

Članek pojasnjuje, kako sodobna odrska interpretacija oziroma obnovitvena uprizoritev *Škofjeloškega pasijona* (lat. *Processio Locopolitana*) konstruira nekatera protislovja, kot so: a) protislovje med amaterizmom in profesionalnostjo; b) protislovje med igro in performansom; c) protislovje med gledališčem in skupnostjo; č) protislovje med zgodovino in sedanjostjo ter d) protislovje med epistemologijo in vero. Okrog leta 1715 je kapucin pater Romuald (1676–1748) napisal besedilo pasijona, ki danes velja za najstarejše ohranjeno slovensko dramsko besedilo in najstarejšo režijsko knjigo v evropskem prostoru. Pasijon so uprizarjali v postnem času do leta 1768 v obliki spokorne procesije. Po spremembi slovenskega političnega in ekonomskega sistema leta 1991 se je interes za pasijon ponovno pojavil, kljub temu pa je bil v vsem tem času uprizorjen le nekajkrat, in sicer leta 1999, 2000, 2009 in 2015. Na uprizoritev pasijona močno vplivata kolektivni amaterizem in konstruiranje značilne pasijonske gledališke skupnosti. Tudi če se bo v prihodnosti produkcija *Škofjeloškega pasijona* odvijala na višji profesionalni ravni, bo *Škofjeloški pasijon* vedno ostal amatersko gledališče, povezano z nastankom gledališke skupnosti, ki ohranja elemente srednjeveške kulture v sodobni sekularni družbi.

Ključne besede: amatersko gledališče, pasijon, obnovitvena uprizoritev, gledališča skupnost, sekularna družba, protislovja, Škofja Loka

Dr. Tomaž Krpič je sociolog telesa in kognitivni sociolog, ki ga zanimajo performativne študije in gledalčevo telo v postdramskem gledališču. V preteklosti je objavil več člankov in knjig, v katerih z različnih vidikov obravnava človeško telo. Trenutno je zaposlen na Fakulteti za družbene vede Univerze v Ljubljani.

tomaz.krpic@guest.arnes.si

»Pasijon ima zdravilno moč!«

Protislovja Škofjeloškega pasijona

Tomaž Krpič

Fakulteta za družbene vede Univerze v Ljubljani

Kajti kakovost besedila in izvedbe pasijonske igre je manj pomembna od tega, kako – navadno majhna – skupnost, ki jo žene skupna ideja, izraža verska občutja, ki jih deli z desettisoči gledalcev.

Robert L. Ernstein (30)

Uvod

Nedavno sem bil na predavanju prvega režiserja¹ sodobne uprizoritve *Škofjeloškega pasijona* (lat. *Processio Locopolitana*) Marjana Kokalja. Sredi predavanja je iz maloštevilnega občinstva, ki se med seboj dobro pozna, vstala dobro izobražena ženska, nekdanja direktorica lokalne javne knjižnice, med ljudmi znana in cenjena zaradi svoje globoke in iskrene vere, iztegnila glavo, da bi pritegnila predavateljevo pozornost, in slovesno rekla: »Pasijon ima zdravilno moč!« Občinstvo je tiho in z odobravanjem prikimalo, predavatelj pa se je na njen zanos odzval resnično zadržano. Morda sem bil edini, ki se mu je njen nastop zdel nekoliko čuden. Njena reakcija vsekakor vzbuja številna provokativna in zanimiva vprašanja. Kako je lahko pasijonska igra sploh dejavnik v procesu zdravljenja? Kdo je »pacient« in kdo »zdravnik«? Ali je bilo to dejanje podpore kazalnik obračanja v »mračni« srednji vek, ko je veljalo, da vera in misticizem nadzorujeta »koristne« učinke celo na področju telesnega in duševnega zdravlja ljudi? Lahko bi še nadaljeval.

Začetek evropskih pasijonskih iger sega skoraj tisočletje v preteklost, ko uporaba logičnega mišljenja in sodobne racionalnosti nista bila na voljo na vsakem koraku (glej Podgoršek 13–23; Marin; Drnovšek).² Danes radi domnevamo, da je bila raven človeškega znanja takrat mnogo nižja in manj kompleksna. Ljudje so bili zaradi praznoverij o družbenem in fizičnem svetu, pa tudi o nadnaravnih področjih, ujeti v

¹ Tradicionalno imenovan *magister processionis*.

² Čeprav mnogi verjamejo, da je pasijonska igra omejena na katoliško cerkev, je treba priznati, da tudi druge vere poznajo to obliko svetega rituala (glej na primer An Eye-Witness; Ale-Mohammed).

kognitivni »pasti« srednjega veka. Tako bi si lahko mislili, da je naša »provokatorka« mislila bodisi na desekularizacijo slovenske družbe bodisi na neke vrste individualno versko zdravljenje. Prva razlaga je verjetna, saj je po letu 1991 slovenska katoliška cerkev naredila korake, s katerimi je poskušala prevzeti aktivnejšo vlogo pri naslavljanju strukturnih sprememb slovenske družbe (Jogan), o resničnosti druge pa lahko zgolj špekuliramo.

Skromni cilj tega članka je predstaviti vrsto komentarjev na to, kako sodobne postavitev ali obnovitvene uprizoritve *Škofjeloškega pasijona* ustvarjajo različna protislovja, o katerih se je treba pogajati in jih (vsaj delno) rešiti s transformacijo gledališke skupnosti pasijonske igre vsakič, ko je pasijon uprizorjen, da bi dosegli raven »zdravilne moči«. ³

Škofjeloški pasijon

Škofjeloški pasijon je predloga, ki jo je napisal oče Romuald na začetku 18. stoletja (Ogrin). Ohranjena verzija ima obliko režijske knjige (Andres) in je shranjena v arhivu kapucinskega samostana v Škofji Loki. Predloga je sicer napisana v starem škofjeloškem dialektu, nemščini in latinščini, vendar je bil jezik predstave posodobljen za ponovno postavitev (glej Kaluža). Pasijon uprizarjajo med postom, le da ga danes ponovijo osemkrat vsakih šest let, na začetku pa so ga izvedli enkrat samkrat, vendar vsako leto (Florjančič 76–82). Pasijon ima obliko spokorne pasijonske procesije. Začne se na robu mesta, v tako imenovanem pasijonskem taboru, se vije čez Mestni trg in se spusti na Spodnji trg, nato pa se vrne na začetek. Na vsakem trgu sta dve postaji. Integralna verzija je bila uprizarjana zgolj v 18. stoletju in v letih sodobne oživitve (1999, 2000, 2009, 2015). V številnih drugih primerih je bil pasijon zreduciran na zgolj nekaj prizorov ali pa močno prirejen za izvedbo na gledaliških odrih ali za predvajanje na radiu (Florjančič 76–82).

Večina sodelujočih prihaja iz lokalnega okolja; torej iz Škofje Loke, Poljanske in Selške doline. Oblikovanje zasedb temelji na skupnostnih, župnijskih, družinskih in prijateljskih razmerjih ter ga je mogoče označiti kot kolektivno ali kot individualno (Gartner, »Romualdov«; Štukl). Prizore pasijona so med lokalne skupnosti razdelili v času priprav na prvo obnovitveno uprizoritev leta 1999. Vsaka skupnost ima vodjo, ki v lokalnem okolju zbere in izbere sodelujoče. Nekateri posamezniki pa so k sodelovanju povabljeni posebej, zaradi svojih profesionalnih znanj. Udeleženci imajo leto dni za pripravo in ustvarjanje svojih likov in urjenje svojih teles. Udeležencev je več kakor tisoč, četudi vsi ne sodelujejo pri procesiji. Ker za nastop nihče ne dobi

³ Pasijonska skupnost v Škofji Loki je, kakor vsaka druga gledališka skupnost (Krpič, »Building« 104–106) sestavljena iz sedmih elementov: (a) skupine sodelujočih (gledalcev, igralcev, performerjev ...); (b) gledaliških konvencij; (c) občutka pripadnosti; (d) spontane ustvarjalnosti; (e) širših ciljev; (f) prostora in relativne stalnosti ter (g) skupnostne epistemologije (glej tudi članek o elementih *Škofjeloškega pasijona* v Krpič, »On the Elements«).

denarnega nadomestila – z izjemo režiserja in producenta – imamo pasijon upravičeno za amatersko gledališče. Sodelujoči izpričujejo, da imajo z drugimi sodelujočimi pozitiven duhovni, družbeni in kulturni odnos (Krajnik; »Pasijonci o škofjeloškem pasijonu«; Slatnar; Smukavec).

Ali je religioznost odločilna pri izbiri sodelujočih? Na to vprašanje ni mogoče enostavno odgovoriti. Pasijonska igra je, seveda, močno obtežena z verskim pomenom. Posledično bi lahko sklepali, da privlači le verne prostovoljce. Vendar ni tako. Številni udeleženci niso aktivni verniki nobene veroizpovedi. Verjeti je, da verne udeležence v gledališko skupnost »lepi« njihova vera, neverni pa večinoma iščejo izgubljeni občutek pripadnosti širši skupnosti. Ni čudno, da je eden od širših ciljev, za katere si prizadevajo sodelujoči, stabilna in stalna pasijonska skupnost. Tako stabilnost je težko doseči, saj pasijona ne uprizarjajo vsako leto. Vrzal med uprizoritvami poskušajo premostiti z gradnjo edinstvene skupnostne epistemologije,⁴ kombinacije osebne epistemologije (Kant) in družbene kolektivne zaloge znanja (Schutz).

Protislovja

Kot kulturni, politični, verski in družbeni pojav, ki je ideološko izšel iz starega Rima in se razvijal ves srednji vek, bil napisan in izvajan pretežno v baroku in končno znova uprizorjen v sekularni sodobni slovenski družbi, *Škofjeloški pasijon* neizogibno zaobjema številna protislovja, kot so: a) protislovje med amaterizmom in profesionalizmom; (b) protislovje med igro in performansom; (c) protislovje med gledališčem in skupnostjo; (d) protislovje med zgodovino in sedanostjo ter (e) protislovje med epistemologijo in vero. Ne pretiravamo, če rečemo, da je srčika vseh zgornjih protislovij amaterizem kot nujni mehanizem, ki poganja fenomen pasijonskih iger.

Protislovje med amaterizmom in profesionalizmom

Škofjeloški pasijon je močno odvisen od prostovoljstva lokalnega prebivalstva. Upošteva potrebno število sodelujočih pri pasijonu je težko pričakovati, da bo uprizoritev vedno na najvišji ravni kakovosti. A sodelujočim slabše kakovosti ne moremo zameriti, kakor bi jo zamerili poklicnim igralcem, saj si prizadevajo za tolikšno kakovost, kot jim jo dopuščata talent in prosti čas (glej Bachmann). Po eni strani drži, da »[i]ma dobro igranje malo opraviti z vero, veliko pa s tehniko« (Erenstein 38), po drugi pa je treba upoštevati, da religiozni element pasijonske igre vendarle pomembno vpliva na kakovost igre.

⁴ Breale naj natančnejšo predstavitev in definicijo »skupnostne epistemologije« poišče v Krpič, »On the Elements« 90–91.

Odnos katoliške cerkve do gledališča in igralcev⁵ ima namreč dolgo zgodovino, po kateri »izid ni tako pomemben kakor samo prizadevanje« (Grdina 25). Kakovost in profesionalni odnos sta odrinjena na stran, čeprav obseg organizacije in ambicije sodelujočih v pasijonu včasih obupano »kličejo« po uvedbi višjih profesionalnih gledaliških standardov (Golob). A obstaja še en, tokrat pozitiven vidik »odtegotovanja« gledaliških standardov. Med sodelujočimi je mogoče opaziti tendenco, da bi pogosto slabo razvito performativno telo (Civetta) razumeli in sprejeli ne kot nekaj problematičnega, ampak nasprotno, kot »tihi mehanizem«, ki sodelujočim dopušča, da gledališko skupnost pasijonske igre zgradijo z manj konflikti.

Protislovje med amaterizmom in profesionalizmom se je zaostriло pri uprizoritvi pasijona leta 2015. Pred tem je režiser Borut Gartner (prim. Gartnerjeve članke v *Pasijonskih doneskih*) večkrat dal prednost ustvarjanju pasijonske skupnosti pred profesionalno produkcijo igre. Njegov osnovni cilj je bil v produkcijo pripeljati kar največ sodelujočih. Rezultat je bil brez dvoma številčno impresiven, hkrati pa je kazal določeno potrebo, da bi organizacijo pasijona predstavili na višji, bolj profesionalen nivo. Ni jasno, ali je postavitev leta 2015 zato režiral profesionalni gledališki režiser, toda ta rešitev je sprožila več konfliktov med režiserjem in številnimi sodelujočimi (glej Golob 20; Neubauer 114) glede dramaturških vidikov pasijona. Morda je zanimivo omeniti, da so, četudi je vsem vpletenim jasno, da ima pasijon amaterski značaj, vsi režiserji in člani njihovih ustvarjalnih ekip trdili, da je bilo njihovo delo visoko profesionalno, kar kaže, da je o terminu »profesionalno« mogoče diskutirati.

Protislovje med igro, performansom in obnovitveno uprizoritvijo

Ali je *Škoffeloški pasijon* igra ali performans? Predloga pasijona nas lahko na prvi pogled napelje k razlagi, da imamo pred seboj zgolj igro. Predvidevamo, da je zgodba, ki jo je o Jezusovem življenju in smrti zapisal oče Romuald, zgolj igra, ker morda verjamemo, da je izmišljena. Nihče ne more z gotovostjo trditi, ali so bili protagonisti pasijona resnične zgodovinske osebnosti in ali so se dogodki resnično zgodili, kakor so prikazani. Izobražen obiskovalec sodobnega dramskega gledališča je seznanjen s takim estetskim distanciranjem. Kaj pa iskren vernik? Ali lahko ustvari enak estetski odnos? Če ne, potem mora biti za to vzrok drugačna narava njegovega ali njenega dožemanja pasijonske igre. Prihaja iz religije, ne iz estetike. Resnični vernik ne bi smel dvomiti, da je bil Jezus Kristus v neki davni preteklosti resnično žrtvovan za dobrobit človeštva. Zato pasijon, ne glede na številne gledališke elemente, vsaj delno ne temelji na procesu ustvarjanja fiktivne naracije, ampak na sprejemanju religioznih spoznanj in razodetij (Grdina 26).

⁵ Četudi je katoliška cerkev v srednjem veku gledališče zatirala in velikokrat kazensko preganjala ter getoizirala igralce, potujoče pevce in pantomimike, je duhovščina vendar dovolila »uprizorjanje« različnih biblijskih prizorov med latinsko mašo. To je bilo mogoče, ker je bila množica večinoma nepismena, knjige pa redkost in veliko predrage, da bi bile na voljo preprostim ljudem.

Ali so torej sodelujoči v pasijonu performerji in ne igralci? V dramskem gledališču dilemo, kaj naredi igralca, (delno) rešuje estetska distanca, ki jo igralec gradi do lika, ki ga upodablja. Ni razloga, da amaterski igralec ne bi mogel doseči istega. A v postdramskem gledališču in performansu se lahko posameznik zlije z upodobitvijo in je tako performer. To pomeni, da predstavlja samega/-o sebe. Kako se to sklada s pasijonom? Ko je posameznik del močno versko »obarvanega« skupnostnega gledališča, kaže svojo iskreno vero, ki je usklajena s tisto, ki jo ima protagonist pasijonske igre. Seveda nastopajoči ne more biti identičen Jezusu Kristusu, se pa vseeno lahko poistoveti z njegovimi čustvi in občutji, ne glede na to, ali je sam veren ali ne. To nas pripelje do naslednjega zanimivega vprašanja. Če je pri dramskem gledališču premislek brez dvoma na strani gledalca, je premislek v skupnostnem verskem gledališču na strani amaterskega performerja. In če mu občinstvo v tem sledi, toliko bolje.

Če je *Škofjeloški pasijon* performans, ali je lahko tudi obnovitvena uprizoritev? Nekako je to vsaj obnovitvena uprizoritev verzije *Škofjeloškega pasijona* iz 18. stoletja. Ker v arhivih ni veliko dokumentov o izvajanju pasijona, lahko zgolj razpravljamo o mogočih razlikah. Po pravici lahko špekuliramo o bogatejši in spektakularnejši naravi sodobne uprizoritve. Toda ali je lahko pasijon obnovitvena uprizoritev življenja in smrti Jezusa Kristusa? Je lahko morda celo dokumentarno gledališče (glej Martin 9), kjer se uprizarjajoča telesa prekrivajo s predvidoma živimi telesi tistih, ki so predstavljeni na odru? No, dokler ne bo razkrita resnična narava Kristusovega življenja in smrti, to vprašanje ostaja neodgovorjeno.

Protislovje med gledališčem in skupnostjo

Uprizoritve pasijona ne smemo zreducirati zgolj na predstavitev predloge, saj bi morala biti kolikor je mogoče gledališka, torej živa, ritmična, naravna, v pričakovanju uprizoritvenih teles, zvokov in glasbe, kostumov, mask in scenografije (Andres 59). Četudi se s tem strinjam, je samo izgovarjanje besedila po mnenju nekaterih še vedno premalo razvito in drugotnega pomena na račun spektakla (Kaluža 109). Poleg tega, če svojo epistemološko radovednost usmerimo zgolj na končni estetski produkt pasijonske igre, lahko pridemo do zavajajočega zaključka, da je to, kar gledamo na postajah, zgolj izdelek še enega amaterskega gledališča. A v zakulisju *Škofjeloškega pasijona* se dogaja še marsikaj. Sodelujoči o tem govorijo kot o pasijonski skupnosti, ki jo gradijo oni in njihovi »oboževalci«, torej občinstvo in vsi, ki uživajo v pasijonskih igrah in jih podpirajo. Obseg skupnosti niha med vrhuncem v času zadnjih priprav na uprizoritev in dnom, preden se začnejo priprave za naslednjo produkcijo.

Sodelujoči v pasijonu so projekt začeli z iskrenim namenom, da bi okrepili svojo skupnost, kajti skozi skupnost se združujeta vera in performans (Grdina 28; primerjaj še

Fischer-Lichte, »Culture«; McKenna). Vendar pa so na poti do tega cilja naleteli na resno oviro; v pretežno sekularni slovenski družbi niso mogli zbrati dovolj sredstev in virov, da bi *Škofjeloški pasijon* izvedli sami. Opreti so se morali na širšo skupnost (občino in državo). Nekje v tem procesu so se vodje pasijonske skupnosti naučili, kako »uporabiti« gledališko skupnost, ki se naravno oblikuje vsakič, ko uprizarjajo pasijon, za svoje lastne cilje (o gradnji skupnosti v gledališču in predstavi glej Krpič, »Building«).

Tako je treba razlikovati med gledališko skupnostjo pasijonske igre, ki obsega vse sodelujoče pri *škofjeloškem pasijonu*,⁶ in pasijonsko skupnostjo, ki jo sestavlja majhno število sodelujočih v ozkem jedru pasijona. Glavna razlika med obema skupnostma je raven vernosti, vključenosti in amaterizma sodelujočih. Povprečni član pasijonske skupnosti je globoko veren, ima več vpliva na produkcijo pasijona ali pa je vanjo zgolj bolj vpet in je manj profesionalen v smislu sodobnih gledaliških standardov.

Protislovje med zgodovino in sodobnostjo

Škofjeloški pasijon predstavlja niz »zgodovinskih dogodkov«, na primer izgon Adama in Eve iz raja, Samsonov boj proti Filistejcem, življenje in smrt Jezusa Kristusa in druge. Resnica zgodovinskega obstoja Kristusa (in enaka predpostavka velja za druge protagoniste pasijona) morda ni tako zelo pomembna. Na tej točki dokazi zgodovinske vede ne podpirajo enoglasno ene same strani; ali tistih, ki verjamejo v njegov obstoj, ali tistih, ki ne. A zgodovinska vrzel med »takrat« in »zdaj« je prepoznavna in pomembna. Zgodba o Odrešeniku, ki so jo nekoč povedali štirje evangelisti, je prestala mnogo transformacij, na katere so vplivali družba, zgodovina, politika in prevodi, preden je končno prišla do ljudi, ki živijo v sodobni družbi. Številni še vedno verjamejo v Kristusovo življenje in smrt, kljub vplivu sodobne znanosti in političnemu oblikovanju sekularne družbe. Taka je moč vere. A temeljno dejstvo je, da sta zdaj izvor in ideologija pasijona tako daleč v zgodovini, da se naravno postavlja vprašanje o tem, kako, če sploh, se še vedno navezuje na izkušnje ljudi, ki živijo sedaj? Kajti nekateri elementi pasijona so očitno v nasprotju s sodobnimi kulturnimi in političnimi standardi.

Vendar pa se je napetost med konservatizmom in progresizmom katoliške cerkve pri pasijonih pogosto izkazala. Ko je, denimo, južnoafriška cerkev leta 1952 organizirala *Durbanski pasijon*, je šlo za dejanje upora proti na novo vzpostavljenemu apartheidu. A zdi se, da so »Marijanski kongres, pasijon in procesija [...] javno podprli kolonializem, separatizem in belsko nadvlado« (Lambert in Hammerschlad 75). Protislovje med konservatizmom in progresizmom je navzoče tudi pri kontemplativnih pisanjih gledališkega režiserja pasijona iz leta 2009, Gartnerja (»Romualdov« 12), kjer

⁶ Po definiciji gledališka skupnost vključuje tudi gledalce. A pri *Škofjeloškem pasijonu* je vpliv občinstva na oblikovanje gledališke skupnosti pasijonske igre sicer pomemben, vendar vseeno majhen.

označuje pasijon kot verski dogodek in nasprotuje zahtevam nekaterih, da je treba uprizoritev široko oglaševati, da bi postala občinska molznica. Tako prezira komercializacijo *Oberammergauskega pasijona*. O pasijonu govori kot o daru, s katerim naj bi posameznik privzdignil svojo duhovnost in se odvrnil od materializma in neoliberalizma.

Kar si poleg zgodovine delijo vsa živa bitja, je izkušnja smrti in trpljenja (glej Gartner, »Romualdov« 122), zatoorej tisti, ki pozitivno pišejo o pasijonu, pogosto opominjajo na njegov univerzalni pomen in brezčasno sporočilo. Ker smo vsi umrljivi, bi morali v svoje dobro pri pasijonu vsi sodelovati ali ga kako drugače podpreti. Vendar pa, se zdi, radi pozabijo, da ljudje različno razumejo, se odzovejo in upirajo/sprejemajo lastno trpljenje in smrt, odvisno od prostora in časa, tako da na to ne more biti enega samega odgovora. A so še druge, celo bolj kontroverzne teme, ki so vpete v *Škofjeloški pasijon*. Denimo krivda judov in nalaganje kolektivne krivde za Kristusovo križanje njim. Če je na začetku 18. stoletja, ko je bila igra napisana, krivda judov še vedno veljala za samoumevno dejstvo, danes verska in etnična netoleranca ni več sprejemljiva. Po *Nostra Aetate* je bil leta 1969 spremenjen celo *Oberammergauski pasijon* – pasijon pasijonov – ko so odstranili ali spremenili »nekatero bolj žaljive protijudovske odlomke« (Lambert in Hammerschlag 80). Pri *Škofjeloškem pasijonu* pa take odločitve ni bilo. Nasprotno, obstaja močna podpora proti kakršnim koli spremembam izvirnega besedila pasijona. Po pravici se lahko vprašamo tudi, kako je mogoče, da je bil režiser *Škofjeloškega pasijona* vedno moški? Žal avtor članka ne ve, koliko gledaliških režiserk se je prijavilo na mesto režiserja, pa niso bile izbrane. Vemo pa, da je bila reakcija enega od vplivnih članov pasijonske skupnosti na spolno mešano *Zadnjo večerjo*, uprizorjeno pred dvema desetletjema v produkciji pasijona v SNG Drama Ljubljana, ki jo je režirala Meta Hočevar, radikalno zavračanje.

Protislovje med epistemologijo in vero

Kmalu po prvih dveh sodobnih uprizoritvah *Škofjeloškega pasijona* (1999 in 2000) se je začel ločeni proces kot eden od konstitutivnih elementov pasijonske skupnosti. Četudi vsak udeleženec pasijon razume in dojema nekoliko drugače, kar je razumljivo, saj igrajo različne like in imajo različne obveznosti, na koncu s »tihimi pogajanji« vsi udeleženci skupaj oblikujejo relevantno skupinsko zalogo znanja ali tako imenovano skupno epistemologijo o *Škofjeloškem pasijonu*. Vsako leto izideta posebna monografija *Pasijonski almanah* in revija *Pasijonski doneski*. V zadnjih letih je bilo objavljenih še več publikacij, povezanih s pasijonom. Javna predavanja, okrogle mize, strokovna srečanja in podobno bi morala vzdrževati pasijonsko skupnost v dobri kondiciji.

Čeprav je cilj sodelujočih pri pasijonu zgraditi dobro zbirko empiričnega gradiva in solidno objektivno znanje in razlage o fenomenu pasijonov na splošno, je treba

jasno povedati, da sodelujoči pri *Škoffjeloškem pasijonu* sledijo določenim smernicam. Sodelujoči bi nam radi poslali močno sporočilo, kako razumejo in čutijo pasijon, in da zato verjamejo, da ga je treba izvajati natanko tako! In četudi je tak pogled popolnoma legitimen, vendarle sproža vprašanje, koliko verski epistemološki spektakel pri ustvarjalcih skupnostne epistemologije spodbuja asimetrično percepcijo.

Četudi cenim in spoštujem skupnostno epistemologijo, si vseeno drznem pokazati na še eno mogočo asimetrično strategijo tistih, ki prispevajo h gradnji zaloge znanja. Četudi v družbenih in humanističnih vedah raziskovalci in akademiki pogosto poskušajo dokazati svoje teze in teorije, moramo sprejeti, da je tako znanje veljavno le začasno. Proces kritičnega prevpraševanja teorij in razlag, ki je utemeljen na logični in racionalni argumentaciji, je veliko pomembnejši od potrjevanja znanstvenega védenja. Slepo potrjevanje zbranega védenja, in to bolj ali manj drži za skupnostno epistemologijo *Škoffjeloškega pasijona*, zagotovo nasprotuje osnovnim znanstvenim vrednotam in normam ter lahko vodi v ustvarjanje verske ideologije pasijonske igre. Posledično so prispevki k skupnostni epistemologiji pogosto precej amaterski in religiozno usmerjeni.

Zaključki

Leta 1991 so se Slovenci odločili spremeniti politični in gospodarski sistem ter so v kratkem pričakovali ugoden učinek na gospodarskem, političnem in družbenem področju. Hkrati so prišle spremembe v kulturi. *Škoffjeloški pasijon* lahko razumemo kot del navdušenega poosamosvojitvenega verskega vala, ki je poskušal preplaviti slovensko družbo. Četudi je bila (in je še) večina slovenske družbe obrnjena v prihodnost, so nekateri hrepeneli po oddaljeni preteklosti, da bi se premaknili naprej. Preplavljenost s spomini na minula družbena, politična in kulturna razmerja – v kakršnih bi, tako so iskreno prepričani, njihova družba znova vzcvetela – je lahko zelo protislovno. Radoveden pogled nazaj je nekaj, kar vsi počnemo v upanju, da se bomo izognili starim napakam ali da bomo našli navdih za nove rešitve, ki jih bomo uporabili v sedanjosti. Kurt Vonnegut je nekoč dejal, da ima prav zaradi te človeške lastnosti tako rad Lotovo ženo. Ko je njena družina bežala iz Sodome in Gomore, se je obrnila, da bi videla pogubno kazen, četudi je bog to prepovedal. Zato se je spremenila v solni steber; dragoceno, vendar zaustavljeno stvar. Tako se na koncu zdi smiselno vprašanje, ali si *Škoffjeloški pasijon* deli usodo z Lotovo ženo: dragocen je pri graditvi »zdrave« pasijonske skupnosti, a če ga v prihodnost prenašamo brez kritičnega pogleda na njegova protislovja, nas utegne pasijon ustaviti pri transformaciji v boljšo družbo.

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Prevedla Barbara Skubic

This paper explains how the modern staging or re-enactment of *Škofjeloški pasijon* (Eng. *Škofja Loka Passion Play* or, Latin, *Processio Iacopolitana*) constructs distinct controversies: (a) between amateurism and professionalism; (b) between play and performance; (c) between theatre and community; (d) between history and the present; and (e) between epistemology and faith. Around 1715, Father Romuald (1676–1748), a member of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, wrote a script for a passion play, the oldest preserved dramatic text written in the Slovenian language and the oldest preserved *Regiebuch*, a script with stage directions, in Europe. The passion play was performed during Lent until 1768 in the form of a penitential passion play procession. After Slovenia's political system changed in 1991, interest in the passion play revived, but since there have only been a few performances, in 1999, 2000, 2009 and 2015. The performance of the passion play is deeply affected by collective amateurism and the construction of a distinct passion play theatre community. Even if the future productions of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* will eventually develop to a higher professional level, the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* will always remain a communal theatre that demands a theatre community with Medieval cultural elements in a modern secular society.

Keywords: community theatre, passion play, re-enactment, theatre community, secular society, controversies, Škofja Loka

Tomaž Krpič is a sociologist of the body in performance studies, particularly in the spectator's body in post-dramatic theatre. He has published widely on the various social, political and cultural aspects of theatre and art performance. He is a member of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.

tomaz.krpic@guest.arnes.si

"THE PASSION PLAY HAS A HEALING POWER!": The Controversies of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*

Tomaž Krpič

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana

For the quality of the text and performance of passion plays are less important than the manner in which a community, usually a small one, driven by a communal idea, expresses religious feelings which tens of thousands of spectators share.

Robert L. Erenstein (30)

Introduction

Not so long ago, I was attending a lecture given by Marjan Kokalj, the first stage manager¹ of the modern re-staging of *Škofjeloški pasijon* (Eng. *Škofja Loka Passion Play* or, Latin, *Processio locopolitana*). In the middle of his presentation, one member of a small and closely acquainted audience, – a reasonably well-educated woman, a former director of the local public library, recognised and appreciated among the people for her devout and honest religiousness, – rose on the chair, popped her head out to reach the speaker's attention and spoke out with a solemn voice: "The passion play has a healing power!" The audience silently and approvingly nodded to her, while the speaker responded with reservation towards her enthusiasm. Perhaps I was the only one in the room who found her gesture slightly odd. Her reaction certainly raises many provocative and intriguing questions. How could the passion play possibly be a factor in the process of healing? Who is the "patient" and who the "physician"? Was this action of support an indicator of turning back towards the "dark" Middle Ages, when religion and mysticism were considered to be in possession of producing "beneficial" effects, even in the realm of people's physical and mental health? And even further, I might add.

The origin of the passion plays in Europe can be traced almost a thousand years back

¹ Traditionally addressed as a *magister processionis*. Since the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* is more determined in advance in comparison to the productions of professional theatres and thus less open to personal creativity, I prefer to use the expression "stage manager" over "theatre director".

to the times when the application of logical reason and modern rationality were not to be found around every corner (see Podgoršek 13–23; Marin; Drnovšek).² Nowadays, we like to assume that the level of human knowledge was much lower and less complex at that time. People were cognitively “entrapped” inside Medieval civilisation by superstitions about the social or the physical world, and the supernatural realm as well. Consequently, one could easily endorse the explanation that either our Lady “provocateur” meant the de-secularisation of Slovenian society or she was after some kind of individual religious healing. The first explanation could be plausible, as, after 1991, there were attempts made by the Slovenian Catholic Church to take a more active role in addressing the structural changes of Slovenian society (Jogan), while about the truthfulness of the second, we can only speculate.

This article’s modest aim is to deliver a series of comments on how the modern re-staging or re-enactment of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* produces various controversies, which need to be negotiated and (at least partially) resolved, through the transformation of the passion play theatre community each time the passion play is produced in order to reach the state of “healing power”.³

The Škofja Loka Passion Play

The *Škofja Loka Passion Play* is a script written by Father Romuald at the beginning of the 18th century (Ogrin). The preserved version of the script has the form of a *Regiebuch* (Andres) and is archived in the monastery of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in Škofja Loka. While the text is written in old Škofja Loka dialect, German and Latin languages, for the purpose of re-staging, the language of the performance was modernised (see Kaluža). The passion play is performed during Lent, except that the procession is now repeated eight times every six years, while initially it was performed only once, yet every year (Florjančič 76–82). The form is a penitential Passion procession. It starts on the outskirts of the town at the so-called *Pasijonski tabor* (Passion Play Camp), winds through Mestni trg (Town Square), then descends towards Spodnji trg (Lower Square), to return back to the place where it started. Each square has two stations. The integral version of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* was performed only in the 18th century and in the years of its modern revival (1999, 2000, 2009, 2015). In several other examples, it was either reduced to only a few scenes or significantly adapted to be performed on

² Contrary to many who may believe that the passion play is restricted to the Catholic Church, other religions are also familiar with this form of sacred ritual (see for instance An Eye-Witness; Ale-Mohammed).

³ The *Škofja Loka Passion Play* community, like any other theatre community (Krpič *Building* 104–9), consists of seven elements: (a) a group of participants (spectators, actors, performers ...); (b) theatre conventions; (c) a sentiment of belonging together; (d) non-deliberate construction; (e) wider goals; (f) locality and relative permanency; and (g) communal epistemology (see also the article on the elements of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* in Krpič *On the Elements*).

theatre stages or broadcasted on the Radio (Florjančič 76–82).

Most of the participants come from the local surroundings, that is, from Škofja Loka, Poljanska dolina (Poljane Valley) and Selška dolina (Selška Valley). The casting of the participants is based on communal, parochial, familiar and friend-related relationships and can be labelled either as collective or individual (Gartner *Romualdov*; Štukl). During the initial 1999 re-staging, the passion play's scenes were distributed among the local communities. Each community had a leader who recruited and selected the participants from the local environment. However, some participants are personally invited to take part in the passion play because of their professional skills. The participants have one year of preparation to build their characters and train their performing bodies. The number of participants is more than a thousand, though not all of them participate in the procession. Since no one receives any financial compensation for participating – the exceptions being the stage manager and the production manager – the passion play is rightly considered amateur theatre. The participants express being in positive spiritual, social and cultural relations with each other (Krajnik; "Pasijonci o škofjeloškem pasijonu"; Slatnar; Smukavec).

Does a participant's religiousness play a decisive part in the selection? This question does not have an easy answer. The passion play is, naturally, heavily loaded with religious meaning. Consequently, one might expect that it attracts only religious people to volunteer. However, this is not the case. Many participants do not practise any religion. In the case of the religious participants, the social "glue" that binds them in the passion play theatre community is their religious devotion.

In contrast, the non-religious participants mostly look for the lost feeling of being part of a wider community. Small wonder that one of the broader goals towards which the participants strive is a stable and permanent passion play community. Such stability is hard to gain as the passion play is not produced every year. Building a unique communal epistemology,⁴ a combination of personal epistemology (Kant) and collective stock of knowledge (Schutz), is an attempt to bridge the gap between the stagings.

The controversies

Being a cultural, political, religious and social phenomenon, which ideologically originated in Ancient Rome and developed further on through the Medieval times, was written and mostly performed in Baroque, to be finally re-staged in the secular modern Slovenian society, the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* unavoidably embraces numerous controversies, namely, that: (a) between amateurism and professionalism;

⁴ A reader should see a more dense description and definition of "communal epistemology" in Krpič *On the Elements*, 90–91.

(b) between play and performance; (c) between theatre and community; (d) between history and the present; and (e) between epistemology and faith. Nevertheless, amateurism lies in the kernel of these controversies as an essential mechanism which propels the phenomenon of the passion play.

The controversy between amateurism and professionalism

The *Škofja Loka Passion Play* heavily depends on the volunteerism of the local inhabitants. Considering the number of passion play participants needed, we can hardly expect that the performing is always of the highest quality. However, we cannot begrudge the poor quality of performance to the participants, as we would professional actors, for they are trying to be as good as their talent and spare time enables them (see Bachmann). On the one hand, it is accurate that “[g]ood acting has little to do with faith and much to do with technique” (Erenstein 38). On the other hand, one needs to consider that the religious content of the passion play nevertheless has a significant impact on its quality. Namely, there is a long history of the Catholic Church’s relationship to theatre and actors⁵ according to which “[t]he result of mimicking is not much more important than the effort itself”⁶ (Grđina 25). The quality and the professional attitude are put aside, despite that the scale of the organisation and the ambitions of the participants of the passion play sometimes desperately “call” for the application of higher professional theatre standards (Golob 2016). Yet there is a positive aspect of the “withdrawal” of theatre standards: the intentions to understand and to accept the often poorly-developed humble performing body (Civetta 2008) not as something deeply problematic but, on the contrary, as a silent mechanism, which allows the participants to build the passion play theatre community with fewer conflicts, can be noticed among the passion play participants.

The controversy between amateurism and professionalism escalated in the 2015 re-enactment of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*. In the past, the stage manager Borut Gartner (see for instance *Romualdov, Pasijonu*) had often given preference to the creation of the passion play community over the professional production of the play. His primary goal was to include as many participants as possible in the production. Indubitably, the result in numbers was impressive. Still, at the same time, it demonstrates a need to push the organisation of the passion play to a higher, more professional level. Whether this was the reason why a professional theatre director directed the next passion play (2015) is unclear. However, this solution sparked several conflicts between the stage

⁵ While theatre was oppressed by the Catholic Church, and actors, minstrels and mimics were many times prosecuted and ghettoised during the Medieval times, the clergy nevertheless allowed “re-enactments” of different scenes from the Bible during the Latin mass. This was possible because the masses were mostly illiterate and books were scarce and far too expensive to be available to common people.

⁶ All citations from Slovenian sources were translated by the author.

manager and a number of the passion play participants (see Golob 20; Neubauer 114) over the dramaturgical aspects of the passion play. Interestingly, although the amateur character of the passion play is evident to all involved, every stage manager and the members of his crew have claimed that their work was highly professional, thus indicating the highly negotiable character of the term “professional”.

The controversy between play, performance and re-enactment

Is the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* a play or a performance? The script of the passion play might, at first, direct us to the interpretation that what we have here is just a play. We assume that the story written by Father Romuald of the life and death of Jesus Christ is just a play because we might believe it is fictitious. No one can tell for sure whether the protagonists of the passion play really were historical figures or if the events really took place as depicted in the passion play. A well-educated and regular theatregoer of modern dramatic theatre is familiar with such aesthetic distancing. But how about a sincere believer? Can he or she produce the same aesthetic attitude? If not, then this must be because his or her perception of the passion play is of a different nature. It comes from religion, not aesthetics. A true believer would have little doubt that Jesus Christ was in some distant past really sacrificed for the benefit of humankind. Therefore, the passion play, despite including many theatrical elements, is partially not about the creation of fictive narration, but about acceptance and how to become accustomed to comprehension and revelation (Grdina 26).

Are the participants of the passion play thus rather performers than actors? In dramatic theatre, the dilemma of what makes an actor is (partly) resolved by building the aesthetic distance of an actor from the impersonation of a character. There is no reason why an amateur actor could not be able to achieve the same condition. However, in post-dramatic theatre and performance art, a union between the performer and the impersonation was addressed in different way. The performer was presenting him or herself. How does this go along with the passion play? When one is a part of the religiously intensively “coloured” communal theatre, one presents his sincere devotion, which is in alignment with that of the protagonists of the passion play. Of course, a participant cannot be identical with Jesus Christ, yet he (or she) nevertheless may identify with his feelings and emotions, no matter whether one is religious or not. This point brings us to another notable issue. While in dramatic theatre, contemplation is no doubt on the spectator, and only rarely on the actor, in religious communal theatre, contemplation seems to be on the amateur performer. And if the audience goes along with the performers, even better.

If the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* is a performance, can it also be a re-enactment? In some sense, it is at least a re-enactment of the 18th-century version of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*. Since archives are thin on historical documents about the performance of the passion play, we can only discuss the possible differences. We can rightly speculate on the richer and more spectacular nature of the modern staging. But, can it be a re-enactment of the life and death of Jesus Christ? Or perhaps even documentary theatre (see Martin 9), in which the performing bodies overlap with the supposed-to-be-living body of those being represented on the stage? Well, until the true nature of the life and death of Jesus Christ is unveiled, this question shall remain unanswered.

The controversy between theatre and community

The performance of the passion play should not be reduced merely to a presentation of the script, for it should be as theatrical as possible, that is, live, rhythmic, natural, anticipating the performing body, sound and music, costumes, make-up and scenography (Andres 59). Although I agree about that, according to some, the very utterance of the passion play's text is still underdeveloped and subordinate to the spectacle (Kaluža 109). Besides, if we focus our epistemological curiosity merely on the final aesthetic product of the passion play, we might come to the misleading conclusion that what we observe on the stations is simply a production of another amateur theatre. However, there is more going on in "the backstage" of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*. The participants refer to this as the passion play community, built by the participants and their "groupies", that is, the audience and everyone who enjoys and supports the passion play. The extent and shape of the community oscillates throughout the year in accordance to the proximity of the staging.

The participants of the passion play launched the project of the passion play with an honest intention to strengthen their community, for religion and performance are brought together through the community (Grdina 28; also compare Fischer-Lichte "Culture"; McKenna). However, on the way to reach this goal, they encountered a severe obstacle; in the predominantly secular Slovenian society, they were unable to collect enough means and resources to produce the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* alone. They needed to rely on the wider community (the municipality and the state). Somewhere in this process, the leaders of the passion play community learnt how to "use" the theatre community that is organically constructed each time the passion play is staged for their own purpose (on building a community in theatre and performance see Krpič "Building").

So, a distinction should be made between the theatre community of the passion play,

which encompasses all the participants of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*,⁷ and the passion play community, which consists of only a smaller number of participants, who compose a narrow passion play circle. The level of religiousness, inclusiveness and amateurism of the participants is the main difference between both communities. The average member of the passion play community is deeply religious, has more influence on the production of the passion play, or at least he or she is more engaged and is less professional in terms of modern theatre standards.

The controversy between history and the present

The *Škofja Loka Passion Play* presents a set of “historical events”, for instance, Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Paradise, Samson’s fight against the Philistines, the life and death of Jesus Christ, and more. The truth of Jesus Christ’s historical existence (the same assumption goes for the other protagonists of the passion play as well) is perhaps not that important. At the current point, the evidence of historical science does not unequivocally support either side; either those who believe in his existence or those who do not. Yet, the historical gap between “then” and “now” is recognisable and significant. The story of the Redeemer, once told by the four evangelists, went through many transformations caused by social, historical, political and translational influences before it finally reached the people who live in the modern society. Many still share beliefs about the life and death of Jesus Christ, despite the influence of modern science and political formation of secular society. Such is the power of religion. But the bottom line is that the origin of the passion play and its ideology is now so far away in history that it naturally raises a question about how, if at all, it still relates to the experiences of currently living human being. Namely, some of the elements of the passion play are evidently in contradiction with modern cultural and political standards.

However, the tension between the conservatism and progressivism of the Catholic Church has been proven many times in the case of the passion play. For instance, when the church in South Africa organised the *Durban Passion Play* in 1952, it was an act of rebellion against the newly established apartheid. However, the “Marian Congress, the Passion Play, and the procession seem publicly to have endorsed colonialism, separatism, and white domination” (Lambert and Hammerschlag 75). The contemplative writings of theatre director Borut Gartner (*Romauldov* 121), the stage manager of the 2009 passion play, in which he distinguishes the passion play as a religious event and contradicts the demands of some that the performance should be heavily advertised and become a municipal milk cow. In this matter, he despises

⁷ By definition, the theatre community also includes the audience. However, in the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* the audience’s influence on the creation of the theatre community of the passion play is important, yet nevertheless small.

the commercialisation of the Oberammergau Passion Play. He speaks about passion plays as being a gift with which one should arouse one's own spirituality and turn away from the materialism of neoliberalism.

What is shared by any living being beyond history is the experience of death and suffering (see Gartner *Romualdov* 122), hence often reminding us of those who write positively about the passion play, of its universal meaning and timeless message. Since everybody is mortal, everyone should thus benefit from taking part in or in any other way supporting the passion play. However, it seems they forget that people understand, react and resist/accept their own suffering and death differently depending on the place and time so that in this respect there cannot be only one answer given. But there are other even more controversial themes embedded in the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*. For instance, the guilt of the Jews and the infliction of collective penalty upon them for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. While at the beginning of the 18th century, when the passion play was created, the guilt of the Jews was still considered a self-evident fact, nowadays, religious and ethnic intolerance is no longer acceptable. After *Nostra Aetate*, even the Oberammergau Passion Play – the passion play of all passion plays – was modified in 1969, when “some of the more offensive anti-Jewish passages” were removed or changed (Lambert and Hammerschlag 80). No such decision was made in the case of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*.

On the contrary, there is strong support against any possible changes of the original text of the passion play. One could also rightly ask why until now every stage manager of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* has been a man. Unfortunately, the author of this paper does not know how many female theatre directors ever responded to the calls for the post of the stage manager but were not selected for the job. However, we do know that the reaction of one of the influential members of the passion play community to gender-mixed Last Supper scene performed two decades ago in the production of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* in the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, directed by Meta Hočevar, was a radical refusal.

The controversy between epistemology and faith

Soon after the first two modern stagings of the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* (in 1999 and 2000), a distinct process also started as one of the constitutive elements of the passion play community. Although every participant of the passion play slightly differently perceives and understands the passion play, which is reasonable since different characters are played or because the participants have various obligations, in the end, through “silent negotiations”, all the participants together construct a

relevant collective stock of knowledge or so-called communal epistemology about the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*. Each year a special monograph titled *Pasijonski almanah* (The Passion Play Almanac) and the journal *Pasijonski doneski* (The Passion Play Contributions) are published. Several other publications related to the passion play have also been published separately in the last few years. Public lectures, round tables, expert meetings, and similar should keep the condition of the passion play community in good shape.

Although the passion play participants aim to build an honest collection of empirical material and to build reasonable objective knowledge and explanations about the passion play phenomenon in general, we should be clear that the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* participants undoubtedly follow a certain agenda. The passion play participants would like to send us a powerful message that this is how they understand and feel about the passion play, and that those are the reasons why they believe the passion play should be executed this and this way! Although such an attitude is entirely legitimate, it nevertheless begs the question, in what proportion religious epistemological spectacles provide the creators of the communal epistemology with an asymmetrical perception.

While I appreciate and value the communal epistemology, I nevertheless dare to point to another possible asymmetric strategy of those who contribute to the building of the stock of knowledge. Although in social sciences and humanities, many times, researchers and scholars try to prove their theses and theories, we should accept that such knowledge is only temporarily valid. A process of the critical falsification of theories and explanations based on logical and rational argumentation is much more important as a verification of scientific knowledge. Being only after the verification of collected knowledge, something more or less true for the knowledge provided by the communal epistemology in the case of *Škofja Loka Passion Play*, certainly contradicts some basic scientific values and norms and may lead to the creation of religious passion play ideology. Consequently, the contributions to communal epistemology are often rather amateurish and religiously oriented.

Conclusions

In 1991, the Slovenian people decided to transform the political and economic system, expecting a prosperous effect in a short period in terms of economic, political and social results. Changes in culture also came along. The *Škofja Loka Passion Play* can be understood as a part of the post-independence enthusiastic religious wave that tried to overflow Slovenian society. While the majority of Slovenian society was (and still is) nevertheless oriented towards the present-near future timeline, some longed for

the distant times, although in order to move on. Being overwhelmed by the memories of once gone social, political and cultural relationships, – in which they honestly believe their own society will flourish again, can be a highly controversial endeavour. A curious look back is something we all do either in hope to avoid old mistakes or to seek inspiration for new solutions to apply in the present. Kurt Vonnegut once said that this human characteristic is the reason why he likes Lot's wife. While her family was fleeing from Sodom and Gomorrah, she turned back to see the scourge of punishment, although God had forbidden her to do so. Hence, she was turned into a salt pillar; a valuable thing but arrested. So, in the end, it seems plausible to ask whether the *Škofja Loka Passion Play* shares the destiny of Lot's wife: it is precious in building a "healthy" passion play community, but if taken with us into the future without a critical engagement with its controversies, the passion play may just arrest our transformation into a better society.

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