

with one of the immediate goals of keeping the homeland tradition alive. Considering the fact that the main social event for their performance is the festival “To our People and Descendants”, which is, as Karin reveals, sponsored both by the Ministry of Culture and the Province of Vojvodina (Provincial Secretariat for Culture) as well as by some wealthy individuals, but also taking into account that regionally specific Dinaric dances are no longer performed in the participatory context of weddings and other festivities, it is a question of how long this practice will be kept alive.

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Bojana Radovanović, *Eksperimentalni glas: Savremena teorija i praksa*
[**Experimental Voice: Contemporary Theory and Practice**], Belgrade: Orion Art, 2018, 170 pages, ISBN 978-86-6389-073-2¹

Musicologist and theoretician of art Bojana Radovanović published a monograph dedicated to the problem of experimental voice in contemporary theory and practice, in 2018. She undertook the assignment of dealing with a topic that covers several ‘burning’ fields of theoretical inquiry, both content- and methodology-wise. As for the content of the study, its focus on the performance aspects and the voice itself (understood as sound, not only speech/language, which always indi-

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cates its connection to the body and the possibilities of its political intervention / Radovanović 2018: 11/) relies on the work focused on performance, the performative body and the political agency of art, produced in recent years. As for the methodology, the study is transdisciplinary in its character, since the main idea of thinking about experimental voice, its agency and its theoretical understanding 'flows' between the disciplines of musicology, performance studies, the theory of arts, psychology, philosophy, and in general – in the liminal zones between music, theatre and poetry /Ibid., 12/. In that sense, it is no coincidence that this book has appeared within the series called *PH – preko humanistike* [Beyond Humanities], edited by Dr. Miodrag (Miško) Šuvaković. This latest edition ties in with similar endeavours the editor has carried out in the last four years. Although covering various topics, the titles published in this period have a common feature of exploring the inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives of contemporary humanities.

Radovanović's book is based on her Master's Thesis (further broadened and developed), defended at the Faculty of Media and Communication under the mentorship of Dr. Miško Šuvaković. It could be said that the study is not orientated towards developing one specific take on the problem. Instead, the author offers an extensive overview of chosen contemporary theoretical considerations of voice in general and several case studies of 20th and 21st century practices where experimental voice was the main tool of artistic and political intervention. Bearing in mind that the literature on

(experimental) voice in the Serbian language is scarce, and that as far as the reviewer currently knows, there is no comprehensive monograph in this country, dealing with similar problems, the decision to take such an approach seems valuable in the sense that this study serves as an introduction to possible approaches and topics in our country.

The conceptual precision and firmly set coordinates in which the main notions are laid out are demonstrated through the clarity of the monograph's structure. The study is divided into five chapters. In addition to the introduction and conclusion, there are three main chapters, as well as two appendices, a glossary, bibliography, name index, summary in English and a note on the author. In the introductory text the said coordinates are given, and the author explains how she hears and understands voice (*Kako čujem/razumem glas?*). The first chapter is titled *Opšta teorija glasa* [General Theory of Voice]. The pre-eminent approaches, from the positions of psychoanalysis, biopolitics, theories of voice and body, are all taken into account. The objectivity of voice, its materiality, voice as an indication of the presence of subject and body, as well as an indication of the subject's political agency are presented in the following subchapters: *Glas – pogled iz psihoanalize* [Voice – view from psychoanalysis], *Glas i politika* [Voice and politics], and "*Taj glas nikako ne može poticati iz tog tela*" – *Glas i telo* ['That voice could never emerge from that body' – Voice and the Body]. Among the principal authors whose theories (and interpretation of other theoretical ideas) figure as referential points here are Mladen

Dolar, Jelena Novak, Giorgio Agamben, Adriana Cavarero, Roland Barthes, Brandon LaBelle. For B. Radovanović, the chosen theoretical approaches/positions highlight a number of issues regarding the problem of language in relation to voice, and regarding the performative body, which accompanies her earlier statement on the manner in which she understands voice. Here, they can be reduced to the main questions of how language can be bypassed and how this is shown in various experimental artistic practices (Ibid., 52).

Before examining these questions in more detail, Radovanović gives short histories of voice in music, poetry and theatre in the second chapter, *Glas/telo u izvođačkim umetnostima* [Voice/Body in the Performing Arts]. Going through the mentioned artistic fields, as well as corresponding scientific disciplines, the author presents the historically central ideas concerning the treatment of voice in each of those, before explaining their closeness during the 20th century and the emergence of performance art. The chapter concludes with Radovanović's discussion on Paolo Virno's theses about virtuosity, work and politics. While Virno borrowed the concept of virtuosity to explain the modes of work(ing) in Post-Fordism, Radovanović uses his concept to understand the political quality of performance practice, and, more precisely, of experimental vocal practices. Thus, she understands virtuosity both in the traditional sense of technical artistry and in Virno's sense of political virtuosity. Complementary to that, the experimental qualities are comprehended both in terms of the materiality of voice and exploring the

boundaries of its expression, as well as in terms of the content of experimental vocal performances and their political effects.

These parallel lines of understanding concepts of virtuosity, experiment, performance are shown in the central chapter, *Ekspperimentalni glas* [Experimental Voice]. Several case studies of different artistic takes on the experiment, voice and performance are analysed, starting with Kurt Schwitters's Dadaistic experiments up to 21st century practices, concluding with that of Antonia Bär. Among them, case studies can be seen to be in two groups. First, there are narratives on the activities and works of Schwitters, Steve McCaffery, Antonin Artaud and Cathy Berberian, recognised by the author as 'manifest phenomena/figures/works of sound poetry, music and theatre' (Ibid., 78). McCaffery's activity is included here both because of his artistic and theoretical practice. Between his sound poetry orientated towards the abolition of the sign, Schwitters' specific combination of *Merz* and composition (by means of the collage composing of sound), Artaud's critique of European theatre given through the insistence on pre-linguistic and primal action, and Berberian's 'new vocality', the invention of new vocal performance techniques and playing with boundaries between popular culture and avant-garde art, there is a common thread of bypassing the meaning of language and the sign, and instead focusing on the sound characteristic of voice and its affective qualities. In addition, political agency of these artistic statements is underlined, which is also the case with the following case stud-

ies, roughly recognised as the second group. These are examples of the continuation of similar ideas in the 21st century. Among them, there is political activism performed through the electro-acoustic theatre of Diamanda Gallás, her exploring of the 'monstruosity' of voice and body, but also in Laurie Anderson's new theatre and 'vocal drag'. Further examples include early operas by Robert Wilson and his relying on the phonetic qualities of language, *Moonchild* project by John Zorn, with special attention given to Mike Patton's extended vocal techniques and theatricalization of laughter as a specific form of human communication, acting as the subversion of the language system in performance *Rire/Laugh/Lachen* by Antonia Bär. In 'Izvođenje' epiloga' [Performing' the Epilogue], the author gives a summary of the presented thesis, concluding that 'considered experimental voices virtuously play with the burning questions of their time', and show themselves as 'politically abundant and interventional forces' (Ibid., 139).

Given that for readers in Serbia this study is an introduction to the topic, it is appropriate that, in addition to the glossary, it also contains valuable appendices: short biographies of the artists mentioned throughout the study and the translation into Serbian of Cathy Berberian's manifesto, *New Vocality*. Berberian's efforts to establish her specific approach to vocality, her emancipation from Luciano Berio as a central avant-garde 'musicworld' figure (and former husband), her affirmative approach towards fluid boundaries between art and popular culture can generally be seen in the light of affirming Otherness. One could say

something similar about Adriana Cavarero's remark that 'woman sings, man thinks' and the subsequent positioning of this thesis as a grain from which a 'profound discussion on the history of mankind, gender relations, philosophy, metaphysics, music and (...) voice' can be drawn (Ibid., 48). To a certain extent, the striving to put forward a discussion on Otherness in its many forms, alternative means of expression that are experimental in nature, and thus orientated towards making interventions in culture and society, as well as emphasising authors who placed these qualities in the forefront, can be seen as the underlying values of Bojana Radovanović's study. Stressing the said qualities, as was already stated, in pioneering study on the topic of experimental voice in the context of the Serbian language, is of itself an interesting intervention in the local theoretical discourse.