

# THEATRUM MUNDI IX

## SPACE: An Interdisciplinary Approach

10. 09. – 15. 09. 2018

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 IX :

In this year's *Theatrum Mundi* we are open to discussions on the concept of space. Together with the concept of time (which was the topic of the previous *Theatrum mundi*), the concept of space is one of the basic concepts humans employ in order to understand the world around themselves, their own bodies, and their inner worlds.

Traditionally, philosophy and science were concerned with the physical space. In attempts to understand it, two main opposing theories were presented: the absolute and the relational theory. The first, proposed by Newton and defended by Clark in the famous Leibniz - Clark letters, takes space as a giant container, containing all things in the universe. According to it, motion is absolute. In contrast, the relational theorists (e.g. Leibniz, Mach), who claim that motion is relative, argue that space is to be understood as the spatial relation between things and that it would not exist independently of the things it connects. Later, Einstein's special and general theory of relativity showed that motion in our world was relative. However, as Nick Huggett in Stanford Encyclopedia suggests, that “does not automatically settle the traditional relationist/absolutist debate” and many philosophers would argue that “we should understand our spacetime as real thing”.

Beside the space that can be measured by geometers or scientists and thinking about it in abstract terms, there is also a perceived space, the space as we experience. Philosopher Merleau-Ponty put the lived body, the body of experience, particularly the moving body, at the center of his philosophy. He developed the concept of the body schema which emerged in the activity of the body, in the

crossing of the body and the world. The embodied perspective and the importance of the interplay with the space – social and natural opens further investigations in the lived space; understood as the intimate places like a child's first house, drawers, nests and corners (Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space*), social and political space (Lefebvre), or new virtual spaces developed by information technologies. Throughout its history, literature has depicted various spaces – real and imaginary, public and private, rural and urban, utopian and dystopian – and created innovative ways to connect space with time.

Performance studies (as defined by McAuley) explore how theater buildings function to frame the performance event, the organization of audience and practitioner spaces within the building, the nature of the stage and the modes of representation it facilitates, and the relationship between the real space of the theater and the fictional places that are evoked. However - as Schechner points out - what sets performance studies apart, is not necessarily what is defined as performance but the framework surrounding the interaction of behavior and the public space in which the performance is enacted. That is why we suggest exploring spaces of identity in performance: social relational spaces, temporal relational spaces, discursive relational spaces, cyberspaces, transhuman performing spaces produced by bodies on interface.

Nigel Thrift approaches the concept of space as »the fundamental stuff of human geography« identifying four different kinds of constructed spaces: empirical, block, image and place. Empirical space refers to the process whereby the mundane fabric of daily life is constructed. Block space refers to the process whereby routine pathways of interaction are set up around which boundaries are often drawn. Image space refers to the process whereby the proliferation of images has produced new apprehensions of space. Place refers to the process whereby spaces are ordered in ways that open up affective and other embodied potentials.

In this seminar – we are particularly interested in the politics of space and place, as well as in the geography of social relations, gender and »feminist geographies« (McDowell).

We would like to know more about the links between the sense of space and other kinds of cognition, for example the relationship between space and memory. We would be intrigued to know how our brain processes spatial information – how it detects the configuration of our own bodies and how it uses the spatial position of neurons within the brain to organize information about the spatial position of stimuli in the world.

We are interested in space as a fundamental aspect of human cognition and action. We would like to explore its relation to language and culture. We are open to contributions on the relationship between technology based artwork exploring virtual spaces, performance art, literature, and theatrical art.

We kindly invite philosophers, particularly performance philosophers, cognitive scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, philologists, artists, and physicists to join us in Dubrovnik, a special place to discuss space.

## TIMETABLE

**PONEDJELJAK, 10. rujna/ MONDAY, September 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**IUC**

09.00 – 09.15

*Opening words*

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

prof. dr. sc. Olga Markič (University of Ljubljana)

9.15 – 10.00

*Getting to know each other: participants introducing their research fields.*

10.00 – 11:00

*Minding the Gap: Beauties and Challenges of Interdisciplinary Research*

Open-to-public presentation of the Project “*How Practice-led Research in Artistic Performance Can Contribute to Croatian Science*”,  
*supported by the Croatian Science Foundation*

Announcing International Conference

*Innovative Methodologies: International Art & Science Conference*

Zagreb, 9-11 April 2019

Academy of Dramatic Art, University of Zagreb

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17:30 – 19.00

IUC

*Towards a Dictionary: Same Term – Different Meaning*  
Panel Discussion on Communicating Across Disciplines

**UTORAK, 11. rujna / Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**IUC**

09.00 – 09.45

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*

doc. dr. sc. Snežana Kalinić

(Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade)

*Cherry-Flavoured Dystopia*

The study interprets Chekhov's last play *The Cherry Orchard* and analyses various utopian and dystopian aspects of its garden imagery. It explores Chekhov's portrayal of the changing social order in Russia and discusses his investigations of the idea of progress.

09.45 – 10.15

*Rasprava/Discussion*

10.15 - 11.00

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*

**dr. sc. Goran Pavlić , ass.**

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

### *Where is theatre?*

The topology of western theatre mostly relies on several almost *apriori* assumptions about the nature of theatre. The first of these is the place of performance, i.e. the particularly designated area where theatrical artwork happens. Most often, these artworks function as the staging of already existing dramatic and/or literary work.

Conceived in such a manner, space is treated as secondary aspect of a concrete performance, something that possibly, but not necessarily, contributes to its aesthetic value. Although situation significantly changed with the onset of post-dramatic theatre, space still remains theatre's adjunct feature.

Marvin Carlson stresses the fact that spatial reorientation historically meant constitution of theatre studies. In his words: "Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the foundation of modern theatre studies was grounded upon a spatial reorientation—from the linear reading of drama to the three-dimensional staging of it". But even such an inclusive perspective treats theatrical space as a multi-dimensional void, as particular and neutral "there" where anything can happen. I'll propose a more "conservative" account on space, i.e. one which significantly departs from principal fitness of any spatial arrangement for a theatrical production. More precisely, I'll postulate the constitutive role of space, situated in precise historical moment in interpreting classical or contemporary dramatic texts.

Treating space as a feature of historical contingency, and not as a location of physical coordinates, shifts our interpretative attention from strict, more or less known clues to possibly productive (re)evaluation of spatial determination. Doing so substantially reshapes traditional ontology of the theatre from *something* that happens *somewhere* or *anywhere* to something that happens exactly and only in particular space.

11.00 – 11.15

*Rasprava/ Discussion*

11.15 – 12.00

*Pauza/ Pause*

12.00– 12.45

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*  
Katarzyna Włoszczyńska

(PhD candidate, Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und  
Medienphilosophie, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar)

*The Spatial Promise of the Cinematographic Gaze in View of its Post-Cinematic  
Mimicry*

In attempts to explain our fascination with moving images, which allowed cinema to continue its triumph throughout the 20th century, the relation between the pre-cinematic world, its techno-aesthetic transformation, and human perception is of continuous interest to film theory. The current approach of media anthropology allows to conceive of the interplay between the gaze of the eye and the one of the camera as a relation of reciprocal generativity. Grounded in a preconfiguration by mutual alignment within the material limits and possibilities of the respective other it can be addressed as an 'implied contract' ensuring perceptual realism. As phenomenological film theory has argued for analogue cinematography, both viewing subjects – the film and the spectator – are materially embodied and thus situated in space (Sobchack). Their anthropomedial tie is therefore in its essence determined by spacial relations.

The computer generated image, however, renders the presumption of the enworldedness of the camera obsolete, and the implied contract between the human and the technological gaze loses its material foundation. But this fact does not classify the arguments discussed here as outdated, quite the contrary, since, paradoxically, digital film does not explore the full range of its media technological possibilities but restrains them to the mimicry of the embodied structure of classical cinema (Rodowick; Rosen; Shaviro). The general impression of aesthetic stability in post-cinema relies highly on the imitation of photographic realism achieved by the simulation of a spatially situated camera eye that ‚views‘ the virtual space. Hence the simulacrum of the analogue spatial promise sheds new light on traditional questions about the ontology of the moving image as it retrospectively highlights the fundamental role of spacial semblance within the double gaze that defines the cinematographic.

12.45 -13.15

*Rasprava /Discussion*

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19.00 – 21.00

*Evening «Small Talk» in the Old Town*  
**Interpretations, Paradigms, Worldviews:  
Why Do Different Scientists Interpret Reality**

SRIJEDA, 12. rujna /WEDNESDAY, September 12<sup>th</sup>  
IUC

09.00 – 09.45

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*

prof. dr. sc. Franjo Sokolić

(Faculty of Science, Department of Physics, University of Split)

### *What are Space, Time and Space-Time*

Space and time are the basic concepts of physics. It is not possible to reduce them to more fundamental notions. Until the event of relativity theory it appeared that they are self-evident, although some physicists and philosophers were concerned with questions about space and time. These are still among the most debated and unresolved questions of the philosophy of physics. In this presentation I will try to present the physicist view of these notions.

Modern mechanics started with the consideration of Galileo concerning motion. The basic problem of the heliocentric world-view was to explain the fact that we do not “feel” the enormous speed with which Earth is turning around the Sun. Now we know that this speed is of 30 km/s. Galileo formulated the relativity principle saying that it is not possible to perceive by any means the uniform linear motion of the system in which all the objects share the same motion. For instance, we cannot make experiment on the Earth to prove its almost linear motion (revolution of the Earth) in the short time period, while by Foucault pendulum we can show its rotation.

Although Newton was aware of the Galileo’s relativity principle, he formulated his dynamics on the hypothesis of absolute space and time which exist independently of the objects and their motion. This was immediately criticized by Leibnitz, who emphasized the relational aspect of space and time. Leibnitz was saying that space is just a relation between objects, if there are no objects, there is no space. The dispute between relationists and absolutists is still going on. It comes to the question does space have some properties of the substance, or not.

This polemic raged again with the birth of electrodynamics and the notion of ether, which was needed to explain the propagation of electrodynamic waves. If ether would exist and Galileo’s transformations between inertial referential frames would be true, then we should be able to measure the absolute motion of the Earth through ether. This was endeavored by Michelson and Morley in their famous experiment in 1887. To the consternation of everybody the expected result was not obtained, indicating that ether does not exist. Electrodynamics does obey the relativity principle, but it is not invariant to Galileo’s but to Lorentz transformations.

Einstein took these conclusions seriously and came to the amazing result saying that space and time are not independent notions but form a single object, the

space-time. Observers in relative motion perceive events differently, although the space-time interval between them does not change. One of the consequences of this theory is the famous twin paradox. It says that if twins are traveling one with respect to the other by relativistic velocities (close to that of light), then they will differ considerably in age when they meet some time after parting. This idea of space-time is quite far from our intuitive notion of space and time. Nevertheless it was confirmed by numerous experiments and now makes part of the standard conceptions of physics.

The basic fact from which the theory of relativity springs out is that infinitely fast signals do not exist in nature. Because signals are necessary to obtain the synchronicity of clocks, the simultaneity of time in different places depends on the motion of the observer and is not a universal notion. There are two theories of relativity: special (STR) and general (GTR).

STR is concerned with observers in uniform linear relative motion. It is described by a flat 4-dimensional space-time proposed by Minkovsky. For physical laws to be relativistically invariant, it has to be expressed in the language of the minkovskyan four-tensors. One of its consequences is relating electrical and magnetic phenomena described by a single electro-magnetic tensorial field.

GTR is concerned with any relative motion and start from the principle of identity of inertial and gravitational mass. It means that gravitation is a consequence of the fact that masses curve space-time around themselves. Space-time becomes something with physical properties similar to the ether. Locally space-time becomes flat, and the STR is applicable.

09.45 – 10.15

*Rasprava/Discussion*

10.15 – 11.00

*Pauza/ Pause*

11.00 – 11.45

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*  
*(skype video conference):*

dr. sc. **Senka Božić-Vrbančić**, associate professor  
(University of Zadar, the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology)

*Affective dimensions of space: migration and diversity issues*

In my talk I discuss inextricability of emotions and public policies on diversity issues and analyse various ways in which feelings are negotiated in the public space. I start with anthropology of policy that stress that public policy could be seen as a mechanism that contributes to the formation of identity. As Chris Shore and Susan Wright (1997, 2011) point out, public policies affect the lives and livelihoods of citizens. They actively constitute social reality. They give shape and meaning to what we call reality, they are often designed not so much to generate public support

but to construct what they propose in order to bear on the governance of the social.

Therefore, according to them, the anthropological task is to question power relations and ‘naturalised’ assumptions which often frame public policy. Inspired by affect theory, especially by the work of Sara Ahmed (2004, 2010, 2012) and Lauren Berlant (2014, 2015, 2016), I argue that in order to understand power relations and policies as a form of social action we also need to explore ‘emotionality of policy’ and its performance in public space, the ways in which policies are designed to offer emotional attachments to people, the kind of fantasies they mobilize (utopian and dystopian), and atmospheres they create that people move through (anxiety, fear, happiness...) in relation to the abstractions like race, gender, class and nation. To talk about emotionality of policy, space and affective tendencies is, as Berlant (2015) argues, almost always to talk about intensities, and “behind that linkage is a relation to the stories which we tell about ourselves, that modality of performance that attaches feeling states to bodily performance”. In discussing some of these issues I use examples from my own ethnographic research on contemporary policies of cultural diversity in New Zealand.

11.45 – 12.15

*Rasprava/Discussion*

12.15 – 13:00

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*

**Nikolina Rafaj**

*(Postgraduate Studies, ADU, University of Zagreb)*

### *Performing a passage – dramaturgy as a mode of disappearing*

What determines a given space as a field of research? Is it just one of the countless sites waiting to be discovered? A physical, symbolical or virtual space?

The concept of a field is significant not only in ethnographic research, but also in qualitative research methods on the whole. The focal point of much debate has been the *rite of passage*, situated at the beginning of every fieldwork and frequently taken as synonymous with the negotiation process of entering the field itself – a critical moment that determines the course of the forthcoming research. Fieldwork can be defined as an improvisational, mobile, fluid, flexible and transformative process. Those performative qualities suggest a cleft between *doing* and *making* the field which remains permanently marked by the co-existence of two subjects – the subject conducting the research and the very subject of research. Such borderless process that refuses to hide its fissures provides a platform for questioning the necessity of fictional frames in an ethnographic text as means of restraining the research horizon. An irrepressible desire to dive into research material paired with recognition of not being able to fully perform the immersion produce an urgency of semi-virtual limitations of immediate *imponderabilia*. How to point a finger at something while omitting everything else, including the finger?

13.00 – 13.15  
*Rasprava/ Discussion*

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19.00 – 21.00  
*Evening «Small Talk» in the Old Town*  
**Interpretations, Paradigms, Worldviews:  
Why Do Different Scientists Interpret Reality  
Differently?**

**ČETVRTAK, 13. rujna / THURSDAY, September 13<sup>th</sup>**  
**IUC**

09.00 – 09.45  
*Izlaganje/ Presentation*

prof. dr. sc. **Olga Markič**  
(Faculty of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana)

*Space: embodied and situated cognition perspective*

Embodied and situated approaches are part of the "post-cognitivist" turn in cognitive science research. They stress that cognition is a feature of biological organism evolved through time and is fundamentally grounded in sensory-motor processes. Bodily movements and spatial cognition thus come to focus in cognitive science research. In this paper I will discuss two questions that seem difficult from the embodied perspective: (1) - how to come to other perspectives on space that are not part of the egocentric perspective; (2) - how to understand mathematical and physical investigation about the objective features of space (absolute and the relational theories of space; Zeno's paradoxes). I will argue that to find a solution for both of them, one has to acknowledge that embodied cognition enables disembodied thought and investigate how this is possible. For the first one, I will point to the research on spatial perspective taking (Tversky, Hard, 2008) that shows potential ways how to overcome one's own embodied position in space by taking an imaginary one. For the second, it is important to see a difference between on-line and off-line cognition (Wilson, 2002) and find out how off-line cognition provides resources that enable abstract and de-contextualized representations. I will close with a short discussion on some examples from the embodied cognition perspective.

09.45 – 10.15  
*Rasprava/Discussion*

10.15 . 11.00  
*Izlaganje/ Presentation:*

prof. dr. sc. Sibila Petlevski  
(Academy of Dramatic Art – Department of Dramaturgy, University of Zagreb)

*“Fearful Symmetry” – William Blake’s Tiger Stripe Theory*

Here we offer a completely new reading of the syntagma “fearful symmetry”. This is a widely quoted, differently interpreted and for different reasons, and in different contexts used and misused syntagma, borrowed from the poetic/philosophical system of William Blake. The religious interpretation of the poem containing this syntagma should not be taken for granted. Mentioning «fearful symmetry» we refer to the formal and interpretative relationship between first and the last quatren of the poem «The Tyger» composed of six stanzas, pointing to various levels of “symmetry” in the ratio between “elements” of the poem. Contrary to the most of the already established interpretations of Blake's philosophical views, we strongly argument in favor of his methodological naturalism, and we analyze Blake's functionalist insights into developmental potentials of the human brain as a sophisticated pattern-seeking instrument. Frye lucidly detects Blake’s functionalism of the “Universal Nature” (and wrongly ascribes it to Locke) but – in our view – the contamination of Blakian vision with Lokian philosophy is not always truly motivated by the poetic system itself. Blake’s romantic egotism, his impulse to *create a system not to be enslaved by another man’s*, makes him critical towards the popular simplifications of the Newtonian rationalism and Lockian deism. Blake’s spiritual naturalism is fond of the concept of the Universal Nature and its dynamism. That is why “Jerusalem” is programmatically anti-Lokian and anti-deist. On the other hand, the never-ending point and counterpoint of concepts-images in Blake’s poetry resembles the experiment of mirror gazing. The more he focuses his eyes to the reflection of them, the more chimeras of Christian deism and Swedenborgianism he discovers in his own image. Blake’s spiritual (visionary) naturalism previews a peculiar type of functionalism that does not only see the possibility of a superior *pattern-seeking organ* with capacities beyond human scale, but also dares to predict the singularity of its coming.

11.00 – 11.15  
*Rasprava/ Discussion*

11.15 – 12.00  
*Pauza/ Pause*

12.00 – 12.45

*Izlaganje/ Presentation*  
**Josipa Bubaš,**  
(PhD candidate, University of Zadar)

*Embodied Construction of Space*

The paper analyzes performative workshop methods that I have started to develop recently, relying on bodily response to space inputs - sound, touch, vision. It follows the development of the tasks leading to the full immersion of the body - mind in the different aspects of space and the active creation of "situation". As Dewey proposed - the subject is active creator and can never take position "outside". At the same time, active involvement in the situation and its creation presupposes the rearrangement of the organization of the self. I will analyze my works with several students and the newly developed method of "reporting" which I have learned from German choreographer Rosalind Crisp and then developed further to use it as a tool to incite bodily imagination and build the trust in the bodily processes.

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19.00 – 21.00  
*Evening «Small Talk»*  
*Everyday Words That Mean Something Else to Scientists*

**PETAK, 14. rujna / FRIDAY, September 14th**  
09.00 – 09.30  
*Izlaganje/ Presentation*  
**doc. dr. sc. Mario Vrbanić**  
(English Studies Department, University of Zadar)  
(skype video conference):

*Space of impossible Laughter*

According to Bergson when the human body acts and moves and thinks like a machine, we have a formula for the comic (Bergson 1911). The comic is "something mechanical encrusted upon the living". I see this as a striking feature of the 19th century that has relevance today. Since the 19th century, the human body has been affected by different technologies, state control, a bureaucratic administrative universe focused on the "final solution", up until today's prevailing ideology of happy-healthy bodies animated by the simulacra of permanent joy. All of these technologies constitute a fundamental confusion about the body in relation to suffering and joy. Alenka Zupančič (2008) argues that there is something in

comedy that conceals the other side in it, something horrible and uncanny. The question is, what is this uncanny side of laughter today, when, as Lauren Berlant (2017) argues, we live in the moment of economic crisis, austerity and unemployment which characterizes humorlessness. How can we laugh when our world is dying and inequality is casted” as the appropriate order of things”. In this talk I analyze laughter produced in spatial coordinates like that of the concentration camp and the factory, focusing on Chaplinesque performance of fragmented, broken body, and its perception in the early Soviet cinema, and the imposition of digital metrics on bodies (“Message is Murder”, Beller) in our contemporary time.

9.30 – 10.00

*Rasprava/Discussion*

10:00 – 17:00

“*Débat en plein air*»

*Topic:*

*Scholé & Ānanda – Exploring Leisure Time Concepts – Cultural and Historical Differences*  
(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)

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19.00 – 21.00

*Evening «Small Talk» in the Old Town*  
*A Quest for The Unattainable? Unification of Knowledge*

**SUBOTA, 15. rujna / SATURDAY, September 15th**

10:00 – 10:45

*Evalvacija, završne riječi / Evaluation, concluding remarks with discussion.*  
*Departure of participants.*