if not entirely flawless, communication environment for expressing and exploring an emotional state characterized by acute fear and anxiety. The aforementioned circumstances have given me the hope that these two experiences (theater amateurism and scientific work) could be combined to create a new epistemological quality or, at least, new epistemological combinations of existing knowledge.

#### “AMATEUR” FEAR

I will be discussing the amateur play *Rehearsal of the Orchestra*<sup>2</sup> by the INAT Drama Workshop from an autoethnographical perspective. I contributed to its creation and participated in about one hundred performances. The play was made in 1993, during the war in Croatia (1991-1995). It was performed at festivals in the Czech Republic, Denmark and Monaco, while performances in Croatia took place in the catacombs, a bomb shelter beneath the city of Pula, on the Croatian side of the Istrian peninsula.<sup>3</sup> The play ended its run in 1997. Its author was director Branko Sušac and it was performed by two employed men, an unemployed woman and seven high school students (most of which were girls). The performers at the time were not professional actors and none of them, at least to my knowledge, went on to make acting their primary source of income.

The play begins with the audience assembling at one of the entrances to the tunnel, where a male performer, dressed in a military camouflage uniform and holding a metal bar, lines them up and ushers them inside the tunnel. After walking through the dark, damp tunnel for about fifty meters, a young family is seen sitting at a table in one of the recessed areas of the tunnel. There is a pram beside them. The family moves in a choppy,

<sup>2</sup> The play was subtitled *With the Help of Fellini and Nightmares*.

<sup>3</sup> The play was originally performed at the intersection of several underground tunnels located beneath the “Kaštel”, or fortress, of Pula. These underground tunnels span a network approximately ten kilometers long and were used to connect the fortification system of Pula. The construction of the tunnels began during Austria-Hungary for the purpose of protecting one of its naval bases. They were later expanded by the Yugoslav People’s Army.

interrupted manner, like puppets on a string, all the while smiling and talking to the “baby” in the pram. At this point, the performer removes the camouflage uniform and lays it on a piece of white canvas.<sup>4</sup> Under the uniform, the performer is wearing a black suit and white shirt. He continues to roughly usher members of the audience to the spectator area, which is located at the intersection of the tunnels.



Rehearsal of the Orchestra



Rehearsal of the Orchestra

<sup>4</sup> The laying of the military uniform on the white canvas is a reference to the advertising campaign of the Italian company Benetton, which used photographs by Oliviero Toscani. One of the photographs, which was also used as part of the advertising campaign in Croatia, shows a bloody military uniform on a piece of white canvas.



Rehearsal of the Orchestra



Rehearsal of the Orchestra



Rehearsal of the Orchestra

A very loud and unpleasant screech is heard on the main stage, while nine performers sit and use their movements to express inner fear, anxiety and anticipation. The fear and anxiety escalate when one of the female performers asks the audience and the other performers a question which is meaningless in their present context, after which she, frustrated by the lack of an answer, screams at the audience. The hysteria is brought to an end by the performer in the suit, who bashes two rods together in the direction of each of the performers, after which they fall to the floor. He then proceeds to cover them with black nylon.

He then begins his reign of terror. At first, he forces the other performers to act aggressively and then makes them participate in a masked game. Finally, the performers are forced to participate in the Orchestra. However, whenever it tries to make music, the Orchestra is abruptly interrupted by excesses from one of its members. These excesses are visibly a product of tension and fear, but also of defiance. Human contact becomes impossible. The scene becomes one of fear and terror, which the performer in the suit, now the conductor, ceaselessly enforces and clearly seems to be enjoying. The Orchestra becomes an army. The soldiers become disabled and then retreat from the stage.

The family from the beginning of the play arrives at the desolate scene, a smile still on their faces. The mother collects the masks scattered about the stage and places them in the pram. The parents then accidentally let go of the pram and the play ends with their paralyzed, frightened bodies facing posterity.

The time of creating *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* is a time of mindlessness, war, and the breakup of Yugoslavia. It is a time marked by pronounced nationalism, violence, confrontations with dissenting voices, reduced freedom of press, expression and public action, the time when many war crimes were committed, as well as the time of mass displacement, murders motivated by nationalism or politics, etc. It is a historic time which rendered individual and family lives, as well as local and national communities unrecognizable.

Under these circumstances, in a city that was the largest naval base since the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the breakup of Yugoslavia, a city that was spared the destruction caused by the war, *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* was created, with its poetics built on movement, music, and scream, and only three lines. Social and cultural factors that preserved peace have, in a way, provided the social and cultural space for *Rehearsal of the Orchestra*, a revolt against mindlessness.<sup>5</sup> As I mentioned, the author of the performance is director Branko Sušac, but it has been created during long conversations about our acute fears in the war and of the war. This fact is where its exemplarity in the context of Croatian amateurism

<sup>5</sup> On the topic of Pula and INAT, Bojan Munjin wrote the following: “It should be noted that Pula has been a military base for centuries, spanning different regimes, states and empires, along with being a city of migrants of various nationalities. It should then come as no wonder that, in the shadows of military vessels and the naval base, a pacifist opposition was quietly brewing for decades – one that would go on to equally mock socialist rigidity, nationalist deadly seriousness and capitalist consumerism.” (Munjin 2016: 78) He refers to the alternative scene in Pula as “deliberately maladjusted youth” (ibid.).

during the war lies. The play is a result of a process of exploration, which emerged from the need to show resistance – a rare thing at the time – to the dominant discourse, which claimed the war was both necessary and unavoidable. It came about as the result of a very uncomfortable quest.

In this paper, I would like to speak of *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* as more than just an artistic form. I would like to show how the process of its creation coincided with the ideas collected under the moniker of “performance ethnography”,<sup>6</sup> which I would like to present, problematize and affirm in the context of researching the narration of fear not only as a method of artistic design, but as a research method and also an epistemology which could primarily prove useful in ethnology and/or cultural anthropology, as well as in folkloristics. The precondition “of decolonizing performance ethnography”, Virginie Magnat believes, “necessarily entails redefining both ethnographic research, shaped by the discipline of anthropology, and performance practice, informed by Western theater” (Magnat 2012: 35). The required displacement is manifold. It requires the researchers to remove themselves from the logocentricity of culture, namely the dominant logocentricity of science and, to a lesser extent, of theater.

I will attempt to demonstrate that the *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* can function as “coincidental”, “casual” non-verbal ethnography of emotions on war and in war. The play can be seen as an example of a study of emotions and its presentation. Research of the ensemble began with the verbalization of one’s own intimate, tremendous imaginarium – the imaginarium of us, “the regular people”, the “experts” on our own experience and anxiety – for it to be transformed in the course of research into movement, and finally into a performance as a whole.<sup>7</sup> The conversations went on for months and would include issues from our everyday lives, marked by existential fears present in the families of the participants, fear for the lives of our loved ones, fear of mobilization, and fear of the legacy the war was going to leave us. Dreams constitute an important part of the imaginarium of fear. For example, I had a recurring dream for a long time. In this dream, the army occupied my house. This dream, and the emotional world that had fed into it, had become an integral part of the play (as did many of the other participants’ dreams, emotions, impressions and experiences). In the process of creating the play, we attempted a non-verbal language of the amateur body and tried to employ non-verbal methods of narrating fear using the body, along with examining the fear of verbalizing fear.

From an epistemological viewpoint, it is extremely important to emphasize that the ensemble performs as amateurs. To be an amateur in this context means, as Marxist theoretician of theater Nicholas Ridout said, to own “the true realm of freedom – not the

<sup>6</sup> For more on performance ethnography see, for example, Conquergood 1985, 2006 [1991], 1992, 2002; Denzin 2003; Jones 2002, 2006; Harrop and Njaradi 2013; Pollock 2006; Rusted 2012, and later parts of this text.

<sup>7</sup> A similar process in performance ethnography was described by Soyini Madison (2006) in the paper “Staging Fieldwork/Performing Human Rights”.

‘free time’ of capitalist leisure”. Ridout argues that the “passionate amateur’ or ‘romantic anti-capitalist’ wants to find some way of undoing, even if only for a moment, the time of her work and the work of time upon herself” (Ridout 2013: 9). “[T]he amateur acts out of love [...] making unconditional commitment that affirms its own autonomy” (ibid.: 29). Access to INAT has always been completely democratically free and without charge. It was performed in extremely bad conditions. In extreme wartime circumstances, it became a space of necessity. The necessity of acting in this manner can be explained in the words of Ridout, who claims that

the amateur also acts in relation to ‘the realm of necessity’, her activity constantly defined in a position either to the work of the professional who makes her living from theater, or to the work she herself does to make her own living. This is because, to follow the logic of Marx’s thought, the realm of freedom is always ultimately contingent upon the realm of necessity. (Ridout 2013: 29)<sup>8</sup>

These are the important reasons why INAT was able to become an exploratory space that could look beyond the dominant or alternative paradigms of theater in Croatia at the time.<sup>9</sup>

## DOUBT IN THE MODERN HUMAN’S ABILITY TO NARRATE FEAR AND TRAUMA

The postmodern condition has simultaneously generated a sense that our activities are mainly narrative, and announced a break-up with grand narratives and expressed doubt in the modern human’s ability to narrate, especially fear and trauma. The final consequence of this state is moving towards non-language and silence. In that sense, researching the narrations of fear has to be within the non-verbal and often muted spaces. To illustrate this, I will mention several issues.

The problems of researching and recording narrations of fear within ethnology and folkloristics are, for example, situations in which, while the acute feeling of fear lasts, we often do not speak, or form meaningful narratives. From a research perspective, we often do not approach other people’s fears while they are ongoing. Stories of fear do not have to

<sup>8</sup> The idea of passionate amateurism is perhaps best summarized in the words of publicist Boris Rotar, who, writing on INAT, said the following: “No payment is small enough for how much I love theater” (Lampalov 2009: 131).

<sup>9</sup> About the beginnings of the alternative theater in the theater of war see Marjanić 2000. For information on recent professional plays, which thematize the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from a post-war perspective, see Močnik 2014. The author problematizes the fetishization of violence and the aestheticization of the Balkan wars through the medium of verbal theater, along with claiming, “the narrations can offer very specific and limited insight into the complex phenomena” (Močnik 2014: 88). She directed her critique at the aestheticized knowledge, which is thus produced.



be told in fear, but they can trigger re-experiencing fear or activate other emotions such as sadness (sometimes even happiness), disgust, etc. Stories of fear are often, maybe more than any other stories, (self)censored. We are afraid to say that we are afraid of something because the feeling of fear exposes us as people who have a reason to be afraid. The one intimidating us must not know that we are afraid of them, because to be afraid means to be vulnerable. In the end, verbalized language often cannot offer a way to express an emotional response to that which is intimidating. The narrations of fear are also incomplete narratives. For example, to say “I am afraid of war” in the sense of literary minimalism already means to tell a story in fear (on literary minimalism, see Užarević 2012); however, that story does not fulfill our scientific curiosity for understanding the entirety of human existence. It became a methodological challenge, and an especially great one for someone who deals with oral narratives. This was precisely why I chose – not without undue discomfort – to embark upon the following ruminations.

Studying the consequences of war today is in no way simpler than it was to study everyday life during wartime. I would dare to conclude that it is in many ways harder, seeing that politics failed to provide an adequate response to the challenges of the post-war period, such as reconciliation, condemnation of war crimes, dealing with the past, education, adequate work with victims of trauma, etc. Circumstances like these allowed fear to multiply in many of its aspects, to transform and become “pacified” in the form of long-term post-war anxiety and, in many cases, as a conspiracy of silence (Zerubavel 2006: 82), which undermines the need for intersubjectivity and often produces a profound feeling of isolation.

Newer ethnographic methods that are sometimes called “following the narrative” (Braid 1996), ethnography of listening (Bendix 2000) and sensory scholarship (Stoller 1997) have proven to be inadequate to shed light on the limits and the disproportion between language competences and the psychological world of the individual.

The complexity of the relationship between verbal language and fear, along with the complexity of the relationship between fear and body, demands new insight, new methodologies and new boundaries between the artistic, the scientific, the performative and the textual in ethnography. In postdramatic theater, the play, as a product of the exploratory process, is, in a way, a convention. The methodological and epistemological shift should be examined from the perspectives of ethnology, cultural anthropology and folklore research. The incentive for choosing this course of reasoning was given to me by the attempts of several researchers studying Croatian ethnography of war to bring literary elements into anthropology, i.e. to distance anthropology from scientific discourse and bring it closer to literature and artistic discourse (e.g. Povržanović 1992: 63–64).<sup>10</sup> Fear can be shaped,

<sup>10</sup> “One of the attempts at providing an answer to this new, healthy, yet burdensome insecurity is the imbuing of the anthropological with the literary: the individualization of the text and transparent authorship set for an artistic course. The form, genre and means of expression become very important” (ibid.).

transferred and remembered through various oral genres (e.g. through a personal narrative, legend or anecdote), as well as through gestures and screams, but it can also be analytically reshaped into various other genres (in our example, into that of ethnography and/or scientific texts and performances) and explored within various registers, institutional frameworks, canonical determinants, scientific and artistic “languages” or a combination of the aforementioned.

The researchers who performed the ethnography of war have put in a lot of effort into interpreting their emotional (in)competence when writing about themselves in an acute state of fear in times of collective obsession with collectivity.<sup>11</sup> War ethnographers have constantly complained that words are not enough for them to describe the fear, terror, pain, anger, etc.<sup>12</sup> They explicitly highlighted the “natural” character of silence, but also the danger it posed in the context of the necessity of taking intellectual action.<sup>13</sup> The ethnography of war has, as a result of unsolved aforementioned issues, faced much criticism for being one-sided and emotional to an extent that borders on propaganda (see, for example, Čale Feldman 1995).

At the same time, *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* was created within the framework of the theater of movement, as a consequence of researching fears of the ensemble cast caused by the war. *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* was also targeted for criticism because the character of the master of terror was linked to real people from the political scene. It was also deemed too pacifist in an environment which, from the politically preferred perspective, was considered ripe for mobilization. The extreme experience of war created fear, along with bringing to the surface and articulating a doubt in the modern human’s ability to narrate fear and trauma – and it did so, it would seem, in both the register of science and that of theater amateurism (if, perhaps, with a different intensity).

<sup>11</sup> “How, then, should one write an ethnological text here and today? For whom? Does it even make sense to realize oneself as an author in a situation where many are not even allowed to be, let alone be what they want to be and do what they want to do? Should one be writing when the times call for shooting; should one be writing if helping the displaced is more important; should one be writing down symbols on a piece of paper when the centuries-old symbols of cultural identity are being turned to ashes and dust?” (Povržanović 1992: 64)

<sup>12</sup> Lada Čale Feldman believes that “[s]cientific language often seemed too cold and selective for the difficult and chaotic reality, which is why a large part of the story remains on the margins, stored away and hidden in computer storage” (Čale Feldman, Senjković and Prica 1992: 45–46). “The confabulated discomfort regarding the implied importance of a scientific account of the war, regarding the necessity to think and talk in a language which is rendered entirely useless and pointless during wartime, belongs to the breaks in a vision of a future brought about by war” (ibid.: 64).

<sup>13</sup> In the midst of war, they write the following: “Many sights, words and experiences from the previous year are enough to render a person speechless. Silence is, ultimately, the most honest response to shock. Due to the ‘chatty’ character of the crime at hand and its tendency to make its consequences anonymous and overturn what would be obvious, some silences, however, become dangerous and disliked. With an almost physiological silence on one side and the obligation to speak up on the other, our contributions are, therefore, presented under the privileged label of decision” (ibid.: 46).

## IN SEARCH OF A CURE

It is known that the mental health of an individual and the healthy sustainability of communities is strongly connected to the possibility, but also the manner of narrating and forming coherent stories on one's own experience and/or historical events. A traumatic experience can have a significant effect on the manner in which a story is formed (cf. Bendix 1990). It is often believed that speech can release from fear and anxiety. This is where the idea of narration as having curative properties comes from. However, both projects, ethnography of war and the play by INAT, doubted the ability of verbal narration to heal. Ethnography of war could not be satisfied with the capacities offered by verbal language since they failed to lessen the unease of the historical moment, while INAT decided to use movement, screams and sounds to explore and communicate its own imaginarium of fear, thus mocking language and the idea that there was anything meaningful to be said.

The absence of voice should not necessarily be understood as a signal indicating the “psychopathologized processes of avoidance and repression, socially suspect processes of personal secrecy, or collective processes of political subjugation” (Kidron 2009: 6), although the absence of voice should sometimes be regarded as a negatively marked absence.

My search for an area related to ethnology and folkloristics in researching the potential of movement in narrating fear and other unpleasant emotions has moved in the direction of possibilities offered by dance and movement therapy (e.g. Payne 1992; Chaiklin and Wengrower 2009), drama therapy, psychodrama (cf. Karp 1998; Haworth 1998), socio-drama, ethnodrama and related methodologies, and therapeutic schools and tendencies. It could be useful to investigate their ethnological and folkloristic potential, especially since the idea of the psychodrama implies that “[i]nternal conflicts and individual pathology are the product of an interaction with the external world of family and society as a whole” (Haworth 1998: 21). Moreno, the founder of psychodrama, has said that: “A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind” (Moreno 1978: 3). This could also apply to INAT's quest, under the condition that there was a therapeutic potential present in INAT in the first place. Its poetics and the creative process could be understood as the diagnostics of social pathologies, rather than a place of healing.

The healing properties of an INAT-style search are at times emphasized, and at times questioned. The theatrologist and folklorist Suzana Marjanić has pointed the curative properties of INAT's poetics, claiming it has the power to initiate the process of healing, to act as a sort of *witchdoctor* in a magical ritual (Marjanić 2016: 73). But, on several occasions (e.g. Tomić 2016: 89), including my interview with him, Branko Sušac said that he was afraid that he had caused distress to many of the hundreds of members of the ensemble in the last few decades. He had taken away from them the opportunity to be happy with their family in fifty square meters, where they would not seek the truth in the world within and outside themselves because they would not know that it was possible and accessible to every living being. INAT's (po)ethics awakens the dormant in humans, but it is simultaneously

anti-healing. It is, above everything, a hard-won right to frustration, the right to disagreement, the right to being, to revolt, to destroy. Now, I do not know to what extent this is healing. Through the grapevine of the theater world we can often hear the question from a member of the audience at INAT's performances: "Does everything have to be so grim? While I was watching your show, I wanted to kill myself!" The director Branko Sušac replied: "The theater is not a kindergarten; it is a place of searching and finding the truth, however cruel it might be." If we look back at the condition of the society during the 1990s and the condition of the same society twenty-five years later, for those who were hoping for a light which the war would bring, it would have been best, figuratively speaking, that they had killed themselves back then.

Art, just like good ethnography, has to take us on journeys that are unpleasant, disturbing and that have no healing properties. The *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* offers no hope. The movement is smothered within itself, in the hopelessness of the Orchestra. At the end of the performance, the Orchestra retreats in wheelchairs, and the normality from the beginning of this story pushes its offspring into the abyss. The theater of cruelty<sup>14</sup> (Artaud 1958) leaves no place for hope, because that is not its task.

#### AVOIDING THE FASCINATION WITH THE UNSPEAKABLE

Antonin Artaud (1958: 7) recognized his time (which has not passed) as confusing, and "at the root of this confusion" he saw "a rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representation". Artaud believes that "it is essential to put an end to the subjugation of the theater to the text, and to recover the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought" (ibid.: 89).

The inadequacy of verbalized language to express acute fear and less acute anxiety and trauma has, in my recent research on narrating fears, directed me to my own experience of narrating fear through movement, i.e. translating incomplete verbal expressions of the inner world into a potentially more communicative and narratively more substantive medium of theatrical movement. Personally, I take this thesis with a grain of salt. The question, namely, is whether the movement is potentially more communicative for all participants in the act of communication. Verbal communication and communication through movement (and also artistic communication) have very different communication codes and communication

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<sup>14</sup> "Cruelty is not synonymous with bloodshed, martyred flesh, crucified enemies. This identification of cruelty with tortured victims is a very minor aspect of the question. In the practice of cruelty there is a kind of higher determinism, to which the executioner-tormentor himself is subjected and which he must be *determined* to endure when the time comes. Cruelty is above all lucid, a kind of rigid control and submission to necessity. There is no cruelty without consciousness and without the application of consciousness. It is consciousness that gives to the exercise of every act of life its blood-red color, its cruel nuance, since it is understood that life is always someone's death." (Artaud 1959: 102)

channels, as well as different levels of precision when it comes to coding and decoding. A greater imprecision of (de)coding movement can be observed both as an added value and as a handicap. The same goes for the verbal shaping of narratives. Communicating fear through movement, on the one hand, enables new quality and quantity of communication, but on the other, it hides that which cannot be communicated due to fear, precisely because of its flexible decoding. It is especially important to notice in our example that political repression in the circumstances of war has, in a way, made the expression using more flexible codes the only possibility, yet, in its “ignorance” it enabled such powerful artistic expression. In such a way, the narrator protects and hides himself/herself from the great, intimidating Other behind a transparent code that he/she uses for communication, and on the other hand, presents it with a “theater of cruelty” in its own image.<sup>15</sup>

In the time of social crises, wars and non-democratic systems, theater, and especially non-verbal theater, has the ability to function as a forum for democratic engagement thanks to two aesthetic resources in particular: polyphony (Bakhtin 1984), and transience (cf. Beausoleil 2013). Polyphony refers to “performance’s multiple communicative modes, including the visual, kinetic, sonic, spatial, affective, and symbolic” (ibid: 260). Polyphony enables the articulation and exploration of fear beyond fixed social categories and enables the articulation of contradictory, oppositional, subliminal, deeply intimate, collective fears, as well as fears of the collective, various anti fears of each individual performer who can, in the same performance, be in harmony, but also be contradictory. Transience, on the other hand, enables that “performance effectively resists efforts or claims to exhaustively name, contain, and possess that which it represents” (ibid.: 262). In this sense, the patriotic criteria for intellectual work (cf. Povzanović 1992: 70) were repealed. *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* could combine and juxtapose different experiences of fear in a manner more relaxed than that of ethnography of war, along with being free of the obligation to “adapt” what was deeply intimate to the desirable and dominant public discourse bent on manufacturing war.

Thus, during wartime, INAT could radically offer theater of cruelty as a form of resistance to a community that believed to be participating in something “holy”, rather than something that was going to ruin the futures of generations to come. Perhaps, to be clearer, one could say we were protected because the oppressors, those who claimed the war as their own and who were allowed (and continue to enjoy) the right to tell their story and their truth, who opposed the value of polyphony and who denied the complexity of the experience of war, could not participate in the reception of the play since they had no capacity to do so.

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<sup>15</sup> Artaud (1958: 41) was aware that “the language of gestures and postures, dance and music, is less capable of analyzing a character, revealing a man’s thoughts, or elucidating states of consciousness clearly and precisely than is verbal language”, but also wondered “who ever said the theater was created to analyze a character, to resolve the conflicts of love and duty, to wrestle with all the problems of a topical and psychological nature that monopolize our contemporary stage?”

From that perspective, it is necessary to cautiously observe *the fascination with the unspeakable* and, certainly, to treat the narration of fear through movement as exceptional bravery and wisdom, but also – why not – partially as cowardice. Giorgio Agamben contested the notion of frightening as unspeakable. He wondered why something frightening should be awarded the “prestige of the mystical” (Agamben 1999: 32). I mention this because it seems important to me to emphasize that, in this case, there is an objective danger of sentimentalizing the role and narrative potency of movement in (artistic) communication within the community. On the other hand, however, non-verbal theater could be the answer to or even a form of resistance against the logocentricity of the West, seeing that non-verbal theater follows Artaud’s thoughts on how western logocentrism has paralyzed thought (Marjanić 2016: 73) and the communication of emotions.

#### IN SEARCH OF A METHOD AND/OR MODEL OF SCHOLARLY REPRESENTATION

The problems and criticism with which Croatian ethnography of war was faced serve as an incentive to contemplate new methodologies which would offer artistic performance as the product of ethnographic research, one in which narration is achieved through movement, without words, or which would at least examine emotions and affects in a completely different manner – through movement, gestures, light, sound, symbolism and performance. Such an approach to methodology and creation is not new.<sup>16</sup> Performance and ethnography were most significantly brought together in a paradigm called “performance ethnography”, which can be described as “ethnographic research embodied by the ethnographer, the fieldwork community, an audience, or any combination of these participants” (Jones 2006: 339). Performance ethnography is based on the idea “that bodies harbor knowledge about culture, and that performance allows for the exchange of that knowledge across bodies” (ibid.).

Significant possibilities of linking the scientific and performative actions, which I strongly believe would have brought new and fresh theoretical, methodological and epistemological insights into narrating fear, can be sought in performance ethnography. Today it is an active, albeit marginal part of anthropology, but it is a lively field amongst the

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<sup>16</sup> The performance orientation in folklore studies began in 1971 with the special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* edited by Americo Paredes and Richard Bauman (which the American Folklore Society quickly republished as *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*), and other folkloristic texts (e.g. Ben-Amos 1971; Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1975; Bauman 1975, 1986). The history of the relationship between anthropology, folkloristics and performance studies is ongoing and complex, and I will not examine it further in this text (for more information on the history of the relationship, see Harrop 2013: 5 pp.; Kapchan 1995; Njaradi 2013; Rusted 2012). The turn from informative to performative ethnography – ethnography which can be heard and felt, which uses the concept of “performative witnessing” (Fabian 1990: 3) to question the notion of participant observation – is important, along with the turn from ethnography of performance to performance ethnography (cf. Rusted 2012).

researchers of the dramatic arts. It has been influenced the most by Dwight Conquergood, who shifted the focus from the ethnography of performance to the contemporary qualitative research methods surrounding performance ethnography (Conquergood 1985, 2002, 2006 [1991]). In its original version, performance ethnography moves beyond a researcher conducting fieldwork in and around a particular site of performance. Scholars and artists working in the area of performance ethnography use fieldwork methods to generate material for new performances.

Performance ethnography can function as critical ethnography by being an agent of social change. The turn from ethnography of performance to performance ethnography happened thanks to the deconstruction of “the hegemony of textualism” in ethnographic work and the scientific presentation of said work (Conquergood 2002: 147). Conquergood sought to include in performance ethnography the fieldwork community members among the bodies that must be considered in the performance work (Conquergood 1985, 2006 [1991]), and also believed that the ethnographer must be a co-performer in order to understand embodied meanings (2006 [1991]: 359).

Like knowledge, emotions are connected with the body. They also circulate between different bodies, but in a different way. Studying fear requires insight into the reactions of the body to fear, as well as into the relationship between the body and that which is frightening. Sara Ahmed describes the relationship between body and fear, while also claiming that emotions are not found within us, even though our bodies react to them:

In fear, the world presses against the body; the body shrinks back from the world in the desire to avoid the object of fear. Fear involves shrinking the body [...]. Such shrinkage is significant: fear works to contain some bodies such that they take up less space. In this way, emotions work to align bodily space with social space. It is not that fear begins in a body and then restricts the mobility of that body. [...] [T]he response of fear is itself dependent on particular narratives of what and who is fearsome that are already in place. (Ahmed 2014: 69)

Performance ethnography can contribute to the study of emotions because, as described by Joni L. Jones, it “embraces the muddiness of multiple perspectives, idiosyncrasy, and competing truths, and pushes everyone present into an immediate confrontation with our beliefs and behavior.” When faced with the bodies of others, we are, Jones believes, “less able to retreat into the privacy of our own limited self-serving thinking, our stereotypes and biases” and “[w]e have to acknowledge the validity of another viewpoint, because it is living right there in front of us” (Jones 2006: 344).

As I reflected on these two completely independent projects, ethnography of war and the play *Rehearsal of the Orchestra*, I found myself faced with the following question: is it truly possible, in the context of highly canonized and textualized scientific work, to treat *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* as a result of a scientific endeavor equal to a written text?

What would ethnology and/or cultural anthropology and folkloristics have to look like for *Rehearsal of the Orchestra* to be allowed to function as the result of studying one community's fears or as one phase of research in which emphasis is placed on narrating fear through movement, sound, symbolism, music, screams? What are the non-utopian modalities for leaving the comfort zone of scholarly methodologies and epistemologies? Are such modalities even possible and how can they contribute to a partial distancing from the logocentric approaches to emotions and affects in the aforementioned disciplines? Is it necessary, or even possible, to develop and implement a modality of performance ethnography as a form of art-based research, especially when the subject of such research are emotions which are in many ways unavailable to the researcher on conventional fieldwork?

Conquergood (2006 [1991]: 359) has emphasized that “textualism tends to ignore the flux of human relationships, the ways meanings are created intersubjectively as well as intertextually, embodied in gestures as well as in words, and connected to political, moral, and aesthetic interests”. In his breakdown of the planes of analyses “world as performance” along with the frequently problematized relationship between performance and cultural process, performance and ethnographic praxis, performance, hermeneutics and the politics of performance, he highlights the relationship between performance and scholarly representation. He points out that this relationship is the least studied and that its potential hasn't been fully recognized. I believe that a project like *Rehearsal of the Orchestra*, due to the specific circumstances and the manner in which it was created, can serve as a good guide and example of how this potential can be realized. This will not turn the play into a product of scientific research, but, in many ways, it could have been one and can be examined as such from today's perspective. The relationship between performance and scholarly representation is, Conquergood believes, “the most deeply subversive and threatening to the text-bound structure of the academy” (ibid.: 362). Performance as a form of scholarly representation is understood as a challenge to the domination of textualism, according to which textual publications would not be considered the singular *telos* of fieldwork (ibid.). Therefore, Conquergood recommends the decentralization, rather than the dismissal of texts, a focus on what is lost and silenced in texts, but also, I would add, in the everyday life which we wish to study. Performance is in scientific work understood to be “a complement, alternative, supplement, and critique of inscribed texts” (ibid.).

Conquergood believes that performance studies, as a field wider than performance ethnography, “bring this rare hybridity into the academy, a commingling of analytical and artistic”, professional and amateur “ways of knowing that unsettles [sic] the institutional organization of knowledge and disciplines” (Conquergood 2002: 151). Conquergood believes that the hegemony of textualism needs to be exposed and undermined (ibid.: 147). He states that good hybrid practice should “challenge the hegemony of the text best by reconfiguring texts and performances in horizontal, metonymic tension, not by replacing one hierarchy with another, the romance of performance for the authority of the text” (ibid.: 151). If it is so difficult, as we have seen, for language to approach fear, reevaluating “dominant epistemologies



that link knowing with seeing” could give us insight into “meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context” (ibid.: 146). Epistemological violence, as roughly designated by Conquergood, operates in such a manner that even extralinguistic human action and embodied events are construed as texts to be read. It excludes

the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, coexperienced, covert – and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out. [...] The visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge blinds researchers to meanings that are expressed forcefully through intonation, silence, body tension, arched eyebrows, blank stares, and other protective arts of disguise and secrecy. (Conquergood 2002: 146)

In his work, Conquergood was able to establish epistemological links between creativity, critique, and civic engagement that are complementary (ibid.: 153).

The weak points of one part of Croatian ethnography of war arise from the constant stumbling upon the epistemological baggage of ethnography. For insight beyond the epistemological baggage of ethnography, an individual search within oneself is required, a search which would surpass the collective imaginarium of fear and place what is universal at its center, beyond the categories of group identity, and which could look at fear and other emotions as something not only capable, but frequently susceptible to reorientation. Ahmed observed that fear belongs to no one. In other words, emotions are found neither “within” the individual nor within society, but rather create surfaces and boundaries, which allow the individual and society to delineate themselves as if they were the object of emotions (Ahmed 2014: 10). It is possible that such a search would provide the necessary space for critical reflection on one’s own fear, hatred and disgust towards the Other, on compassion and its limits, as well as allow insight into the dominant politics of empathy (cf. Frever 2016) and, thus, the weak points of one’s own pacifism. These insights require more than the tools offered by highly textualized ethnography, both during and after the war. Whether *the cruelty of passionate amateurs* will be able to teach us anything depends exclusively, I believe, on our openness to the possibility of looking, as Conquergood had done, at disciplinary authority as a matter of scientific method and not rhetorical strategy.

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## UPOVEDOVANJE STRAHU Z GIBANJEM: MOŽNOSTI RAZISKOVANJA OSEBNIH STISK IN STISK SKUPNOSTI NA PRIMERU AMATERSKEGA GLEDALIŠČA

*Postmoderne okoliščine ustvarjajo občutek, da so naše dejavnosti večinoma upovedovane, a hkrati napovedujejo prelom z veliki zgodbami in izražajo dvom o človekovi zmožnosti pripovedovanja, predvsem izražanja strahu in travme. Posledica tega je premik k neverbalnemu in tišini.*

*Te okoliščine močno vplivajo na možnost in domet etnološkega in folklorističnega raziskovanja sodobnih pripovedi o strahu in travmi, da bi razumeli polnost človekovega bivanja onstran semiotičnih konceptov reprezentacij in graditve posameznikove identitete. Te okoliščine tudi spodbujajo, da se vprašamo o metodi, predstavitvi in etiki.*

*Na primeru amaterskega gledališča se članek osredinja na jezikovne omejitve in nejezikovne možnosti upovedovanja strahu z gibanjem. Namen je tudi preučiti načine, kako se približati pripovedovanju neprijetnih in bolečih čustev in njihovega molka tako, da se osredinja na gibanje in njegovo narativno in raziskovalno moč v etnologiji, kulturni antropologiji in folkloristiki. Kompleksnost razmerja med verbalnim jezikom in strahom, skupaj s kompleksnostjo razmerja med strahom in telesom, zahteva nove poglede, nove metodologije in nove ločnice med umetniškim, znanstvenim, performativnim in besednim v etnografiji. Avtorica zato preučuje možnosti uporabe etnografije uprizarjanja/izražanja/izvedbe, na katero je najbolj vplival Dwight Conquergood, ko je premaknil fokus od etnografije uprizoritve na sodobne kvalitativne raziskovalne metode, ki so povezane v performativno etnografijo.*

*Avtorica zato primerja, koliko je ta primerjava sploh mogoča, dva diskurza – znanstvenega in umetniškega (amaterska igra Rehearsal of the Orchestra [Vaja orkestra] v izvedbi gledališča »INAT Drama Workshop« iz Pulja); prvi pa je povezan s posebnim znanstvenim poljem »hrvaške etnografije vojne«.*

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