

**Boyan Manchev**

**Seminar at CARPA4, Helsinki, June 2015**

## **Program for Inhuman Theater,**

**or**

## **The Monstrous Desire of the Things**

The starting point of my lecture will be the following claim: if we could speak of a potential shift in contemporary performance production, it takes place in the horizon of new dynamic ontologies. The new tendencies at stake are formulating through artistic means questions and experimenting with problems, simultaneous to the crucial for contemporary philosophy, science and politics questions: What is agency? What is process? What is change? What is decision? Or, what is the force of desire? *What is the desire of the things?*

Hence, this transformative-materialist turn comes not as a sequel, but as critical reformulation or even as sharp contrast to the relational and/or 'social' turn of the previous decades: the dynamic demand of things is opposed to the performative connections in the age of networks. The obscure demand of things, demand of tumultuous forces and desires, insists against the hegemonic reality of *performance capitalism*. Instead of focusing on 'relationality', or instrumental relations, today we must face the complex processes, complex agencies and operations, techniques and forms of production and organisation, the understanding of which only could make the transformation of the initial conditions possible. Instead of speaking of 'simple', substantial or quasi-substantial things and relations (both commodified as products), we need to formulate anew the question of agencies and subjectivities, therefore the question of conditions of transformation, division and therefore decision.

In this lecture I will propose further articulation of constellation of concepts, central for my work in the last decade – transformative ontology, disorganization, tekhnō-aesthetics, metamorphosis. The conceptual experiment will be based on the method of *philosophical figurology*; the mythical figures of the Sphinx, of Pandora and Arachne, or more recent monsters like Frankenstein, as well as the obscure action of things in contemporary performance, will be interpreted and conceptually manipulated.

### ***What is Inhuman Theatre?***

*What would be a theater without human? A scene of the inhuman? Perhaps theatre has no other origin but this very question, which has opened space for the monster called human to become itself.*

*The question of theater is first and foremost a question of the force, which exceeds the human. This force is the obscure force of desire, a boundless, and therefore 'inhuman' force. Desire is Monster.*

*The time for post-human theatre, theatre of limitless desire and unlimited subjectivation of things, has come.*

### **Background readings:**

- Deleuze, Gilles. *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. Translated by Robert Hurley, City Lights Books, San Francisco, 1988, pp. 48, 51: "Affections, Affect"; 97-104: "Power"
- Manchev, Boyan. *L'altération du monde. Pour une esthétique radicale*, Paris: Lignes, 2009.
- Manchev, Boyan. "Transformance : The Body of Event", in *It takes place when it doesn't*, Eds. Martina Hochmuth, Krassimira Kruschkova and Georg Schöllhammer, Frankfurt am Main: Revolver Verlag, 2006. Excerpts reprinted in: *Dance. Documents of Contemporary Art*, Ed. by André Lepecki, Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2012, pp. 125-127.
- Manchev, Boyan. "Rage: the Affect of the Political". In: *On Rage / Über Wut*, ed. by Cordula Hamschmidt, Revolver Verlag, Frankfurt, 2011.
- Manchev, Boyan. « Disorganisation » and « Persistence ». In *Depletion Design*, 2013.
- Palladini, Giulia. "Towards an Idle Theatre: The Politics and Poetics of Foreplay" in *The Drama Review* 56.4 (2012): 97-105.
- Virno, Paolo. *A Grammar of the Multitude. For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Translated by Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito and Andrea Casson. New York: Semiotext(e), 2004.

**Boyan Manchev** is philosopher, Professor at the New Bulgarian University (Sofia) and guest Professor at the Sofia University and the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK Berlin). He is also former Director of Program and Vice-President of the International College of Philosophy in Paris. His actual research, which proposes the perspective of a radical materialism, is focused on the fields of ontology, philosophy of art and political philosophy.

Manchev has lectured widely at European, North-American and Japanese universities and cultural institutions. He has organised and/or collaborated to number of projects, congresses and public forums dealing with philosophy, art and politics at the CIPh, EHESS and Palais de Tokyo (Paris), UTCP (Tokyo), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Volksbühne and NBK (Berlin), ZKM (Karlsruhe), Tanzquartier, MUMOK, WUK and IWM (Vienna), Columbia University, PS1 and Apexart (New York), ICA, SGHG and SLS (Sofia), the Festival d'Avignon, among others.

Manchev has also participated as theorist, dramaturge or performer in theater, contemporary dance and visual arts projects. He co-authored with Ani Vaseva the theatre pieces *A Dying Play* and *Frankenstein*, and curated the exhibition *Out of Time* at the Sofia City Art Gallery (March – April 2011).

Manchev is the author of seven books and numerous book chapters, catalogues and other publications in various languages. In the last years appeared *Logic of the Political* (Sofia: Iztok/Zapad – Critical Studies, 2012), *Miracolo* (Milano: Lanfranchi, 2011), *Out of Time* (Sofia: SGHG, 2011), *L'altération du monde: Pour une esthétique radicale* (Paris: Lignes, 2009); *La Métamorphose et l'Instant – Désorganisation de la vie* (Paris: La Phocide, 2009); *Rue Descartes 64: La métamorphose*, ed. by B. Manchev (Paris: PUF, 2009) ; *Rue Descartes 67: Quel sujet du politique?*, ed. by G. Basterra, R. Ivekovic and B. Manchev (Paris: PUF, 2010) ; *The Body-Metamorphosis* (Sofia: Altera, 2007).