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UVODNIK

Iva Štefanija Slosar in Tery Žeželj

Drage i bralke ci,

pričajoči gledališki list nastaja ob zaključku leta, ki s seboj vedno znova prinese hitenje, željo po zaključevanju nekaterih zgodb, da bi se lahko zazrli v novo leto kot v možnost novega začetka, nove prihodnosti. A prihodnosti se intenzivno brišejo in zapirajo, genocid, vojne in katastrofe pa preplavljajo sedanost, ki postaja neznosna. Čas, v katerem tudi te grozote lahko postanejo le novica med novicami, ki tekmujejo za višjo gledanost ne glede na sporočilo, nas vse močnejše dezorientira in izmešča. In prav to izkušnjo bomo mogoče lahko podrobnejše in z distanco pogledali ali premagali v novonastajajoči predstavi kolektiva Počemučka, ki se, kot pove njihovo ime, nenehno sprašuje zakaj. Mogoče brez cilja, da bi našla odgovor, ampak s ciljem, da si vzame čas za postavljanje vprašanj v času, ki postaja vse bolj nestren.

Počemučka v (ko)produkiji našega gledališča ustvarja že drugo predstavo, a naivno bi bilo pričakovati, da ustvarjalci tokrat ne bi poskusili »something completely different«. Počemučka tokrat z nekaterimi novimi in nekaterimi že poznanimi sodelavkami ci pristopa k avtorskemu materialu na drugačen način. Če je njihova prejšnja predstava *Under Construction* močno slonela na koriščenju besede kot orodja pripovedi, se tokrat beseda skoraj v popolnosti umakne in da prostor drugim metodam snavalnega gledališča. Pri tem pa ustvarjalke ci ohranjajo prepoznavno poigravanje z objekti in samosvoj način njihove uporabe, ki razpira spekter tem in tematik ter uprizoritvenih postopkov.

Heterogenost, ki jo lahko prepoznamo v načinu delovanja kolektiva, njegovem ustvarjanju in ne nazadnje tudi v tematski razplastenosti tokratne predstave, je svojo pot našla tudi v gledališki list. Vsak_a pisek ka za izhodiščno točko jemlje drugi vsebinsko-formalni element projekta in ga v besedilu predstavi skozi lasten pogled in stroko. In čeprav se je velikokrat dobro izogniti oznaki »mladi«, je morda tokrat prav mladost navesti kot dodano vrednost, ki povezuje ustvarjalke_ce predstave in avtorice_je besedil. Privednika »mlad« tokrat ne uporabljamo za označevanje neizkušenosti ali manka veščine, ampak kot poudarek na raziskovanju in nemara zaletavem odnosu do ustvarjanja, ki ne išče bližnjic, temveč se jim celo namerno izogne. Pričajočega gledališkega lista tako ne gre brati kot navodila za gledanje, kaj šele kot razlagu videnega. Gledališki list naj služi za vzpostavitev dialoga med umetniškim kolektivom, avtoricami_ji in gledalko_cem/bralko_cem, ki iz napisanih besed in stavkov lahko ustvari svojo lastno verzijo komentarja, namenjenega svetu znotraj in izven zidov dvorane. Ali pa morda samo zastavi vprašanje?

Omeniti pa gre, pogojno rečeno, še eno heterogenost ali prehodnost tega gledališkega lista, ki ima dve urednici, saj s to številko urednikovanje v Gledališču Glej prevzema nova urednica, Iva Štefanija Slosar. Prihodnost gledališkega lista je torej zagotovljena, potrebujemo samo še njegove bralke_ce.

Prijetno branje!









HIPERSTIMULIRANE SEDANJOSTI ZA RAVNO
PRAVŠNJO STIMULACIJO PRIHODNOSTI
Alja Pehar

Da danes vemo, o čem govorimo, ko govorimo o hiperstimulaciji, ni samoumevno. Vznik vsake kategorije za opis nekega psihološkega stanja odstira individualne in kolektivne koordinate določenega obdobja, ki jih je treba razumeti v družbeno-zgodovinskem kontekstu. Da razumemo, kaj mislimo, ko rečemo hiperstimulacija, se mora zgoditi več stvari.

Označevalce psiholoških stanj in njihove pomene si v določenih kulturnih in časovnih kontekstih delijo različne družbene skupine. Med interpretacijami in pomeni, ki jih istim kategorijam pripisujejo različne skupine, vedno potekajo trenja. Pri psiholoških vsebinah se to trenje pomenov običajno dogaja na najmanj dveh poljih: med institucionalno psihologijo/psihiatrijo in splošno vednostjo. S tem ko določene kategorije med različnimi polji prehajajo, se njihovi pomeni postopoma krušijo, preoblikujejo in nalagajo. Da danes vemo, na kaj mislimo, ko rečemo hiperstimulacija, sta bili potrebni določena zgodovina prehajanja pomenov med različnimi polji in njihova postopna udomačitev. To ne pomeni, da so se pomeni izčistili dvoumnosti, ustalili in poenotili. Nasprotno, na pojem se je naložilo dovolj različnih pomenov in asociacij, da ga zlahka uporabljamo, ne da bi nam bilo treba razlagati, na kaj mislimo. Prav zagotovo pa tudi *ne vemo čisto točno*, na katere od množice prekrivajočih in mestoma izključujočih se pomenov se hiperstimulacija nanaša. V kliničnopsihološkem in psihiatričnem polju hiperstimulacija nastopa kot klinični simptom, značilnost različnih psiholoških stanj, kjer določena izpostavljenost senzornim, kognitivnim ali čustvenim dražljajem preseže posamzeničine_kove kapacitete

procesiranja in odzivanja. Značilna je na primer za anksiozne motnje, motnje avtističnega spektra in ADHD. Razlage hiperstimulacije v tem kontekstu so osredotočene na psihološke in nevrofiziološke mehanizme, ki sodelujejo pri upravljanju dražljajev in so lahko tako vzrok kot posledica različnih duševnih motenj. Pa vendar hiperstimulacija, o kateri govorimo, presega to polje in zaobjame širše izkušnje bivanja. V tem primeru se približujemo pomenu, *na katerega mislimo*. Hiperstimulacija dobi zgodovinske in družbene razsežnosti, v njej se zgosti naše razumevanje sveta in nas samih. Razširjenost pojma priča o tem, da se na določeni točki prvotno odklonska kategorija razlije v splošno prepoznavno izkušnjo množic. Za kaj torej gre?

Predpostavlja se naslednje: medtem ko so ravni energije in bazične spoznavne in procesne kapacitete posameznikov skozi zgodovino ostale relativno nespremenjene, se senzorne kvalitete življenja v sodobnosti neutrudno množijo. Hiperstimulacija na ta način odraža tenzijo med razpoložljivostmi posameznice_ka in neobvladljivimi senzorno-informacijskimi razsežnostmi poznomodernega sveta. Iz kliničnega konteksta, v katerem je poudarek na procesnih vzorcih posameznikov z določeno psihiatrično diagnozo, se v tej splošno uporabnejši pomenski različici trejo sestavine zunanjosti: pospešene urbanizacije, neobvladljive globalizacije, algoritemsko vodenih neskončnih nizov podob in informacij, avtomatiziranih tokov finančnega kapitalizma, atomizacije, drobljenja časovnih enot in smisla. Naraščajoče senzorne, kognitivne, čustvene in časovne zahteve so se zaostrike do točke kroničnega

in kolektivnega pomanjkanja notranjih virov za njihovo obvladovanje.

Hiperstimulacija je v subjektivnem doživljanju posameznic_kov zrcaljena podoba sveta.

Kot (skoraj neposredna) preslikava zunanjosti v notranje doživljanje hiperstimulacija koncentrira naše predstave o svetu in nas v njem. Bolj kot nevtralen bio-psihološki mehanizem hiperstimulacijo na ta način razumemo kot družbeno-kulturno-zgodovinsko kategorijo, v kateri so zbrani kolektivni sistemi izkušenj in pomenov. Njen obstoj v polju kolektivnih predstav strukturira naša doživljanja in odnose do notranjih občutkov, ki si jih razložimo kot posledico stalnega in invazivnega dotoka zunanjih dražljajev. Na ta način hiperstimulacija na individualnem nivoju problematizira kvalitativne vidike bivanja v tem svetu. Svet je hiter, neobvladljivo velik, glasen, prenasičen, podatki po njem potujejo in se agregirajo v nove podatke z novimi učinki hitreje kot kadarkoli. Sveta je preveč.

Zaobjete oblike mentalne izčrpanosti, povezane s spremenljivimi dražljaji iz okolja, niso specifične samo za naš čas, temveč imajo svojo zgodovino. Ker tovrstna stanja vzniknejo na presečišču fizične, organske, duševne in širše kulturne izkušnje, so zgodovinski primeri njihovih razlag pomembna vstopna točka v razumevanje načinov, na katere smo ljudje v različnih časovno-prostorskih koordinatah razumeli in razmišljali o umu, telesu in družbi. Sveta je bilo preveč že kdaj prej.

Zaskrbljenost glede psihofizičnih zahtev hitro spreminjajočega sveta in neobvladljivega napredka je tipično moderna. Po eni strani je bila tesnoba glede hiperstimulacije posledica družbenih sprememb, ki so

spremljale prehod v industrijsko moderno: učinkov industrializacije, razvoja znanosti in tehnologije, širitev kapitalističnih produkcijskih sistemov in trgov. Po drugi strani se v njej zrcali tudi vzpostavitev moderne subjektivnosti in novih načinov razumevanja umu kot potencialnega objekta opazovanja, introspekcije kot legitimne metode, ki omogoča samorefleksijo. Na presečišču obeh vznikne niz teorij, ki poskušajo zaobjeti izkušnje bivanja v industrijskih družbah. V 19. stoletju se na primer pojavi psihiatrična diagnoza nevrastenije, opredeljene kot pešanje »živčne moči«, končne zaloge telesne in duševne energije, potrebne za vsakodnevno delovanje. Vzroke za to psihofizično stanje so pripisovali izključno zunanjim okoliščinam, ki jih prinaša življenje v sodobnem svetu: družbeni pritiski in zahteve novih oblik dela, značilnosti hitrega mestnega življenja, tehnološke inovacije – telegraf in parni pogon. Prve sociološke analize hiperstimulacije so se ukvarjale predvsem z značilnostmi življenja v novih urbanih okoljih. V hiperstimuliranem življenju velemest, ki posameznice_ke nenehno preplavlja s stalnim navalom čutnih in socialnih dražljajev, naj bi se množile tudi družbene vloge in vplivi. Njihovo številnost in pogosto nasprotuječe si zahteve so povezovali z razdrobljenimi izkušnjami sebstva in čustveno odtujenostjo.

Od takrat je minilo več kot 120 let in danes hiperstimulacije ne razumemo več kot zgolj klinični simptom, psihiatrično diagnozo ali značilnost velemestnega življenja, ampak veliko širše. Ali je razlog za ta pojav res odraz objektivne družbene realnosti, ki je vse intenzivneje zasičena z dražljaji, ali pa

vseprisotnosti današnjega diskurza, je težko razločiti. Gotovo nekateri materialni in simbolni procesi potekajo hitreje kot kadarkoli prej. Ultimativni cilj je profit. Tehnološko posredovani mehanizmi upravljanja in produciranja subjektivnosti so reaktivnejši in natančnejši. Tehnologije kvantificiranega sebstva, ki omogočajo sledenje aktivnostim in fiziološkim procesom, celostne izkušnje (gibanje, spanje, počutje) drobijo na številčne metrike. Ultimativni cilj je optimizacija. Premik k postfordizmu in zahteve poznegata kapitalizma terjajo podreditev vse večjega razpona naših ne samo fizičnih, ampak tudi čustvenih in umskih zmogljivosti. Cilja pogosto ni. Včasih si želimo, da bi bilo sveta več.

Razumevanje hiperstimulacije je nujno povezano tudi s časovnimi režimi sedanjosti. V sodobni organizaciji časovnosti se prejšnja nedvoumna delitev na linearno sosledje preteklost-sedanjost-prihodnost sesuva. Ustalitev enotne in linearne časovnosti v moderni je bila neločljivo povezana z idealom napredka. To družbeno fabricirano načelo je dobilo obliko vseobsegajočega loka, ki je uokvirjal posameznična_kova dejanja in jih usmerjal k zamisljivemu cilju v prihodnosti. Ampak če je bila prej sedanjost vedno v funkciji prihodnosti, je v relativno kratkem času prihodnost izgubila neizpodbitno moč osmišljanja vsega, kar delamo v tem trenutku. Razhajanje med obljudbami napredka in vseprisotnostjo kriz in razpok razkrije ambient negotovosti, v katerem lebdimo danes. Na ta način lahko hiperstimulacijo razumemo tudi kot odsotnost vseobsegajočega narativa, ki bi strukturiral izkušnje (časa) v sedanjosti. S tem ko

prihodnost vse težje deluje kot končna (in nenehno posodabljoča se) točka naših želja, ciljev in projekcij, je pod vprašaj postavljena ne samo specifična vizija prihodnosti, ampak prihodnost sama po sebi.

V tem časovnem redu je za sodobnost značilno hiperfokusiranje na sedanjost. Iz predmoderne ciklične logike časa, ki je prešla v jasno linearo strukturo prej-zdaj-potem, se danes vračamo v ciklične vzorce. Vendar cikličnosti več ne narekujejo narava in njene zakonitosti, okoli katerih bi se zlilo naše organiziranje časa in dojemanje časovnosti. Današnji časovni cikli so krajše, manj predvidljive, sočasne in prekrivajoče se zanke, ki nas neprestano vračajo nazaj v sedanjost, iz katere se ne premaknemo.

Zato lahko razmislek o hiperstimulaciji vodi tudi k razumevanju časovnih sistemov sedanjosti. Čeprav nam prihodnosti (tako slabe kot dobre) polzijo iz dometa zamisljivega, sta njihova odsotnost in preobrazba njihovih funkcij vseprisotni. Potrebujemo nove ideje o prihodnosti, ki jih bodo vodile nove utopije in ki lahko ukrotijo in osmislijo doživljanje stimulacijsko nevzdržne sedanjosti. To je možno samo s skupnimi razmisleki in skupnim delovanjem. Usmerjajo naj jih utopične ideje, trezne analize sedanjosti, pesimistične projekcije prihodnosti in upanje, predvsem pa razmislek o tem, kako ravno prav stimulirano sedanjost, sobivanje in prakse medsebojne skrbi podaljšati v boljše prihodnosti.

Alja Pehar je psihologinja in mlada raziskovalka na Centru za socialno psihologijo na Fakulteti za družbene vede v Ljubljani. Ukvarja se z zgodovino kvantifikacije v psihologiji. S prijateljico Ano Reberc ima na Radiu Študent oddajo *Psihoteka*.









O POMENU KOŽE
Bor Hrvatin Stančić

Koža ni le naš največji organ, ampak je večplastna in razplastena ločnica med našo (imaginarno) notranjostjo in (realnim) zunanjim svetom. Zato je že od antike našemu največjemu organu priznan ne le preživetveni pomen, ampak je koža prepoznana tudi kot platno, na katerem se izrisujejo zdravje in lepotičnost, bolezen in bolečina.

Skozi evolucijo je koža pridobivala številne ključne vloge v homeostazi človeškega telesa: je naša prva bariera pred zunanjimi agensi, kot so različni patogeni, UV sevanje, kemične in mehanske poškodbe. Je tudi ključen organ za uravnavanje krhkega ravnovesja telesne temperature in organizem varuje pred dehidracijo. Nemara ima prav zato koža neverjetno regeneracijsko sposobnost – v le tridesetih dneh se namreč lahko najbolj zunanja plast kože, povrhnjica, v celoti obnovi. Vsako minuto se iz kože izloči in nato tudi nadomesti približno 40.000 odmrlih celic, ki so pomembno vezivo in del – tako nadležnega – hišnega prahu.

V različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih je bila koža vselej indikator družbenih idealov in zdravja. V starem Egiptu je bila negovana, gladka koža simbol čistosti in božje naklonjenosti. V starogrških in rimskih časih je bila svetla polt idealiziran simbol svobode – privilegij posameznikovega časa in življenja brez udinjanja pod žgočim soncem. Ta povezava se je ohranila tudi v renesančni in viktorijanski dobi, kjer je skozi svetlo in pobledelo kožo pronica modra kri plemstva baročnih proporcev. V evropski umetnosti lahko najdemo številne zglede, ki opisujejo ideal blede polti; na primer iz morske pene porajajočo se Botticellijevo *Venero* ali pa pravljično, »kot sneg belo polt« *Sneguljčice*, kot jo opisujeta brata Grimm.

V začetku 20. stoletja pa so se ideali začeli spremenjati. V dvajsetih letih je modna ikona Coco Chanel popularizirala osončen videz po nenamernem sončenju v sredozemskih letoviščih. Njena porjavela polt je postala trend, ki je izražal simbol bogastva, prostega časa in svetovljanstva. Tako potemnela koža ni bila več le

znak suženjstva ali primoranega dela pod žgočim soncem, temveč je bila odraz življenja v maniri »la vita e bella«. Nekaj desetletij zatem je to »uzakonila« tudi modna revija Vogue in številne zvezdnice, na primer Brigitte Bardot, ki je v porjavelih odtenkih ponazarjala usodno privlačnost. Trend porjavelosti je sovpadel z vzponom druženja na prostem in rekreativskih dejavnosti.

Prepletal pa se je tudi z odkritjem povezave med ultravijolično svetlobo in tvorjenjem vitamina D. Vsled omenjenega je medicinska stroka pričela spodbujati izpostavljanje soncu kot preventivni in tudi terapevtski zdravstveni ukrep. Porjavelost, ki je nekoč veljala za nezaželeno in manjvredno, je postala modna, znak bogastva, tudi bogastva razpolaganja s svojim časom.

Preko zahoda na vzhod ... Tudi v številnih azijskih in afriških kulturah svetlejši toni kože ostajajo idealizirani zaradi zgodovinskih in kolonialnih vplivov. Tako je bila v starodavni Kitajski in Japonski porcelanasta koža utelešenje lepote. Ta ideal je izhajal iz davne Hanove dinastije na Kitajskem ter obdobja Nara na Japonskem, kjer so v bledi koži videli prefinjenost, eleganco in plemenitost. To se je ohranilo tudi danes in se odraža v velikem povpraševanju po izdelkih za posvetlitev kože. Po drugi strani pa se v nekaterih predelih Latinske Amerike še vedno idealizira porjavela koža. Vse to kaže na nenehno spremenjajoče se ideale tena kože, pravzaprav družbenega konstrukta, v katerem se prepletajo različni geografski, družbeni in socioekonomski pogledi. Ti se danes odražajo tudi v številnih estetsko-korektivnih posegih, s katerimi lovimo zadnje trende popolnosti.

Onkraj (nedvoumnega) estetskega pomena pa je koža tudi najpomembnejši senzorični organ, ključen za socializacijo, prepoznavanje in povezovanje druge_ga z drugo_im. Prek goste mreže živčnih končičev nam koža omogoča, da z dotikom, bolečino, toploto in mrazom, pritiskom in ostrino le v svoji

notranjosti doživimo svet, ki nas obdaja. Čustveni učinek dotika – pa naj gre, rečeno z Romeom in Julijo, za »romarski poljub«, ko skleneta dlani se v znak nezdružljive ljubezni, ali pomirjujoče učinke milega gnetenja masaže – poudarja nerazdružljivo povezanost med kožo in duševnim stanjem našega organizma.

Skozi zgodovino je koža služila kot živo platno za pripovedovanje zgodb in nam dajala kulturno identiteto. Tetoviranje, brazgotinjenje in telesne poslikave so ljudje po vsem svetu uporabljali za označevanje statusa, dosežkov, duhovnih in etičnih prepričanj. Na primer Maori z Nove Zelandije uporabljajo zapletene obrazne tetovaže kot način prepoznavne rodu in družbenega statusa. V nasprotju s tem pa so bile tetovaže v srednjeveški Evropi pogosto stigmatizirane in povezane z delikventkami_i ali izobčenkami_ci, ljudmi na robu družbe. Brazgotinjenje se je v nekaterih afriških kulturah uporabljalo v obredne namene ali pa za označevanje plemenske pripadnosti. A tudi brazgotinjenje kože je nenehno spremenjajoči se proces, saj se koža fetusa zaceli popolnoma brez brazgotine, medtem ko postanejo brazgotine pri starejših trajna (neželena) »tetovaža«. A tudi želene poslikave, kot so kana tatuji, se še danes uporabljajo v srednje- in južnoazijskih kulturah ob porokah in rojstnih dnevih. Tetovaže, brazgotine in druge stigme kože pripovedujejo zgodbe o upornosti, prepričanjih, veri in individualnosti. Od upora z družbenega roba pa so tatuji danes prepoznani kot »vsakdanja« umetnost, izraz intime posameznika, ki odraža individualno identiteto, osebna prepričanja, pripadnost, vero ali pa estetski ornament telesa. Je pa tudi brez poslikav naša koža odraz edinstvenosti individuma, ki se izkorišča v forenzične namene, na primer naš prstni odtis.

Ves razpon in mnogoterost pomenov kože nedvoumno presegata njeno fiziološko funkcijo. Tako je koža lakmusov papir družbenih sprememb, medij kulturnega in osebnega izražanja,

ki se razteza preko številnih družbenih idealov, slojev in kast. Od družbenih elit, aristokracije do odpadnic_kov z družbenega obrobja, od bolezni do zdravja, od lepega do nezaželenega, nas koža vselej nagovarja in nam sporoča, da je tisto, kar nas zaznamuje, in je tisto, kar je zaznamovano.

45,0

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KLUBSKA KULTURA – TOVARNA VESELJA
Špela Cvetko

Leta udeležbe na elektronski klubski sceni ne sovpadajo s standardnim človeškim štetjem, bolj so podobna pasjim ali mačjim. Nočni glasbeni podvigi minejo hipoma, premo sorazmerno s subjektivnostjo mladosti in clubbinga kot njene družbeno sprejemljive aktivnosti. Izhod iz mladičevstva za večino pomeni tudi poslavljjanje od aktivnega udejstvovanja na sceni, vendar je elektronika že zdavnaj opustila nujno povezovanje z aktivizmom ali družbenopolitično konotacijo, kaj šele da bi se lahko pohvalila s statusom generacijske vodilne sile mladostne rezistence dominantni družbi skozi digitalni glasbeni futurizem. Že mlade_i britanske_i promotorke_ji rejverske *Second Summer of Love* so v želji po preživetju pod brstečim in represivnim neoliberalizmom Thatcherjeve svoj obstoj zagovarjale_i z definiranjem scene kot dela kreativnih in zabavnih industrij. Zgražanje je prevladalo nad denarjem, ob zadušitvi kontrakulturalnih manifestacij pa sta veselje in utopija iz političnega stanja prešla v izkustvo na voljo za nakup in sredstvo neoliberalne opolnomočitve, izražene skozi potrošnjo.

Če je posameznica_k sam_a človeški kapital, skupek veščin in izkušenj, ki jih je treba razvijati in jim izboljšati vrednost, ni presenetljivo, da največ elektronske glasbe srečamo v fitnesu. Obe sta industriji dobrega počutja, *just do it* mentalitete, obvladovanja osnovnih impulzov, hvalisanja o *grindu* (čeprav ena veliko bolj čeljustne narave), samovoljni purgatorij, zasledujoč dosežke telesne vzdržljivosti, ter kuratorski metodi lastne fizične in simbolne reprezentacije. »Nezdravost« klubske kulture je lažno kontradiktorna tradicionalnemu blagostanju človeka. V boksarskem ringu vikenda proti tednu, med mehurčki veselja in oceanom pehanja, nas lahko kratki odmori v ne-realnosti noči, podprtji s čarobnimi napoji, prepričajo, da vse res ni tako slabo. In veliko lažje je biti dober žurer in morda še profitirati od klubskokulturnega kapitala kulskosti kot pa si priznati, da naš uspeh ni pogojen s trdim delom in trudom, temveč z intersekcijo družbenih struktur

(negotova okoljska prihodnost, neokolonializem, kapitalistično izkoriščanje, seksizem ...).

S tem ko wellness postane strategija nenehnega izboljševanja neoliberalnega subjekta, sproži tudi delo na optimizaciji užitkov. Na površini se kapaciteta za radost kvantificira v številu korakov, narejenih pri plesu, zavestni intenzifikaciji plesa in nootropskem hekanju substanc. Vse to naj bi odražalo predanost glasbi in kulturi, čeprav pravzaprav le dupliciramo neoliberalne meritnike uspehov tekmovalnosti. Najboljši v maksimizaciji užitka je v takšnem sistemu še vedno zguba. Model, v katerem je veselje izbira, od nas zahteva nemogoče, saj vztraja pri predpostavki posamezničinega kovega nadzora nad svojo usodo, ki je povprečen človek v popolnosti nima niti ob igranju Simsov.

Ali je lahko plesišče potem zares srečno? Kot industrija elektronska scena trži fantazijo časa in prostora vnesenost Kulturno afirmira to, kar si želimo biti, s čimer vedno znova osredišča jaz. Nasprotno so klubske kulture preteklosti žealele destabilizirati subjektivnost. Njena disociacija je sprožila fokus na skupno in omogočila zmanjšanje vrednosti kategorij razlik. Povezanost z drugimi lahko sproži tudi katarzo negativnih in neželenih čustev, od dolgočasja do strahu in žalosti. Iz njih se izvijejo odprtost, upanje in radost, lesketanje novih, drugačnih možnosti življenja pa skozi proces uzremo brez mediacije izkustva. Razlika med produktno srečo in pravo stvarjo zaradi dekontekstualizacije in dehistorizacije elektronske plesne glasbe ni več enaka distinkciji med alternativno in mainstreamovsko glasbeno sceno. Alternativnost se velikokrat konceptualizira le na ravni estetike drugačnosti, vendar obstaja razlika med politično in osebno, čustveno svobodo. Prva spreminja družbene strukture, druga pa jih ohranja in spreminja le glasbeno artikulacijo.

Širši problem zabrisanja mej med alternativo in mainstreamom je nuja po delovanju vseh v istem ekonomskem

sistemu. Deklarativno lahko subkulturni akterji stojijo za določenimi vrednotami klubske kulture, a individualna mikro ekonomija, iz katere se napajajo, je tarča komercialnih interesov. Zelo jasna grožnja pri tem je nepotešen apetit po izkoriščanju profitabilnosti prostora. Z njim povezane gentrifikacija, populacijska segregacija, privatizacija prostora in povečana regulacija javnega prostora močno vplivajo na elektronsko sceno. Neinstitucionalne, »necivilizirane« glasbe in prostori, kot je na primer Metelkova, v katerih se najdejo razne manjšinske in družbeno nenormativne skupine, so pod veliko budnejšim očesom birokratov, ki simbolno nečistost dela populacije hitreje povežejo s prostori združevanja kot pa s slabo družbeno infrastrukturo.

Ker prizorišča elektronske scene niso profitabilna, že zlasti če gre za manifestacije kontrakulture, slovenska scena pa zapovrh ni velika v mednarodnem smislu, je elektronska plesna glasba občasen gost le nekaj klubov in festivalov. Med domače polnopravne elektronske klube z žanrsko raznolikim in vseletnim programom tako lahko štejemo le *K4* v okviru *Zorice* ozziroma *Lok4cije*, ki je simptom neoliberalnega izkoriščanja hedonizma. Izrazito močna gostinska služba *Gast Ent.* je z dodatkom prizorišča v portfolio diverzificirala svoj glasbeni in simbolni doseg, izrazita korporatizacija delovanja pa je po slabih treh letih od ponovnega odprtja pod novim lastništvom rezultirala v izgubi kakršnegakoli glasbenega avanturizma in v predvidljivem udobju, ki ni zmožno zagotoviti katarze, kaj šele oblikovati skupnosti v pravem pomenu besede. S prevzemom *Gast Ent.* pa se je na slovenski sceni veliko bolj neopazno prvič materializiral tudi koncept 24-urne ekonomije. Zaprt produktni ekosistem zadovoljstva, ki potrošnikom omogoča konzumiranje aktivnosti v neprekinjenem krogu od zore do mraka in ki v primeru *Lok4cije* obsega bar, restavracijo, klub in hostel.

Zlasti po odmiku od primarnih ekonomskih panog je 24-urna ekonomija, sledeč želji po revitalizaciji mest, postala trendovska

strategija redefiniranja nočne ekonomije, še posebej klubske ekonomije, kot kulturnoekonomske investicije, s čimer naj bi mesta izkoristila neizkoriščen potencial do tedaj zapostavljenega sektorja. Implementacije strategije razvoja so izrazito različne glede na že obstoječi infrastrukturni in licenčni sistem mest, vendar jim je skupno, da se 24-urne ekonomije večinoma ne enači tudi s 24-urnim klubskim dogajanjem. Podpira se preoblikovanje klubskih prostorov v večnamembnost, kar zahteva sredinskemu »občinstvu« prijazen program. Bodisi bo to butični fitnes, galerija in sezonska restavracija ali ploščarna. Sistem cilja na idejo mest, ki ne spijo in s tem predstavljajo ideal živosti. A pri tem se slednjega enači z zahtevo, da lahko in celo moramo za polnost življenja v mestu vsepovsod in vedno delovati kot potrošnici_ki ali delavke_ci. Glede na majhnost mest in nočne ekonomije v Sloveniji ideja 24-urne ekonomije najbrž ne bo nikoli širše prevzeta, vendar se poskus maksimalizacije izkoristka mesta vidi tudi v privatizaciji prostora.

Širitev ponudbe in posledično intenzificiran način dela je rezultat neoliberalnega zasuka kulturnih aktivnosti proti tekmovalnosti, podjetništву in »dobrodušnosti« korporacij. Kreativna_i klubbska_i delavka_ec mora v takšnem sistemu razširiti nabor veščin in nujno sodelovati v omrežni družabnosti, kjer se njena_gova vrednost meri s simbolno pozicijo na sceni. Nujno je torej uskladiti ustvarjanje ali aktivnost z zunanjim, medijsko posredovano družabno podobo in pričakovanji klubbske kulture, s čimer so akterji že blago samo, hkrati pa ustvarjajo poblagovljenje. Tudi če se na alternativno stran elektronske glasbe ne preslika enaka podoba potrošnje, je klubbska kultura način pričakovanega samoizkoriščanja za vse sodelujoče. Na »boljši« strani alternative dobimo zanj le več moralnega odobravanja.

Ali smo torej na plesišču res lahko srečne_i, če so klubbske_i delavke_ci nesrečne_i? Kot za druge delavke_ce tudi za klubsko

kulturo velja, da morajo delavke_ci same_i organizirati delo, se tržiti in intenzivno mrežiti. Delo v kulturi ali kreativi lahko zanika avtoriteto klasične ekonomije in slavi tržno svobodo, a kot avtonomna_i kulturna_i producent_ka je podjetnica_k prepuščen_a ekonomiji pozornosti, zahtevam brendiranja in je tako uspešen_a le toliko, kolikor se zna prodati. Demokratizacija ustvarjanja in izdajanja glasbe je povečala dostopnost kreativnega dela, ista svoboda ustvarjanja pa pomeni dodatek neustvarjalnega dela. DJ ima možnost organizirati lasten elektronski večer, a bo postal_a promotor_ka, PR-ovka_ec, strokovnjak_inja za družbena omrežja, iskalec_ka sponzorjev, prijavitelj_ica projektov, oblikvalec_ka vizualij, projektna_i vodja in še kaj, vse z lastnim finančnim tveganjem ob potencialnem neuspehu dogodka. Skupnost akterjev elektronske glasbe posledično ne more imeti popolnoma altruističnih motivov socializacije. Obstojeca hierarhija in pridobivanje simbolnega in finančnega kapitala obenem reproducirata marginalizacijo že tako na stran potisnjениh skupin. Neformalnost dela in pomembnost prezentacije sebe kot všečnega klubskokulturni sceni ne omogočata nobenih kritik kulturi internih družbenih problemov.

Kljub prekarnosti vseh udeleženih tudi pri klubskokulturnih delavkah_cih obstaja lestvica sprejemljivosti izkoriscanja oziroma neproblematiziranja slabih delovnih pogojev. Vrednost nastopa lokalnih ustvarjalk_cev je v primerjavi s tujimi radikalno manjša in se še posebej močno izrazi na festivalih. Normalizirano je neplačevanje nastopov na radiih, pretočnih platformah (tudi velikanu *Boiler Room*) v zameno za upanje na večjo prepoznavnost ustvarjalke_ca. V želji po ustvarjanju skupnosti ali pridobivanju izkušenj na poti do profesionalizacije je veliko dela opravljenega na prostovoljski bazi, pri čemer se postavlja vprašanje, ali je ob zasledovanju končnega pozitivnega izkupička sploh možno etično organizirati dogodke. Seveda so tukaj še klasičen manko varnosti

pri delu, neobstoječi sistemi uradne podpore ob diskriminaciji, ki še močneje marginalizirajo pozicijo žensk in akterjev_k spolnih manjšin, neupoštevanje legalnih omejitev dela in drugi dejavniki.

Če pod kapitalizmom etična potrošnja ne obstaja, pod neoliberalizmom pa je poblagovljeno življenje samo, se kot samostojne_i agentke_i na prostem trgu delnic z veseljem morda ne bi smeles_i spraševati, kako se disociirati do prave radosti, temveč kako zgraditi klubsko kulturo, katere ekosistem ni past za osamljenost in zmagovalni oder individualnosti. Zna biti, da potrebujemo klubsko kulturo, ki ne ujčka samopomembnosti, temveč nas sune iz cone udobja. Nastopajoče bi lahko skrili za zaveso, afterico rezervirali le za tiste, ki so se na plesišču vsaj enkrat dobro zjokali, nad klubom zgradili skupnostni dom za njegove delavke_ce in uvedli nedeljske popoldanske matineje, na katere ne bi mogel, če nisi v spremstvu starejše_ga občanke_a. Medtem vezi med klubsko kulturo in wellnessom ni smiselnno uničiti, saj je prva bila in še vedno je lahko prostor zamišljanja drugačnih realnosti, le bogatenje naših življenj naj nujno ne služi kot presežna baterija zlomljenega vsakdana.

Špela Cvetko je svobodnjakinja v glasbeni industriji, primarno delajoča v organizaciji dogodkov in PR-u. Njeno delo je izoblikovalo sodelovanje v glasbeni redakciji Radia Študent, kjer je bila glasbena novinarka in glavna glasbena urednica. Drži se načela »Faith in strangers and dancefloors^[1] in si pri svojem delu prizadeva izpodbijati družbene probleme, kot je seksizem.

[1] Pesem Andyja Stotta Faith in Strangers.









EDITORIAL

Iva Štefanija Slosar in Tery Žeželj

Dear readers,

This theatre programme is being created at the end of the year, which means it is accompanied by a certain haste, a desire to conclude certain stories so that we can look forward to the new year as an opportunity for a new beginning, a new future. However, futures are constantly being erased and ended, and genocide, wars and disasters are flooding the present, which is thus becoming increasingly unbearable. We are becoming increasingly disoriented and displaced in a period in which even terrible stories can become merely a snippet among the various news reports that compete for higher ratings regardless of their message. The newly emerging performance by the Počemučka collective, which, as their name suggests, constantly ponders *Why?*, enables us to see this experience in greater detail and with a certain distance, or possibly even overcome it. This might be performed without the goal of finding an answer, but with the aim of taking the time to pose questions during an increasingly impatient period.

Počemučka is currently creating its second performance in (co) production with our theatre, but it would be naive to expect that the creators will not attempt to try »something completely different« this time. This time, Počemučka – with some new and some already familiar collaborators – is approaching its original material in a different way. If their previous performance *Under Construction* relied heavily on the use of words as a narrative tool, this time words are almost completely removed and give way to other constructive theatre methods. In doing so, the creators maintain their recognizable play with objects and their unique way of using them, which expands the spectrum of topics, themes, and staging procedures.

The heterogeneity that can be recognized in the way this collective works, its creativity and, last but not least, in the thematic diversity of this performance, has also found its way into the theatre programme. Each writer took a different substantive-formal element of the project as a starting point and presented it in the text through their own perspective and expertise. Although it is often advisable to avoid the label »young«, it might be appropriate to state youth as an added value that connects the creators of the performance and the authors of the texts in this case. On this occasion, the adjective »young« is not used to indicate inexperience or lack of skill, but as an emphasis on research and perhaps a daring attitude towards creation that does not look for shortcuts, but even deliberately avoids them. The theatre programme you are holding in your hands should therefore not be read as an instruction manual for watching, let alone as an explanation of what one has seen. It should serve to establish a dialogue between the artistic collective, the authors and the viewer/reader, who can create their own version of commentary from the written words and sentences, aimed at the world inside and outside the walls of the theatre. Or perhaps merely pose a question?

It is worth mentioning, conditionally speaking, another heterogeneity or transition brought forth by this theatre issue, which has two editors, because the editing of the Glej Theatre programmes is taken over by a new editor, Iva Štefanija Slosar. The future of it is therefore assured, all we need to keep this future going are readers.

Enjoy your read!









HYPERSTIMULATED PRESENTS FOR AN
APPROPRIATE STIMULATION OF THE FUTURE
Alja Pehar

It is not obvious that we *know what we are talking about* when we talk about hyperstimulation today. The emergence of each category used to describe a psychological state reveals the individual's and collective's coordinates within a particular period, and these should be understood in their socio-historical context. Several things must take place for us to *understand what we mean* when we say hyperstimulation.

The markers of psychological states and their meanings are shared by different social groups in certain cultural and temporal contexts. There is constant friction between the interpretations and meanings attributed to the same categories by different groups. In the case of psychological content, this friction of meanings usually occurs in at least two fields: between institutional psychology/psychiatry and general knowledge. As certain categories pass between different fields, their meanings are gradually broken down, transformed, and imposed. For us to know what we mean when we say hyperstimulation today, a certain history of the passage of meanings between different fields and their gradual domestication needed to be established. This does not mean that the meanings have been cleared of ambiguities, stabilized, and unified. On the contrary, enough different meanings and associations have been imposed on the concept for us to easily use it without having to explain what we mean. We certainly *do not know precisely* which of the multitude of overlapping and sometimes exclusive meanings hyperstimulation refers to. In the fields of clinical psychology and psychiatry, hyperstimulation

appears as a clinical symptom, a characteristic of various psychological conditions, in which a certain exposure to sensory, cognitive, or emotional stimuli exceeds the individual's capacity to process and respond. This, for example, is characteristic of anxiety disorders, autism spectrum disorders and ADHD. Explanations of hyperstimulation in this context focus on the psychological and neurophysiological mechanisms that participate in the management of stimuli and can be both the cause and the consequence of various mental disorders. However, the hyperstimulation we are talking about goes beyond this field and encompasses broader experiences of existence. In this case, we are approaching the meaning we have in mind. Hyperstimulation acquires historical and social dimensions, and our understanding of the world and ourselves is condensed in it. The widespread nature of the concept testifies to the fact that at a certain point what was originally a deviant category spilled over into a generally recognizable experience of the masses. So, what is it about?

The assumption is that while energy levels and basic cognitive and processing capacities of individuals have remained relatively unchanged throughout history, the sensory qualities of life in modernity have started multiplying relentlessly. Hyperstimulation thus reflects the tension between the individual's availability and the uncontrollable sensory-informational dimensions of the modern world. From the clinical context, in which the emphasis lies on the processing patterns of individuals with a specific psychiatric diagnosis, the exterior components emerge in this more generally

applicable semantic version: accelerated urbanization, uncontrollable globalization, algorithmically driven endless series of images and information, automated flows of financial capitalism, atomization, fragmentation of time units and meaning. Growing sensory, cognitive, emotional, and temporal demands have intensified to the point of a chronic and collective lack of internal resources to manage them.

In the subjective experience of individuals, hyperstimulation is a mirrored image of the world.

As (almost direct) mirroring of the exterior into the interior experience, hyperstimulation concentrates our ideas about the world and ourselves in it. Rather than a neutral bio-psychological mechanism, hyperstimulation, in this way, is understood as a socio-cultural-historical category in which collective systems of experience and meaning are gathered. Its existence in the field of collective ideas structures our experiences and relationships to internal feelings, which we interpret as a consequence of a constant and invasive influx of external stimuli. In this way, on the level of an individual, hyperstimulation problematizes the qualitative aspects of being *in this world*. The world is fast, uncontrollably large, loud, oversaturated, data travels through it and aggregates into new data with new effects faster than ever before. There is too much world.

The forms of mental exhaustion encompassed by changing environmental stimuli are not specific to our time, for they have their own history. As such conditions arise at the intersection of physical, organic, mental, and broader cultural experience, historical examples of their explanations provide an important insight into our

understanding of the ways in which people in different temporal and spatial coordinates understood and thought about the mind, body, and society. There has been too much world before.

Concern about the psychophysical demands of a rapidly changing world and uncontrollable progress is typically modern. On the one hand, anxiety revolving around hyperstimulation was a consequence of the social changes that accompanied the transition to industrial modernity: the effects of industrialization, the development of science and technology, the expansion of capitalist production systems and markets. On the other hand, it also reflects the establishment of modern subjectivity and new ways of understanding the mind as a potential object of observation and introspection as a legitimate method of self-reflection. At the intersection of the two, a series of theories emerge that attempt to encompass the experience of living in industrial societies. For example, the 19th century sees the psychiatric diagnosis of neurasthenia, defined as the depletion of “nervous strength,” the finite reserves of physical and mental energy needed for day to day functioning. The causes of this psychophysical condition were attributed exclusively to external circumstances brought about by life in the modern world: social pressures and demands of new forms of work, the characteristics of fast-paced urban life, technological innovations – the telegraph and steam propulsion. The first sociological analyses of hyperstimulation primarily addressed the characteristics of life in new urban environments. In the hyperstimulated life of large cities, which constantly

inundate individuals with an onslaught of sensory and social stimuli, social roles and influences were also said to multiply. Their multiplicity and often conflicting demands were linked to fragmented experiences of the self and emotional alienation.

Over 120 years have passed since then, and today we no longer understand hyperstimulation as a mere clinical symptom, a psychiatric diagnosis, or a characteristic of metropolitan life, for we view it much more broadly. It is hard to discern whether the reason for this phenomenon is indeed a reflection of an objective social reality that is increasingly saturated with stimuli, or the omnipresence of today's discourse. Certainly, some material and symbolic processes are taking place faster than ever before. The ultimate goal is profit. Technologically mediated mechanisms of management and production of subjectivity are more reactive and precise. The technologies of the quantified self, which enable the tracking of activities and physiological processes, crush holistic experiences (movement, sleep, well-being) into numerical metrics. The ultimate goal is optimization. The shift towards post-Fordism and the demands of late capitalism requires the subordination of an ever-increasing range of not only our physical, but also emotional and mental capacities. There is often no goal. Sometimes we wish there were more world.

Understanding hyperstimulation is also linked to the temporal regimes of the present. In the contemporary organization of temporality, the previous unambiguous division into a linear sequence of past-present-future is collapsing. In modernity, the formation

of a unified and linear temporality was inextricably linked to the ideal of progress. This socially fabricated principle took the form of an all-encompassing arc that framed the individual's actions and directed them towards a conceivable goal in the future. However, if, in the past, the present was always in the function of the future, the future has (over a relatively short period) lost its undeniable power to give meaning to everything we do at this moment. The discrepancy between the promises of progress and the omnipresence of crises and ruptures reveals the atmosphere of uncertainty in which we float today. In this way, hyperstimulation can also be understood as the absence of an all-encompassing narrative that would structure the experience (of time) in the present. As the future is finding it increasingly difficult to function as the final (and constantly updating) point of our desires, goals, and projections, not only the specific vision of the future, but the future itself is placed under question. In this temporal order, modernity is characterized by a hyperfocus on the present. From the pre-modern cyclical logic of time, which has shifted to a clear linear structure of before-now-then, we are now returning to cyclical patterns. However, this cyclicity is no longer dictated by nature and its laws, around which our organization of time and perception of temporality would structure itself. Today's time cycles are shorter, less predictable, simultaneous, and overlapping loops that constantly bring us back to the present, from which we do not move.

Therefore, reflection on hyperstimulation can also lead to an understanding of the temporal systems of the

present. Although futures (both bad and good) creep beyond our reach of the imaginable, their absence and the transformation of their functions are omnipresent. We need new ideas about the future, ideas guided by new utopias that can tame and give meaning to the experience of the stimulation-unsustainable present. This is possible only through joint reflections and joint action. They should be guided by utopian ideas, clear analyses of the present, pessimistic projections of the future and hope, and above all, a reflection on how to stimulate the present, coexistence and practices of mutual care towards a better future.

101,7

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ON THE MEANING OF SKIN
Bor Hrvatin Stančić

The skin is not only our largest organ, it is also a multi-layered and fragmented dividing line between our (imaginary) interior and the (real) external world. Therefore, our largest organ has been recognized not only for its importance for our survival, but also as a canvas upon which health and beauty, illness and pain have been depicted ever since antiquity.

Through evolution, the skin has acquired many key roles in the homeostasis of the human body: it is our first barrier against external agents, such as various pathogens, UV radiation, as well as chemical and mechanical damage. It is also a key organ that regulates the fragile balance of our body temperature and protects the organism from dehydration. Perhaps this is the reason why skin has an incredible regenerative capacity - the outermost layer of the skin, the epidermis, can be completely renewed in a mere thirty days. Every minute, approximately 40,000 dead cells are shed from the skin and replaced, thus creating an important binder and part of the – terribly annoying - house dust.

Throughout history, skin has always been an indicator of social ideals and health. In ancient Egypt, well cared for, smooth skin was a symbol of purity and divine favour. In ancient Greek and Roman times, a fair complexion was seen as an idealized symbol of freedom – it was the privilege of individuals with plenty of time on their hands and a life in which there was no need to languish under the scorching sun. This connection remained intact also in the Renaissance and Victorian eras, where the blue blood of the nobility with baroque proportions seeped through the light and pale skin. We can find numerous examples describing the ideal pale complexion in European art; for example, Botticelli's *Venus* emerging from the sea foam or the fairy-tale, “snow-white complexion” of *Snow White*, as described by the Grimm Brothers.

However, in the early 20th century, ideals began to change. In the 1920s, fashion icon Coco Chanel popularized the suntanned

look after she unintentionally sunbathed in Mediterranean resorts. Her tanned complexion became a trend that expressed wealth, leisure, and cosmopolitanism. Suntanned skin was no longer merely a sign of slavery or forced labour under the scorching sun, but a reflection of living in the manner of “*la vita e bella*.” A few decades later, this was further “legitimised” by the fashion magazine *Vogue* and numerous celebrities, such as Brigitte Bardot, who exemplified fatal attractiveness with their suntanned bodies. The suntanning trend coincided with the rise of outdoor socialisation and recreational activities. It was also intertwined with the discovery of the connection between ultraviolet light and the formation of vitamin D. As a result, the medical profession began to promote sun exposure as a preventive and therapeutic health measure. A suntanned skin, once considered undesirable and inferior, has become fashionable, a sign of wealth, including wealth in managing one's time.

From West to East... As a result of historical and colonial influences, lighter skin tones also remain idealized in many Asian and African cultures. In ancient China and Japan, porcelain skin was the epitome of beauty. This ideal originated in the ancient Han Dynasty in China and the Nara period in Japan, where pale skin was seen as a sign of refinement, elegance, and nobility. This has continued to this day and is reflected in the high demand for skin lightening products. On the other hand, suntanned skin remains idealised in some parts of Latin America. All this points to the constantly changing ideals of skin tone, in fact a social construct in which different geographical, social, and socioeconomic views are intertwined. Today, these are also reflected in the numerous aesthetic-corrective interventions with which we chase the latest trends of perfection.

Beyond its (unambiguous) aesthetic significance, the skin is also the most important sensory organ, essential for socialisation,

recognition, and forming connections. Through a dense network of nerve endings, the skin allows us to experience the world around us from within ourselves, through touch, pain, heat and cold, pressure, and sharpness. The emotional effect of touch – whether it is, as shown in Romeo and Juliet, a “pilgrim’s kiss” in which their palms clasp in a sign of irreconcilable love, or the soothing effects of a gentle kneading massage – emphasizes the inseparable connection between the skin and the mental state of our organism.

Throughout history, skin has served as a living canvas for storytelling and has given us our cultural identities. Tattooing, scarring, and body art have been used by people around the world to mark their status, achievements, spiritual, as well as ethical beliefs. For example, the Māori from New Zealand use intricate facial tattoos to identify lineage and social status. In contrast, in medieval Europe, tattoos were often stigmatized and associated with delinquents and outcasts, people on the margins of society. In certain African cultures scarring was used for ceremonial purposes or to mark tribal affiliation. However, skin scarring is also an ever-changing process, for while foetal skin heals without scarring, scars in the elderly become permanent (undesired) “tattoos.” However, desired designs, such as henna tattoos, are still used today in Central and South Asian cultures in wedding and birthday celebrations. Tattoos, scars, and other skin stigmata tell stories of resistance, beliefs, faith, and individuality. From rebellion on the margins of society, today, tattoos are recognized as “everyday” art, an expression of the individual’s intimacy, reflecting the individual’s identity, personal beliefs, affiliation, religion or serving as an aesthetic ornament of the body. But even without paintings, skin is a reflection of the individual’s uniqueness, which is exploited for forensic purposes, for example, through fingerprinting.

The full range and multiplicity of meanings of the skin clearly transcend its physiological function. Thus, the skin is a

litmus test of social change, a medium of cultural and personal expression that spans many social ideals, strata, and castes. From the elites, the aristocracy, to the outcasts on the social fringes, from illness to health, from beauty to ugliness, the skin always speaks to us and tells us that it is what marks us and is what is marked.

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CLUB CULTURE – FUN FACTORY
Špela Cvetko

The years spent participating on the electronic club scene do not coincide with the standard human count, they are more like dog or cat years. Nightly musical feats pass in an instant, directly proportional to the subjectivity of youth and clubbing as its socially acceptable activity. For most, leaving adolescence behind means saying goodbye to their active participation on the scene, however, electronics has long since abandoned its connection with activism or socio-political connotation, let alone being able to boast the status of a generational leading force of youthful resistance to the dominant society through digital musical futurism. In their desire to survive under Thatcher's budding and repressive neoliberalism, even the young British promoters of the *Second Summer of Love* rave defended their existence by defining the scene as part of the creative and entertainment industries. Outrage prevailed over money, and with the suppression of countercultural manifestations, joy and utopia passed from a political state to an experience that can be purchased and a means of neoliberal empowerment expressed through consumption.

If we consider an individual as human capital, a collection of skills and experiences that need to be developed and their value enhanced, it comes as no surprise that most electronic music is encountered in gyms. Both are industries of the feel-good, *just-do-it* mentality, a mastery of basic impulses, bragging about the *grind* (albeit one of a much more jaw-dropping nature), an arbitrary purgatory, pursuing achievements of physical endurance, and a curatorial method of one's own physical and symbolic representation. The “unhealthiness” of club culture is falsely contradictory to traditional human well-being. In the boxing match between weekends and week days, between bubbles of joy and an ocean of trying, the brief breaks in the non-reality of the night, supported by magic potions, can convince us that everything is not so bad after all. Of course, it is much easier to be a

good partygoer and perhaps even profit from the club-cultural capital of coolness than to admit that our success is not conditioned by hard work and effort, but by the intersection of social structures (uncertain environmental future, neocolonialism, capitalist exploitation, sexism...).

As wellness becomes a strategy for the continuous improvement of the neoliberal subject, it also triggers work on their pleasure optimization. On the surface, the capacity for joy is quantified in the number of steps taken in dancing, the conscious intensification of dance, and nootropic substance hacking. All of this is supposed to reflect a commitment to music and culture, when in fact we are merely duplicating the neoliberal metrics of competitive success. Even the best at maximizing pleasure are losers in such a system. The model in which pleasure is a choice asks the impossible of us, insisting on the assumption of the individual's control over one's destiny, which the average person does not truly have even when playing *The Sims*.

Can the dance floor thus truly be happy? As an industry, the electronic scene markets a fantasy of time and elated space. It culturally affirms what we want to be, thereby repeatedly focusing on the self. In contrast, the club cultures of the past sought to destabilize subjectivity. Its dissociation triggered focusing on the shared grounds and enabled the devaluation of categories of difference. The connection with others can also trigger a catharsis of negative and unwanted emotions, from boredom to fear and sadness. These lead to the emergence of openness, hope and joy, and a glimmer of new, different life possibilities appears through the process without the mediation of experience. Due to the decontextualization and dehistoricization of electronic dance music, the difference between product happiness and the real thing is no longer the same as the distinction between the alternative and mainstream music scene. Alternativeness is often

conceptualized only on the level of the aesthetics of difference, but there is a difference between political and personal, emotional freedom. The former changes social structures, while the latter maintains them and changes only musical articulation.

The broader problem that blurs the boundaries between alternative and mainstream is the necessity for everyone to operate within the same economic system. On the declarative level subcultural actors may stand behind certain club culture values, but the individual micro-economy from which they are fed is the target of commercial interests. A very clear threat in this regard is the insatiable appetite for exploiting the profitability of space. The associated gentrification, population segregation, privatization of space, and increased regulation of public spaces have a strong impact on the electronic scene. Non-institutional, “uncivilized” music and spaces, such as Metelkova, which are home to various minority and socially non-normative groups, are under the vigilant eye of bureaucrats, who more readily associate the symbolic impurity of a part of the population with gathering spaces than with poor social infrastructure.

Since electronic dance music venues are not profitable, especially when it comes to counterculture manifestations, and the Slovenian scene is not large in the international sense, electronic dance music is an occasional guest at merely a few clubs and festivals. Among the domestic full-fledged electronic clubs with a genre-diverse and year-round program, we can mention merely *K4* within *Zorica* or *Lok4cija*, which is a symptom of the neoliberal exploitation of hedonism. The exceptionally strong catering service *Gast Ent.* diversified its musical and symbolic reach by adding a venue to its portfolio, however, after barely three years of reopening under new ownership the pronounced corporative operation resulted in the loss of musical adventurism and in predictable comfort that is

unable to provide catharsis, let alone form a community in the true sense of the word. With the takeover by *Gast Ent.*, the concept of the 24-hour economy materialized on the Slovenian scene, much more imperceptibly, for the first time. A closed product ecosystem of satisfaction that allows consumers to consume activities in a continuous cycle from dawn to dusk and which, in the case of Lok4cija, includes a bar, restaurant, club and hostel.

Following the shift away from the primary economic sectors, the 24-hour economy, following the desire to revitalize cities, has become a trendy strategy for redefining the night economy, especially the club economy, as a cultural-economic investment, with which cities are supposed to exploit the untapped potential of a previously neglected sector. The implementations of the development strategy are markedly different to the existing infrastructure and licensing system of the cities, but they share the idea that the 24-hour economy is in most cases not equated with 24-hour club events. The transformation of club spaces into multipurpose spaces is encouraged, and this requires a programme that is friendly to the downtown “audience”. Be it a boutique fitness centre, a gallery and a seasonal restaurant or a record store. The system is aimed at the idea of cities that do not sleep and thus represent the ideal of liveliness. However, the latter is equated with the requirement that we can and even must act as consumers or workers everywhere and always if we want to live the city life to its full. Given the small size of cities and the night-time economy in Slovenia, the idea of a 24-hour economy will probably never be broadly adopted, but the attempt to maximize the place’s utilization is also seen in the privatization of space.

The expansion of the offer and the consequent intensified way of working is the result of the neoliberal twist of cultural activities towards competition, entrepreneurship and the

“goodwill” of corporations. In such a system, the creative club worker must expand their set of skills and necessarily participate in networked sociability, where their value is measured by his or her symbolic position on the scene. It is therefore necessary to harmonize the creativity or activity with the external, media-mediated social image and expectations of club culture, whereby the actors become commodities themselves, while simultaneously creating commodification. Even if the same image of consumption is not reflected on the alternative side of electronic music, club culture is a way of expected self-exploitation for all participants. The “better” side of the alternative merely obtains greater moral approval.

So, can we really be happy on the dance floor if the club workers are unhappy? As with other workers, club culture also applies to workers who have to organize their own work, intensively market themselves as well as be constantly networking. Work in culture or the creative industry may deny the authority of classical economy and celebrate market freedom, but as an autonomous cultural producer, the entrepreneur is left to the economy of attention and the demands of branding, and is thus only successful to the extent that he or she can sell himself or herself. The democratization of music creation and publishing has increased the accessibility of creative work, however, this freedom of creation leads to the addition of non-creative work. A DJ has the opportunity to organize their or her own electronic evening, but with this, he or she will become a promoter, PR person, social media expert, sponsor seeker, project applicant, visual designer, project manager, and more, all with their own financial risk in the event of the event's potential failure. Consequently, the community of electronic music actors cannot have completely altruistic socialization motives. The existing hierarchy and the acquisition of symbolic and financial capital

simultaneously reproduce the marginalization of already marginalized groups. The informality of the work and the importance of presenting oneself as likable to the club culture scene do not allow for any criticism of the culture's internal social problems.

Despite the precariousness of all those involved, we encounter a scale of acceptability of exploitation and the failure to problematize the poor working conditions among club culture workers. The value of performances by local artists is radically lower compared to foreign ones which is especially pronounced at festivals. Not paying for performances on radio and streaming platforms (including the giant Boiler Room) has been normalized in exchange for the hope of greater recognition of the artist. In the desire to create a community or gain experience on the path to professionalization, much work is done on a volunteer basis, which raises the question of whether it is even possible to organize events ethically while pursuing a positive outcome. Of course, this is also accompanied by the classic lack of job security, non-existent official support systems in the face of discrimination (which further marginalize the position of women and sexual minority actors), disregard for legal work restrictions, and other factors.

If ethical consumption does not exist under capitalism, and life itself is commodified under neoliberalism, then we, as independent agents on the free market, should perhaps not be asking ourselves how to dissociate ourselves to true joy, but how to build a club culture whose ecosystem is not a trap for loneliness and a triumphant stage for individuality. It may be that we need a club culture that does not nurse self-importance, but pushes us out of our comfort zone. We could hide the performers behind a curtain, reserve the after party only for those who have had at least one good cry on the dance floor, build a community centre above the club for its workers, and introduce Sunday

afternoon matinees that you would not be able to attend unless you were accompanied by a senior citizen. In the meantime, there is no point in destroying the connection between club culture and wellness, since the former was and still can be a space for imagining different realities. At this one should ensure that the enrichment of our lives should not serve as a surplus battery for a broken everyday life.

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Špela Cvetko works as a freelancer in the music industry, primarily working in event management and PR. Her work was shaped by her involvement in the music editorial department of Radio Študent, where she was a music journalist and chief music editor. She adheres to the principle of »Faith in strangers and dancefloors«^[1] and strives to challenge social issues such as sexism in her work.

[1] Andy Stott's song *Faith in Strangers*.





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Koprodukcija / Co-produced by:

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Koprodukcija s prostorom /

Co-production with space:

Bunker, Divadlo X10

Projekt omogočili / Supported by:

Ministrstvo za kulturo RS / Ministry of Culture

Mestna občina Ljubljana /

Municipality of Ljubljana,

Mestna občina Novo mesto /

Municipality of Novo Mesto

Generalna pokroviteljica APTa /

General sponsor of APT:

Krka, d. d., Novo mesto

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GLEJ, LIST / GLEJ, PAPER

LETNIK 17, ŠT. 1 / YEAR 17, NO. 1

Urednici / Editors:

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Prevod v angleščino / Translation into English:

Sunčan Stone

Slovenski jezikovni pregled /

Slovene language editing:

Barbara Cerkvenik

Oblikovanje in prelom / Graphic Design:

Grupa Ee / Eva Bevec, Mina Fina, Ivian Kan
Mujezinovič

Izdalo / Published By:

Društvo Gledališče Glej

Tisk / Print:

Stane Peklaj

Naklada / Circulation:

300

Januar / January 2025

Podpirajo nas / Supported by:

Mestna občina Ljubljana / Municipality of Ljubljana

Ministrstvo za kulturo / Ministry of Culture

Evropska komisija, program Ustvarjalna Evropa /

European Commission, programme Creative Europe

Evropska komisija, program Erasmus+ /

European Commission, programme Erasmus +

Javni sklad Republike Slovenije za kulturne dejavnosti

Gooya, Interaktivi mediji, d.o.o.

Društvo za promocijo glasbe

Supercatering, d. o. o.

Glej



Anton Podbevšek Teater



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9 771855 624000
ISSN 1855-6248



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