

THEATRUM MUNDI X

PROGRESS & DECADENCE:

an interdisciplinary approach to the idea of progress
in science and society

09. 09. – 14. 09. 2019

Inter-University Centre (IUC)
Don Frana Bulića 4
20000 DUBROVNIK
Croatia

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The course *Theatrum Mundi* covers wide variety of topics dealing with theatrical, philosophical and political issues, as well as issues in the field of cognitive studies (for example, the potential impact of cognitive science on performance theory; general cognition for theatre audience, social cognition in spectating and cultural cognition in history). We are particularly interested in exploring some of the relations between political discourse and political cognition, as well as in analyzing political discourse genres, their structure and their performative dynamics.

THEMATIC FOCUS FOR THEATRUM MUNDI X :

This year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our seminar with the topic that crowns a decade of exploring innovative interdisciplinarity. We are particularly interested in social, political, mediatic approaches to the topic, as well as in the historical dynamics of philosophical approach to the concepts of progress and decadence, and its artistic and performative thematizations. Contributions from the field of historical studies of the natural sciences are welcome. We also want to open space for a debate on the changes in the cognition of art in the times of so called “technological singularity”.

*Note: This year’s seminar is partially supported by
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. Hrvatska*

TIMETABLE

PONEDJELJAK, 9. rujna/ MONDAY, September 9th

IUC

18.00 – 18.15

Opening words

prof. dr. sc. Sibila Petlevski (University of Zagreb)

prof. dr. sc. Goran Gretić (University of Zagreb)

18:15 – 19.00

Panel Discussion

Overview of conceptual issues:

Progress & Decadence; Creativity & Innovation

19.00 – 21.00

Evening «Small Talk»

in the Old Town

UTORAK, 10. rujna / Tuesday, September 10th

IUC

10. 00– 10 :30

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Dr. sc. Goran Pavlić, assistant professor

(Department of Dramaturgy, Academy of Dramatic Art, University of Zagreb)

The Discontents of Progress: A Case for Realism in Humanities

Although prevalent in humanities for obvious reasons, constructionism as epistemic paradigm in natural field gained its prominence from Latour's seminal insights in 1990s. According to him, nature and society can't be conceived of independently in any meaningful way. Since industrial revolution, we have changed our surroundings in such a significant way that it is possible to speak only of hybrids. In his masterful critique "The Progress of This Storm", Andreas Malm

challenges such a view, and offers an alternative approach. Drawing on insights from Malm and Althusser, I'll outline some of the most pernicious epistemological consequences that Latour's hybridism produces in the humanities' accounts on nature.

10 :30 – 10.45

Rasprava/Discussion

10.45 – 11.15

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Prof. dr. Sibila Petlevski

Technological Neutrality versus Technological Determinism

Technosocial systems live their “real-world” lives between two opposing theoretical views: technological neutrality that maintains that a given technology has no systematic effects in society, and technological determinism, that maintains that technologies directly cause particular societal outcomes. George Christakos is “committed” in his attempt to explain to wider intellectual audience (including fellow colleagues from arts and humanities, and social sciences) the negative trends that had been obtained by use of applied probability, stochastic socio-environmental research, and risk assessment. He does that in plain, and often emotionally charged language. The use of the concept of “Decadence” is a part of his strategy. His position on the problem of “morality” in the scientific life is straightforward: Christakos speaks from the perspective of environmental sciences and engineering, and he does not want to interpret symptoms of crisis only by means of systemic modeling. He wants to speak about it in the public sphere of shared intellectual responsibility. On the other hand, Steven Shapin’s perspective of a historian and sociologist of science, in its in-debt description of *all* coexisting symptoms indiscriminately, simulates “neutrality”. Speaking about the twentieth-century academic culture, Shapin says that its culture is real, pervasive, and consequential. He shows that the presumption of *de-moralization* of experts coexists in late modernity both with contrary sentiments and with massive evidence about technoscientific practices that point to different conclusions altogether. Accordingly, the description of “the way we live now” cannot be *unitary, simple, or tidy*. (Shapin, 2008). Even when they elaborate upon the same corpus of evidence, and even when their way of developing argumentation from that evidence seems comparable - Shapin and Christakos assume different perspectives. We could say that Christakos is “involved and committed”, while Shapin is “involved, but neutral”. The acceptance or dismissal of the concept of decline (or Decadence, if you want) separates these two scholars whose ideas we treat in this lecture as representative of two different types of scientific „involvement“ in the matters of the world we live in.

11 :15 – 11:30

Rasprava/Discussion

11 :30 – 12.00

Pauza/ Pause

12.00 - 12:30

Keynote Video Lecture

Prof. dr. MARC A. RUNCO

Director of Creativity Research and Programming, Southern Oregon University

The Creativity of Interdisciplinary Studies

Cognitive psychologist Mark Runco, is the editor of the *Creativity Research Journal*, a professor, and a leading creativity scholar who is active in empirical research and has published cognitive, economic, genetic, historical, developmental, and educational books and articles on the topic. To help people fulfill their capacity for creativity, he has devised a battery of tests that measures creative potential and performance. He teaches a variety of graduate and undergraduate classes on creativity and innovation, and once each year he organizes an international creativity conference. Professor Runco has prepared a video lecture for our seminar on his recent investigations in the creativity of interdisciplinary studies.

12 : 30 – 13:00

Rasprava/Discussion

18.00 – 18:30

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Dr. art. Mira Muhoberac

University of Zagreb, Croatia

Progress and Decadence in Contemporary Croatian Theater

At present, contemporary Croatian theater shows at least two opposite tendencies. On the one hand, there is a strong desire for progress and inclusion of new forces of European and world theater, science and modern technologies. On the other hand, it shows decadence, from the choice of lyrics to directing and acting and all the performance components. We analyze ten plays in institutional and non-institutional Croatian theaters and festivals, and examine the causes and meanings of interplay of decadence and progress in repertoire and performance strategies and in points of performance maps.

18:30 - 19.00

Rasprava/ Discussion

19.00 – 21.00

Stara Luka Dubrovnik
Evening «Small Talk»
in the Old Town

Interpretations, Paradigms, Worldviews:
The Idea of Progress in Science and Technology Versus the Idea of Progress in
Arts and Humanities

SRIJEDA, 11. rujna /WEDNESDAY, September 11th
IUC

10:15 – 11:00

Keynote Speech

**Live video speech open to general audience
(otvoreno za javnost)**

STELARC

Excess and Indifference: Contingent and Contestable Futures

Stelarc is a celebrated Australian performance artist, whose work, unique in its aesthetic integrity, is indispensable in understanding and defining contemporary Performance Art as such. His projects and performances explore alternate anatomical architectures, interrogating issues of embodiment, agency, identity and the post-human. Between 1973-1975 he made 3 films of the inside of his body—three metres of visual probes into his stomach, left and right bronchi of his lungs and into his colon. Between 1976-1988 he completed 27 body suspensions with insertions into his skin. He has performed with a *Third Hand*, a *Stomach Sculpture* and *Exoskeleton*, a 6-legged walking robot. *Fractal Flesh*, *Ping Body* and *Parasite* are internet performances that explore remote and involuntary choreography via a muscle stimulation system. He is surgically constructing and stem-cell growing an ear on his arm that will be electronically augmented and internet enabled. With the *Re-Wired / Re-Mixed* performance, for five days, six hours a day he could only see with the eyes of someone in London, hear with the ears of someone in NY, whilst anyone, anywhere could choreograph his exoskeleton arm. In 1996 he was made an Honorary Professor of Art and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh and in 2002 was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws by Monash University, Melbourne. In 2010 he was awarded the Ars Electronica Hybrid Arts Prize. In 2015 he received the Australia Council's Emerging and Experimental Arts Award. In 2016 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Ionian University, Corfu. From 2013-2018, Stelarc was a Distinguished Research Fellow, Curtin University, Perth. His artwork is represented by Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne.

www.stelarc.org

11:00 – 11:15

Rasprava/Discussion

11:15 – 11:45

Pauza/ Pause

11:45 – 12.15

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Dr. sc. **Maroje Višić**, adjunct professor
Libertas International University

Progress in the First Generation of the Frankfurt School

The topic of the presentation is progress as understood among the first generation of Frankfurt School members. In inaugural essay “Traditional and Critical Theory” Horkheimer defines and positions critical theory. Critical theory has progressive character in the sense that it rejects positivism, refuses accepting facts on the face value and most importantly it’s united with *praxis*. Marcuse supports Horkheimer’s stances and definition of critical theory. However, in Marcuse’s later writings progress is in close connection with technological advancement. After returning to Germany Adorno abandons views on the progress as revolutionary *praxis* in favor of resistance-as-*praxis*. Giving precedence to theory over *praxis* Adorno deviates from the founding idea of critical theory. However, for Adorno critical theory needs to be revalidated in light of pseudo-*praxis*. Hence, progress in theory comes before progress in *praxis*.

12:15 – 13:00

Rasprava/Discussion

13:00 – 13:30

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Prof. dr. Goran Gretić
(Fakultet političkih znanosti, Sveučilište u Zagrebu)

Politics, Democracy, Ressentiment, Nietzsche’s Reflections on Europe

One can note that Nietzsche has strong attitude that sciences immanently have dimension of power and governmentality. In FW Nietzsche claims that he continues on Schopenhauer. One can find in Nietzsche’s later writings that power, governmentality and life should not be negated but rather freely and joyfully accepted by the well accomplished people. In sciences as in reason one can discover truth of social protests and revolutions and not only its instrumental character. Sciences were inspired by the same will to power for which it accused ruling classes.

According to Nietzsche morality and will to power are inspired by will to governmentality. Nietzsche and Schopenhauer attempted to discover the concealed will to power in the enlightenment as that was what revolutions and social unrests

revealed in its plebiscitarian and subversive discourses. Nietzsche reveals that the intention of the exploited classes is driven by a resentment – by a perverted will to power and governmentality.

In their reinterpretations of Nietzsche as a critique of power - Foucault and many other postmodern philosophers, attempt to separate Nietzsche from the ideologies that are responsible for the disasters of the 20th century.

13:30 – 13:45

Rasprava/Discussion

18.00 – 18.30

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Josipa Bubaš

PhD candidate, performance artist

(Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zadar)

Progress in time, decadence in space?

The idea of progress in the cultural sphere of the “Western world” seems to be tightly connected to the idea of linear time. Carrying the knowledge from the past to the future we, as a civilization, grow supposedly becoming smarter, more successful and wiser. Generally speaking, Westerners have difficulty in distinguish repeatable life patterns, and the appearance of similarities in the pattern often remain unnoticed or ignored, which could explain while developmental progress mostly happens and gets used in the field of technology – the field that changes our behavior, but not so much of consciousness. Eastern perception of human existence, on the contrary, dwells upon the notion of space, and points to the importance pf interconnectivity with the environment, therefore, not isolating the subject from the rest of the world and not making it a mere object to conquer. In the light of recent events, it could be claimed that, while "developing" in the dimension of time, civilization has somehow managed to destroy the dimension of space, therefore turning progress into a dangerous standstill of decadence and environmental neglect.

18:30 – 19:00

Rasprava/ Discussion

19.00 – 21.00

Evening «Small Talk»

in the Old Town

Interpretations, Paradigms, Worldviews:

The Idea of Progress in Science and Technology Versus the Idea of Progress in Arts and Humanities

ČETVRTAK, 12. rujna / THURSDAY, September 12th
IUC

10:00 – 17:00

“Débat en plein air»

Topic:

***The Idea of Progress & “Leisure to Speculate”
in Western Tradition***

(Note: In case of good weather conditions, the discussion will take place on the island of Lokrum, or on the island of Šipán, for which details will be given on time. In case of bad weather the discussion will take place at IUC)

18.00– 18:30

Matea Mlakić

M.A. student

University of Zadar

Environmental Consciousness in D. H. Lawrence's Novels

England of the 19th century was a prosperous time, and widely recognised as the age of progress and economic stability. The country was introduced to the railway lines and industrial production, which made England one of the leading industrial powers. However, Modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, and D.H. Lawrence were vastly sceptical of the advantages of progress. Although it is true that the authors like Dickens, Hardy, and Blake had already revealed the harms of industrial revolution, it is only with Modernist writers that we can talk about a veritable ecological consciousness.

For D.H. Lawrence, ecological consciousness was a major source of inspiration, which can be traced all across his literary oeuvre. He strenuously waged a war against the Machine Age and its utilitarianism, whose profit-logic utterly neglected the detriment it was leaving on humans and nature. Thus, D.H.

Lawrence's work represents a prime example of this new environmental consciousness. In this presentation, my plan is to analyse and display the awareness of the ever-going conflict between nature and society in Lawrence's novels, as the author openly speaks against the infuriating materialism of his era. For this purpose, I will introduce the notion of 'primitivism', or 'anti-modernism', as it is presented in Zoran Kravar's book *Antimodernism (Antimodernizam)*, and talk about Lawrence's vision of a successful society as a semi-permeable membrane between man and nature. In his depiction of everyday life, Lawrence approached the 'primitive' in his relentless insistence for direct engagement with nature. Therefore, his books exhibit what the anthropologist Stanley Diamond meant when

he wrote that among the 'primitives', "the sense of reality is heightened to the point where it sometimes seems to 'blaze'". It is at this point that the experience of the primitive and the mystic converge, for mysticism is no more than reality, perceived at its ultimate subjective pitch. Finally, I will discuss the concept of 'deep ecology', a term coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. My main objective will be to show how Lawrence's ecological consciousness is connected to his deep awareness of the interdependence between humankind and nature. His novels testify to the author's profound belief that men need to live in harmony with the environment in order to preserve nature and thus humanity.

18:30 – 19:00

Rasprava/ Discussion

19.00 – 21.00

Evening «Small Talk»

in the Old Town

**Interpretations, Paradigms, Worldviews:
The Idea of Progress in Science and Technology Versus the Idea of Progress in
Arts and Humanities**

PETAK, 13. rujna / FRIDAY, September 13th

10:00 – 10:30

Izlaganje/ Presentation

Marinko Leš

PhD candidate, actor

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb

Drag culture – de(con)struction of gender binary

From "Paris is burning" period, mid-to-late 1980s the ball culture of New York City, to RuPaul Drag Race phenomenon nowadays. The masquerade of gender, hyperbolic exaggeration of femininity, ridiculing female gender stereotypes, misogyny, "subverted socially constructed performances of gender" (Butler, 2011) or just entertainment. An insight of drag scene in Croatia – visibility of LGBTQ scene at least on cutting edge of alternative scene or just underground amusement in private venues?

10:30 – 10:45

Rasprava/Discussion

10.45 – 11.15

Dr. sc. Snežana Kalinić, assistant professor

(Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade)

Narrative Modalities of Utopian and Dystopian Fiction

Utopian and dystopian fiction has always been devoted to the exploration of the (im)possibilities of progress. This presentation investigates various ways in which the Possible Worlds Theory can be applied to the analysis of utopian and dystopian fictional worlds. The theoretical framework is provided by a comparative reading of utopian studies and Lubomir Doležel's seminal study *Heterocosmica:*

Fiction and Possible Worlds.

Pauza/Pause

11 :15 – 12 :00

12 :00 – 13 :00

Keynote Speech

Live video speech open to general audience

(otvoreno za javnost)

FREDDIE ROKEM

Professor emeritus

Department of Theatre at Tel Aviv University

Interrupting Kafka (שיבושים):

A Research Laboratory for Theory and Practice of Theatre

The research laboratory of artists and academics, initiated and led by Ruth Kanner and Freddie Rokem will investigate the notion of Interruptions (*shibushim*/שיבושים) in the performing arts. The laboratory will provide opportunities to explore and develop the common ground for the forms of thinking/doing developed and expressed in and through artistic creativity and in works of art as well as in academic reflection and research in aesthetics, performance theory and poetics; but also to clarify the differences between the creative and the interpretive processes, even drawing attention to how they 'interrupt' each other.

Traditionally, the *caesura* is a break or pause in a verse where one phrase ends and the subsequent phrase begins or where the verse meter allows for or necessitates such a break. With German Romanticism, in particular through the poet and translator Friedrich Hölderlin, the *caesura* became the point of departure for a more comprehensive theoretical approach to literature and theatre. Hölderlin's often enigmatic remarks about the caesura as an interruptive device have been widely interpreted by poets, scholars and philosophers (like Paul Celan, Paul de Man, Werner Hamacher, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Rainer Nägele and others),

suggesting that the break (or interruption) created by the *caesura* is not arresting the continuity of a text but rather serves as a device (or a feature) which structures its form or, as Hölderlin suggested in his “Remarks on Oedipus”, gives form to ‘representation itself’.

Beginning in his early essays about Hölderlin’s ‘literary’ *caesura* as well as on Goethe’s “Elective Affinities” (*Wahlverwandschaften*), Walter Benjamin transformed this notion into a theatrical, performative idiom based on the epic theatre of Bertolt Brecht and the writings of Franz Kafka. According to Benjamin the interruption (*Unterbrechung*) in Brecht’s epic theatre “consists in arousing astonishment (*Staunen*) rather than empathy (*Einfühlung*)”, a re/presentation (*Darstellung*) of conditions rather than by developing individual, consecutive actions based on causality. In the *caesura*, the interruption of the continuous flow of harmony and wholeness reside the potentials of resistance and change.

The initial triangulation of Kafka, Benjamin and Brecht serves as the basis and point of departure for the explorations and investigations we conduct in the seminar room and the studio, both practically and theoretically; also moving linguistically, geographically and historically to explore the significance of interruptions for the creation and understanding of the arts as well as for their task in our contemporary world.

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Freddie Rokem is Professor (Emeritus) in the Department of Theatre at Tel Aviv University, where he was the Dean of the Faculty of the Arts (2002-2006) and held the Emanuel Herzikowitz Chair for 19th and 20th Century Art (2006-2016). He is currently the Wiegand Visiting Professor of Theater & Performance Studies (TAPS) at the University of Chicago.

His more recent books are *Philosophers and Thespians: Thinking Performance* (2010; translated into Italian, Polish and German; to appear in Hebrew); *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre* (2010, co-edited with Jeanette Malkin); *Strindberg's Secret Codes* (2004) and the prize-winning book *Performing History: Theatrical Representations of the Past in Contemporary Theatre* (2000; translated into German and Polish). He was the editor of *Theatre Research International* (2006-2009) and was a founding co-editor of the Palgrave/Macmillan book series 'Performance Philosophy' (2012-2017) also being among the founders of the 'Performance Philosophy'-network. He has been a visiting professor at many universities in the United States, Germany, Finland and Sweden, and is also a practicing dramaturg.

13 : 00 – 13 :15

Rasprava/Discussion

18:00 -18:30

Dr. Monika Bregović, Postdoctoral Associate
University of Zadar, Croatia

Fish, Imagination, and Art in Virginia Woolf's Work -

Virginia Woolf's fiction and non-fiction is permeated by images of water, populated by fish, crayfish, sharks, or whales. Among Woolf's water-creatures the image of the fish, plunging into the abyss, or darting to the surface, remains closely linked to the author's conception of artistic imagination. In *Professions for Women* she compares the (female) artist to a "fisherman lying sunk in dreams", fishing in "dark places where the largest fish slumber". In *A Room of One's Own* she describes the narrator's imagination as a "little fish" that was sent into hiding by a Beadle who drove her off the Oxbridge lawn. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Woolf again links artists to water-dwellers by labeling them with the idiom 'queer fish'. Mircea Eliade describes water as the supreme symbol of creation and potentiality: it dissolves and breaks up all forms, but also offers new knowledge and insight. Creatures associated with it – fish, dolphins, shell-fish – enjoy its powers, sharing them with those they come into contact with (*Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 1958). To go back to Virginia Woolf, the image of the fisherman fishing for creatures hidden in the depths of the sea is therefore comparable to the artist's waiting for creative inspiration. In this presentation, I analyze the image of the fish in Virginia Woolf's novels and essays, and its significance for her concept of artistic imagination. What are the prerequisites for artistic imagination? How does the artist externalize their vision?

18:30 – 19:00

Discussion/ Rasprava

21.00

Theatre Marin Držić / Kazalište Marina Držića
Pod Dvorom 3, Dubrovnik
(Note: participants only)

ALKESTIDA

ALCESTIS

Predpremijera / Prepremiere

Redateljica/ Theatre Director:

Livija Pandur

Adaptacija Euripidova teksta i dramaturgija/
Adaptation of Euripides' Play & Dramaturgy:

Lada Kaštelan