



SLAM CULTURE

DIVERSITY OF SIGN OR SIGN OF EQUALITY

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Dedicated to the recently deceased Gil Scott-Heron, the man of the spoken word

Use your cipher to decipher, Coded Language, man made laws.
 Climb waterfalls and trees, commune with nature, snakes and bees.
 Let your children name themselves and claim themselves as the new day for
 today we are determined to be the channelers of these changing frequencies
 into songs, paintings, writings, dance, drama, photography, carpentry,
 crafts, love, and love.¹

1. INTRODUCTION

If we listen to the slam² herald³ and accept the demanding task to perceive social reality, one of the examples of criticism of the mentioned reality that could help us in the analysis is the slam movement. The importance of this artistic expression based on the necessity of re-examining the historical and ideological context of birth of African American culture points to the possibility of closer interpretation of tactics and realization of one of the examples of resistance culture. With time, slam culture has become globally accepted and thus received serious wide media attention.

¹ Williams, Saul. "Coded Language", in *Amethyst Rockstar*, (New York: Columbia, 2001), page 29.

² Slam is a slang term and means "criticize strongly" (NB).

³ The term *herald* is used instead of the term *poet* with the intention to stress the importance of slam culture itself that does not refer to poetry only.

As there are numerous examples of slam poetry competitions that are held mainly on stage, be it in theater or in a wide variety of leased premises, the deliberation of corpus on a global level is essential with a view of a deeper analysis.

Slam is an artistic, poetic expression orally performed on a free, so-called micro-open stage in the form of a competition. The contestant is not expected to have poetic background; his wish to express himself will suffice. There are no constraints in terms of theme or poetic form, but competitions differ depending on whether the text and the presentation have been prepared in advance or this is done on the spot. Performers are assessed by a five-member jury selected by the audience. Competition rules imply a time limit in performance and no music in order for the slam poet to be able to show other skills related to gesture, mimicry and posture. Whether related to imitation of the outer sound or the production of a bodily sound, the said skills are either inspired by the *spoken word*⁴ culture of the 1960s or are often taken over from contemporary hip-hop culture. The audience sets a scale for judging the language, rhythm, body language and, finally, the overall performance.

The term *slam* is related to the founder of the movement, sociologist and poet Marc Smith⁵, who defined slam in 1984 as a poetic slap calling the audience to wake up and who attributed philosophical character to it based on the fact that it assumes a stance on social changes that are expressed and criticized in a poetic way. Although at first seen as a street poetry of epic character with elements of African griot culture, which can also be recognized in other African musical forms in jazz, soul, hip-hop and dub expression and which was in the

⁴ The Last Poets, "Made in Amerikkka" See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdFXaDj0dYk>
GilScott-Heron, "The Revolution will not be televised" See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BS3QOtbW4m0>

⁵ See: http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slam_%28po%C3%A9sie%29

beginning solely related to African-American performers, such poetic style is now recognized on all continents.

Slam is a harsh criticism of society through poetry. In which way does slam speech become a sign? What is individual, collective and stereotypical about slam expression? What kind of creative act is that, i.e., does the strategy of creation and performance imply anti-information which strives to become a sign and which is necessary for refuting information on race or gender and questioning the entire historical context in which such poetry and discursive metaphor of black and white poetry emerged? The strength of anti-information in the struggle against social institutions and the way in which art assists in such struggle imply the need for reconsidering global templates with the aim of analyzing language and the way the media construct meaning of the same and different in such kind of expression.

By deliberating the said corpus by means of theoretical texts and comparing the examples of poetry slam in various cultures based on a practical material consisting of audio and video recordings, it is possible to provide grounded answers to the problems of identity and stereotype, race and gender. Those are key questions the analysis is going to deal with because the mentioned analysis can help explain the strategy of slam culture in the struggle for sign. The analyses of language, i.e., speech, and discursive act are necessary for explaining the road towards meaning by way of linguistic findings.

2. ROOTS AND FRUITS

A group of musicians and poets called “The Last Poets” participated in an African-American civil rights movement in the 1960s⁶ and they are considered to be among the founders of hip-hop music. The Last Poets supported the Black Panthers movement, and their politically engaged, rhythmic lyrics call for a wake-up of mind, stressing out the social problems of African-Americans and criticize the United States government. In Claude Santiago's documentary “Made in Amerikkka”, presented for the first time at the jazz festival “Banlieu Bleu” in Paris, the Last Poets gathered again after forty years to talk about freedom, urban slang, the voice of drums from the 1960s and a long-lasting effort to encourage frightened African-Americans through music and poetry to begin a revolution. “Before the White Man Came”⁷ lyrics point to “many, many and many” years of slavery and warn state institutions that they used to have their own history before the said institutions started writing their own version. The Last Poets encourage historical reconstruction and call African-Americans for reflection using narrative, rhythmic speech. In the song “Black People, What Ya'll Gonna Do?”⁸ they are raising the question of whether they will be able to forgive the centuries of slavery. The interrogative is used in order to give a warning and wake up consciousness.

Member of the Last Poets Gil Scott-Heron, a jazz and soul musician and author who was known in the 1960s and the 1970s as a spoken word artist, had a greatest influence in establishing hip-hop and neo-soul sound, and then slam poetry. “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”⁹ was one of the lyrics to influence future slam artists. The said lyrics are of special importance as they are viewed as a harsh criticism of media, particularly television and its role

⁶ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdFXaDj0dYk>

⁷ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1O7MWLdOU7c&feature=related>

⁸ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDUn0te0Kus&feature=related>

⁹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BS3QOtbW4m0>

in the production of truth and meaning. Gil Scott-Heron emphasizes that television is not going to show the truth and that revolution must happen “live”.

The lyrics of “Whitie’s On The Moon”¹⁰ also talk about priority of information by ironically criticizing the fact that some don't have enough money to pay a doctor's bill, *but* attention is paid to “the Whitie” having landed on the Moon. A logical connector *but*, together with other connectors used for rephrasing and making arguments give emphasis to the mentioned irony; they also separate the two truths transforming one statement into information and another one into anti-information for defying the information. The mentioned lyrics are characterized by the positioning in discourse in the sense that the performer is using special vocabulary, discursive genre or language registry, acting as if being on the site of conflict. Such positioning refers not only to literary, but also to revolutionary and political discourse.

Apart from a micro-scene, poetry slam is nowadays present in almost all media. “Def Jam”,¹¹ an example of modern African-American poetry founded in the 1990s by rap musician and producer Russell Simmons, soon developed into HBO's TV show Def Jam Poetry with hip-hop musician Mos Def as a TV presenter. Def Jam is defined as a poetry slam performed in front of a relatively small auditorium with the aim to help overcome the issue of differences and its style is taken over from hip-hop music. Almost all significant names of contemporary hip-hop scene, as well as guest performers from various parts of the world, have participated in the TV show.

¹⁰ See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtBy_ppG4hY&feature=related

¹¹ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Def_Poetry

Saul Williams is one of the most influential representatives of contemporary slam scene. His performance in the Def Jam Poetry and the text of “Coded Language”¹² is one of the most important examples for contemporary slam expression analysis.

Appearing on stage as a herald holding slam folded in a scroll of paper, Saul Williams with his very appearance makes us forget both space and time; although alluding to the history of slavery, he also reminds us of the African cradle and warns that the current truths might have consequences in the future. By warning that history is repeating according to a certain “pattern”, alluding to established spoken and culturological codes, he encourages us to code reality on our own by means of sound and rhythm and not to run away from history, but to question it by declaring present as something pre-sent, i.e., something that had been earlier given to us. Saul Williams is transforming words, i.e., modifying meaningful units to create new meanings. By means of poetry he manages to walk through time in order to reach new answers and change established codes, thus enabling children of the future to decode them on their own. In that way, he calls for re-examining of identity, race and gender and encourages an individual to take over responsibility in increasing general awareness. His performance does not include only language, but speech in its broader, semiological sense as well.

Saul Williams defies code as an established system of norms, but at the same he encourages some new coding; therefore, it is necessary to think over the concept of code itself.

Umberto Eco explains that the term *code* is becoming more and more popular in the 20th century,¹³ whether we are talking about linguistic, culturological, biological, genetic code or

¹² See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzY2-GRDiPM&feature=related>

¹³ Eko, Umberto. *Kod*, Beograd: Narodna knjiga-Alfa, 2004, page 7.

code as a system of norms, and insists on ambiguity in coding, i.e., terminological pollution which simultaneously makes confusion and connection, fetishist decline and fruitful development. In both cases Umberto Eco refers to code as a forerunner of a certain cultural climate, though behind a widespread usage of the term there is some kind of general aspiration. Umberto Eco believes that such aspiration is describable and that its components can be analyzed in detail. He also points to code ambiguity bearing in mind that code assumes communication but does not guarantee it. It guarantees structural relation between different systems, i.e., between society and language,¹⁴ so cultural life is to be considered as a bundle of codes and their continuous mutual reference.

Umberto Eco describes code as a rule connecting elements of field of expression with those of field of meaning. Therefore, code is both an instrument linking expression and sign content and a correlation instrument generating the function of a sign. Code is also a rule used for producing and interpreting meaning and determining the way in which expression and content of signs are correlated.

The code's major role is in the production of meaning; the one sending a message and the one receiving such message must share the same code, i.e., a series of rules which enable meaning. Aspirations towards universal meaning probably lie hidden in the slam message of Saul Williams, who strives by universal code to interpret difference through expression and not as a term related to race, gender or some other nominal separation.

Bearing in mind that Def Jam Poetry is present in three different media, still happening on a micro-open scene that used to be broadcast in a form of series on HBO TV channel, and

¹⁴ Ibid, page 14.

almost every performance being posted on YouTube, the question of reading a message cannot be avoided. Stuart Hall emphasizes the problem of media interpretation of reality and transmission of pure message, and asks how much the transmission of messages is followed by codes and in which way audience decode them.¹⁵ The meaning is produced and distributed in a discursive form, but it has to be translated and transformed into social practices in order to have effect. There is no consumption without meaning, the meaning must be articulated in practice.

Saul Williams calls for the utilization of own code in order to decode meaning, thus opposing normative code used by institutions for production of meaning. He tries to decode coded language of dominant culture through poetry. The way in which narrative slam expression stresses the importance of historical events (also referred to by Stuart Hall) is helpful on the road towards meaning; if events are marked within narrative audio-visual form, the mere form of message becomes a necessary visible form of event on its way from source to recipient. Message form can be considered a decisive moment; it helps production to create a message, i.e., meaning. Each message enters the structure of social practice by decoding, though Stuart Hall insists upon the problem of spectators' understanding arising from their unfamiliarity with language, complex argumentation logic or reading within a certain culturological framework. It is certain that Def Jam participates in struggle for domination by promoting poetry of a marginalized group, but that is not its only purpose; thanks to such media, it is possible nowadays to relocate a poetry slam from a micro-scene to other media, indicating that the only difference in poetic forms is the form itself and thus avoiding stereotypical, racial and gender decoding of content.

¹⁵ Hall, Stuart. "Encoding – decoding", *Culture Media Language*, ed. S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe i P. Willis, Hutchinson, London, 1980, u *Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. M. G. Durham i D. Kellner, Blackwell publishing, 2001, page 166-177.

Gilles Deleuze points out that racism is not displaying particularity of others; it spreads the wave of sameness as long as something that is not allowed to be different – disappears.¹⁶ Stuart Hall stresses that racism is one of the most “naturalized” ideologies due to the fact that race and gender are viewed as something naturally endowed. Ideological apparatus, such as media, label African-Americans as a problematic population and create meanings by transforming discourse.¹⁷ Media cooperation between Def Jam and HBO aimed at promoting slam is an example of discourse transformation and by creating certain culturological framework it points to African-American problems and practices, as well as their slam resistance. Thanks to the said cooperation we are nowadays able to find out more about slam culture. The mentioned TV show is set to present resistance of a certain culture and its need to be recognized. As we are talking about artistic expression, stage performance might help an uninformed spectator to become familiar with slam culture and reconsider possible truths about race and gender, changing a content of arguments and reassessing stereotypical assumptions.¹⁸

The role and readiness of contemporary media to think about message is as important as to the role of spectators and their readiness and capability to read such a message.

¹⁶ Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Félix, “Postulats de la linguistique” (translation Postulati o lingvistici), in *Capitalisme et la schizophrénie: Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1980, page 218.

¹⁷ Hol, Stjuart, “Rasističke ideologije i novi mediji”, in *Mediji/Moć*, ed. Jovan Čekić and Jelisaveta Blagojević, FMK, 2010 (in preparation), page 2.

¹⁸ Ibid, page 10.

3. RESISTANCE

Two sequences from the movie “Slam”, directed by Mark Levin, also do not represent a random sample for analysis due to the fact that the scene is transferred to the film media. Selected sequences in a prison cell and yard¹⁹ are also not accidental because the question of (other) spaces for the realization of resistance is another question to be addressed by this analysis.

In what way has the chosen tactic of resistance been realized through poetry, behind bars in the prison yard, where the mentioned other places function as a time and spatial navel of the world,²⁰ time and space reminder and carrier? To whom, i.e., to which form of power, in what way and in which language, i.e., speech, one fights for the sign? Does that sign on its journey through the media become only a spectacle or with the spectacularity of an individual's

¹⁹ Marc Levin, film “Slam” / prison cell and yard

See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fJWDalZogE

See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSR7H580e5U>

²⁰ Fuko, Mišel. “O drugim prostorima: utopije i heterotopije”, in *Antologija, Teorija arhitekture XXveka*, ed. Miloš R. Perović, (Belgrade: Građevinska knjiga, 2009), page 430-438.

meaningful resistance it struggles against the absurdity of the society of spectacle? Will it be able to, with the support of the media, help preserve the denotative innocence or should Roland Barthes' zero degree²¹, according to Guy Debord, be reversed²² so that speech does not serve to deny style, but to be the style used for denying?

Using such style, the writer, musician and slam poet Saul Williams denies the historical and social truth; by using scene and film media he undertakes the meaning of a spectacle and gives it a new meaning by transforming the discourse, its conventionality and ideological codes used by certain media in the production of meaning²³. In this way, like a boomerang, it does not just respond to the ideological truth and definition of race defined by the media, but to other systems of value that social institutions refer to.

Inspired by the mentioned idea, the director of the film "Slam" Mark Levin tried in 1998 to document the every day life of Afro-Americans in Washington D.C. The movie is inspired by a true event, and young Ray Joshua is played by Saul Williams. Ray is a talented rap musician and poet who is put into prison for selling drugs in an attempt to make money quickly. Trying to forget about the problems in prison he takes writing classes, and to survive, he recites his poetry.

The first scene of the film, which is also material for analysis of examples of resistance, takes place in a prison cell in which Ray invites other inmates to participate in a poetry slam,

²¹ Heck, Camargo, Marina. "The ideological dimension of media messages", in *Culture, Media, Language*, eds. Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis, Routledge in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies University of Birmingham, 2005, page 114.

²² Debord, Guy, *La société du Spectacle*, transl. "Society of Spectacle", (Paris: Folio Galimard, 1967), page 197.

²³ Hol, Stjuart, "Rasističke ideologije i novi mediji", in *Mediji/Moć*, ed. Jovan Čekić and Jelisaveta Blagojević, FMK, 2010 (in preparation), page2.

and thus opposes violence in prison, while the second relates to the poetic revolution in the prison yard, where he attempts to prevent conflict among inmates²⁴.

What is revolutionary in this kind of poetry refers to speech itself. Breathing, an organized poetic rhythm and pulse, not only of the vocal apparatus, but of the whole body, are beyond the domain of the language itself. The sound of the language and the meaning of sound take on the meaning of a sign transforming into an eruption of deepest personal feelings. Since the performance is theatrical, the poet is at the same time an actor and a musician; using the body and his voice as a sound instrument, he is reminiscent of a sound box. With the breathing technique and specificity of speech, he creates an authentic expression and becomes the herald of a personal experience of a collective reality. He becomes the one that makes the language stutter²⁵.

Ray stutters his discomfort using a special breathing technique and voice as an instrument producing a special voice metaphor through resonance zones where more voices are united into one particular linguistic simulacrum, a secret language that Gilles Deleuze calls *parlando*.²⁶

²⁴ 1. Marc Levin, film “Slam”, sequence 1 / prison cell
See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fJWDalZogE
2. Marc Levin, film “Slam”, sequence 2 / prison yard
See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSR7H580e5U>

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze in his book *Critical and Clinical* explains that the language should be “stuttered” (NB “Il faut bégayer la langue en tant que telle”) where the language is not the only homogeneous, orderly system of signs but should be excited by affective, intense, personal emotion. Deleuze asks whether this stuttering language is still language itself or it actually becomes speech.

²⁶ Deleuze, Gil, Guattari Félix, “Postulats de la linguistique” (transl. Postulates on linguistics), in *Capitalisme et la schizophrénie: Mille Plateaux*, (Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1980), page 122.

In such a performance the human body loses the value of goods and regains the artistic value. In this regard, it is important to note that some theorists explain culture as a discursive construct whose meanings are mobilized depending on the particular use and that the traditional and dialogue contexts activate different layers of its meaning and capillary write down the history of knowledge, institutions, power, politics, ideology and values²⁷. Taking into account the mentioned meanings and observing culture as a sign of certain sociological processes, arises the question of importance of cultural resistance in response to these processes. Given that society consists of different interest groups fighting for dominance, in culture that relation is seen as a conflict over *meaning*. The dominant groups in this struggle use a special discursive strategy in order to preserve the meaning and thus run into resistance from opposing groups. Theorist Stuart Hall defines cultural practice as a conflict over meaning among the excluded, marginalized groups that, in an unequal battle, oppose the discourse and practices of the dominant culture.²⁸

Ray Joshua is struggling (in the prison) for the meaning of his culture. His resistance is reflected in an attempt to win over, by means of speech power, the dominant discourse of the institution where he is and which in itself contains the characteristics of other social institutions.

Ray, according to Gilles Deleuze, revolutionarily becomes²⁹, rejecting the shame and responding to what is intolerable and citing history, he actually does not use the known revolutionary methods but rather creates something new through art. When it comes to social changes, Gilles Deleuze sees hope in revolutionary *becoming*. With the way it occupies space,

²⁷ Duda, Dean, "Nadziranje značenja: što je kultura u kulturalnim studijama", in *Reč no. 64/10*, December 2001, page 237.

²⁸ *Ibid*, page 249.

²⁹ Delez, Žil, *Predgovori 1971-1990*, (Loznica: Karpos, 2010), page 243.

the prison resembles a war machine³⁰, but it seems that Ray Joshua, using social escape line, does the same.

Gilles Deleuze also refers to the controversial democratic societies that created human misery and calls to seeking safe ways to have the *becoming* maintained.³¹

He also indicates that a minority may become majority thanks to a particular model; Ray uses a slam model for becoming the majority by inspiring other inmates. In this way, he manages to create a collective slam and collective consciousness.

Ray does not create people; he invites other prisoners because he needs them so as to show resistance. Writing poetry is his *becoming the other* and writing is the way he resists, because art is opposed to slavery, death and power over life.³² Gilles Deleuze explains Bergson's fabulative function of literature³³ as an opportunity to reach the vision or *become* and stresses that it does not apply to the imagination or a projection of *I*, referring to the political significance of Bergson's interpretation of fabulation in creating people by connecting with something in art³⁴.

³⁰ Ibid, page 243.

³¹ Ibid, page 246.

³² Fuko, Mišel. "Pravo smrti i moć nad životom", in *Volja za znanjem, Istorija seksualnosti I*, (Loznica: Karpos, 2006), page 152.

³³ Delez, Žil. "Književnost i život", u *Časopis za književnost i kulturu i društvena pitanja*. See: http://www.b92.net/casopis_rec/58.4/pdf/08.pdf

³⁴ Delez, Žil, *Predgovori 1971-1990*, (Loznica: Karpos, 2010), page 247.

It is thanks to art that Ray manages to take over the space, but what represents an obstacle in the mentioned institution (other than conditions of living) is understanding the expression he suggests in order to resolve conflict.

The question that arises is how the mentioned message could be conveyed beyond prison bars and on the micro-scene? Is this the way that what is directly experienced is lost in representation?³⁵

The director's decision to relocate the local scene into film medium and therefore help in global recognition of the slam movement could be used for the production of truth³⁶ about its necessity and articulates the idea of a cultural and sociological context of its creation. The decision to document the mentioned context could be used in the production of different ideas about the culture of African Americans and call for a more serious critical theory of the social system in which the aforementioned culture, be it accidental or intentional – is often forgotten.

In his critique of the society of spectacle, Guy Debord calls for the necessity of union activists in practice and critical theorists in order to combat the aforementioned society. Debord believes that the denial of the society of spectacle is a long-term goal that should be reflected in

³⁵ Debord, Guy, *La société du Spectacle*, transl. "Society of Spectacle", (Paris: Folio Galimard, 1967), page 15.

³⁶ Hol, Stjuart, *Ibid*, page 2

the re-constitution of rigorous practice inherited from the revolutionary class and that should be communicated with the help of critical theory.³⁷

Slam movement is an example of political activism and is therefore the subject of study by theorists. The duration of resisting the power in the future could represent an equally long time obstacle as the one that is related to the duration of the historical inability to resist the said power. The African American dream is unfulfilled and African Americans need to believe in the mentioned utopia. If they wish to have a dream and get the dream come true, they need a medium, ready to document such a dream so that it can be used as material for a critical theory of society.

3.1. STAYING ALIVE OR PRISON AS HETEROTOPIA

The right over life and death is defined by Michel Foucault as the right of adjudging death or remaining alive³⁸, implying historical and social contexts of power usage.

If we stay with the historical context, which is of major importance for analyzing examples of African-American resistance, special attention should be paid to the issue of body. Human body through history used to be something the colonialists “put their paws on”³⁹, i.e., had power over. Having had utility and goods value, it used to be sold, exchanged or exploited in cotton fields. Social body has been empowered thanks to human body, thus growing aware of

³⁷ Debord, Guy, *La société du Spectacle*, transl. “Society of Spectacle”, (Paris: Folio Galimard, 1967), page 195.

³⁸ Fuko, Mišel. “Pravo smrti i moć nad životom,” in *Volja za znanjem, Istorija seksualnosti I*, (Loznica: Karpos, 2006), page 152.

³⁹ Fuko, Mišel, *Ibid.*

the necessity to keep human body alive. Foucault underlines two forms of power development: the first one, the so-called anatomo-politics of human body refers to human body as a machine and puts emphasis on its discipline, utility, ability and integration into successful monitoring systems. Another one refers to body as a base for biological processes directed towards procreation, health state and life span, and being related to a series of regulatory monitorings it is called bio-politics. These two forms served as a basis for the development of organization of power over life.⁴⁰

The question of staying alive of those whose body is considered as goods became one of the most important ethical issues in the history of humankind. Therefore, the resistance of the mentioned (not only referring to African-Americans) is utterly justifiable and needed. The fact that human body is seen as goods initiated a series of racial prejudices, while colonial history is considered a history of segregation, loss of ethical values and birth of stereotypes.

Michel Foucault believes that power is being distributed in the name of life at present as well. The term bio-power is not only related to the beginnings of capitalism, when human body had its role in the production, but also to a system of laws and behavioral norms exploited by contemporary institutions with aim to regulate, control and correct. Prison is the best possible example of an institution imposing discipline over marginalized social groups. However, it reflects other social institutions, such as social, educational and administrative ones.

Just the way Michel Foucault sees the stronghold of forces defying power and referring to life and man as a human being⁴¹, Ray Joshua makes human body be worth again in prison.

⁴⁰ Ibid, page156.

⁴¹ Ibid, page162.

Slam is a bodily expression; the body speaks, sings, dances and creates. His personal resistance develops into the resistance of all prisoners who are being converted and motivated by the poet with the aim to become again. Although he opts for a non-violent way, that doesn't diminish success of his resistance. Ray puts up resistance to all social institutions in order to stay alive and not to be let alone. By using prison cell and yard, he takes over a closed space in which they reflect providing completely new dimension; both cell and entire prison are transformed into scene, the sight of resistance show. What is spectacular about such performance is the takeover of an institution like prison and its turning into completely different space.

The issue of utopia in such kind of resistance is unfortunately based on our own perspective; in order to decide on the success of certain resistance tactic, it is necessary to interpret a network of meanings in the context in which such tactic developed, thus being far from universal. When it comes to the realization of a concrete example, the issue of utopia might be explained through the interpretation of some other space's syntagm.

According to Michel Foucault, the present time is characterized by ideological conflicts between dejected descendants of time and intrusive conquerors of space.⁴² Localization has been replaced with spreading, which refers to the contemporary perception of space that functions as a network of neighboring points and elements. Michel Foucault points to spatial discomfort in contemporary society. The problem of discomfort refers to both demography and space perception in certain cultures. Anthropologists point to the importance of space perception in different cultures as an inevitable element for understanding life conditions and personal relations. The problem of space in the United States is closely connected to its colonial

⁴² Fuko, Mišel; "O drugim prostorima: utopije i heterotopije", in *Antologija, Teorija arhitekture XX veka*, ed. Miloš R. Perović, (Beograd: Građevinska knjiga, 2009), page 430.

history. Discomfort of settlers is reflected both in culturological and spatial sense. A real space in which those settlers live is actually anti-utopia; therefore, prison might be considered utter anti-utopia for African-Americans. Utopian dream of perfect society, though unrealistic, is completely understandable.

The possibility of effective realization of such utopia is seen by Ray Joshua in the institution of prison, which he took over by moving into it other, equally real institutions, such as theatre, concert scene, street, square, stage, school bench. He utilized prison in order to put up resistance, weaken some institutions and strengthen the others he refers to while making such resistance. He transformed prison cell and yard into a social institution, courtroom, slam scene or square, i.e. into places that differ from the structures they reflect. Such places that run away from all spaces but are still able to be localized are defined by Michel Foucault as heterotopias.⁴³

The first characteristic of heterotopia is that it exists in every culture and appears in two forms: crisis heterotopia and heterotopia of deviation. The latter is inhabited by individuals whose behavior is beyond the norm or standard, as in case of prison.⁴⁴

The second principle of heterotopia is its ability to take over another heterotopia.⁴⁵ In this case, Ray Joshua takes over prison and makes it function in other way – as a scene; in that way it becomes another space in comparison to a regular place of one culture; slam is not performed on a regular scene but in prison.

⁴³ Ibid, page 433.

⁴⁴ Ibid, page 434.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

The third characteristic of heterotopia is that it has power to juxtapose in a unique and real space completely different and mutually incompatible spaces and locations⁴⁶. Slam scene is moved to a contradictory place such as prison yard. The said characteristic of heterotopias is of great importance for a film sequence in the prison yard. Michel Foucault points to the significance of a garden for ancient civilizations reminding of the Persian garden, a sacred place of rectangular shape which unites four sides of the world, and calling it a navel of the world⁴⁷. Since the ancient garden is characterized by the localization of (out of) terrestrial space in one place, its symbolic meaning might refer to time relocation. The poet uses prison yard as a time reminder of its ancient and contemporary meaning. The garden is a symbol of arrangement, and according to Ray Joshua of freedom. Since heterotopias are according to Michel Foucault⁴⁸ related to parts and pieces of time and gain its real function when people are in a kind of total disconnection with traditional time, the takeover of time and space in a prison yard is an explanation of resistance tactic. The poet defies prison as the institution of power, as well as the entire context of time and space that makes sense to his resistance.

Heterotopias are both opening and closing points, simultaneously isolated and accessible, the place not entered by own will but by force⁴⁹. According to Michel Foucault, the mentioned fifth characteristic refers to prison. In order to enter such institution, it is necessary to both break and respect the norm. This kind of power that imposes punishment and then discipline explains the sixth and the last characteristic of heterotopia, i.e. its function in the

⁴⁶ Fuko, Mišel, *Ibid*, page 436.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

relation between two different poles⁵⁰. Prison makes illusory the space in which the same life flows as on the other side of bars, walls and wires, and often compensates for institutional lapses by monitoring, punishing and disciplining. In contemporary society, this institution is moved to homes by means of technology in order for convicts to be punished and disciplined, as well as totally controlled according to Gilles Deleuze.⁵¹

The significance of reconsidering heterotopia characteristics is best reflected in the tactic of its takeover with the aim of realizing the mentioned type of resistance.

⁵⁰ Ibid, page 437.

⁵¹ Delez, Žil, *Predgovori 1971-1990*, (Loznica: Karpos, 2010), page 253.

4. SLAM AND IDENTITY

Contrary to social scene, slam scene is the place that allows for another revolution – the gender one. Nominal group of “women slam” should be avoided in the analysis for the purpose of avoiding the construction of identity based on biologically conditioned sex differences and understanding the concept of gender as a social category. There is an assumption that women performers on the slam scene are becoming something else.

“Culturologically different, bi-racial” Sonya Renee discusses what women deserve.⁵² The mentioned metaphors in the form of ironical criticism are an introduction to the story of a small town with majority Latin-American population, child with three children, absence of father, public transport and an advertisement on a bus door, which is sponsored by an American secretariat in charge of helping people to find a job. Apart from typical rhetoric of public transport, Sonya Renee points to a photograph of a mixed-blooded girl on the advertisement, questioning education, the problems of abortion and employment and criticizing public institutions. Sonya Renee is a spokesperson to those who do not need information on the reality they live in; she is an anti-information transmitted by a real social scene and supported by slam rhetoric. In her ironic style, Sonya Renee questions public institutions and the Church and points to omissions as real information contrary to the advertisement published with the aim to show an intention of institutions to compensate for such omissions. Sonya Renee actually refers to the question of personal choice and decision whether we are talking about right to abortion or

⁵² See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoLL6Zqc-Qo>

personal opinion in general. By repeating the statement “yes, women deserve much better”, she confirms that fact once again. Mantric repetition of some statement in poetry has the effect of constant reminder of the said fact.

Liza Garza⁵³ is among numerous participants in “Def Jam Poetry”. She underlines the problems of street crime and violence trying to find way to protect her children. She blames the state for using the expression “street victim” and calls in question formal discourse of institutions which makes an impression that “concrete or street can swallow up”. In this way she points to state responsibility concerning the problem of violence and calls for change in expression; institutions often use passive form in order to avoid responsibility for violence. Liza Garza use homonyms to emphasize that she has to do “everything” in order to protect her “everything” being aware that she can lose “everything”; she therefore expresses her distrust in state protection and points to the problem of an individual who has to protect himself and his brothers from violence.

Dayna Gilmore⁵⁴ is “a wife, woman, friend” who uses a pronoun “you” when addressing a person, thus explaining a concept of “friend”. “You” is used for every man in whom she hasn’t recognized a friend; Dayna Gilmore makes a list of male features stressing the conventional ones, such as: “man who spends all his time with his friends”, “man as a God”, “street Negro”, “weak-willed man”, “insensitive”, “director”. A reason for the usage of the mentioned stereotypes is called into question.

⁵³ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcjGTkADLqI&feature=related>

⁵⁴ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dga18Th2wly>

According to theorist Richard Dyer, stereotypes are not wrong from the point of opinion but of individuals who define and control them.⁵⁵ Dayna Gilmore employs deeply rooted conventional expressions about men, which gets an impression that such stereotypes are efficient because consensus that enables their functioning exists for a long time.⁵⁶ Bearing in mind that stereotypes function based on general opinion of certain group, it is not clear whether Dayna Gilmore speaks in the name of women population, dissatisfied group or based on her own negative experience. The question of her motives arises as well. Richard Dyer explains that stereotypes function by means of segregation or nominalization even in case of invisible categories.⁵⁷ Reasons for the nominalization of visible category of society are hidden in the invisibility of women reality in marginalized environments and its necessity to be presented. While searching for a friend, Dana Gilmore probably experienced numerous stereotypes of men's reality; her decision to respond to such reality by criticism is not surprising at all. Dayna Gilmore hasn't forgotten to underline the fact that friend exists and break a chain of stereotypes in the name of pursuit for love.

Slam dialogue between Jasmine and Alexis⁵⁸ is a displaced, inner dialogue between mother and her unborn child. The two girls are co-enunciators,⁵⁹ simultaneously participating in the creation of a discourse. Poetic roar on a theatre scene is actually a story about abortion and

⁵⁵ Dajer, Ričard. "Uloga stereotipa" in *Mediji/Moć*, eds. Jovan Čekić and Jelisaveta Blagojević, FMK, 2010 (in preparation), page 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid, page 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid, page 5.

⁵⁸ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViFup3BdiBo&feature=related>

⁵⁹ Mainguenu, Dominique. *Les termes clés de l'analyse du discours* (prev. Ključni termini za analizu diskursa), Paris: Seuil: Points, 1996, page 25.

pangs of conscience. The issue of abortion is often present in poetry slam as a poetic vision of reality, which is usually very cruel in marginalized environments, while the said problem is a personification of social institutions' failure. Slam allows for a relocation of the dialogue, formal appearance of two persons on the scene presenting an inner dialog of the one, i.e., her confrontation with conscience and inner struggle. Slam poetry enables personal questions in the inner dialogue to be asked publicly and the problem of abortion to become question of social responsibility.

Ursula Rucker is one of the most famous spoken word performers engaged in both poetry and music. She participated in numerous projects and has been writing lyrics for the most famous hip-hop performers.⁶⁰ Her associates describe her poetry as powerful and energetic. Saul Williams points to her honesty, while members of the Roots define her as a *savior*.

The lyrics of the song "Return to Innocence Lost"⁶¹ that she wrote for the Roots talks about sexual exploitation and a single mother engaged in drug resale. The text is seen as a serious criticism of urban reality. Ursula Rucker redefines poetry by attributing to it a new socio-political meaning. The lyrics are not only an intimate confession about slavery, sexism, politics and love, but also a story about family violence and a child who grows up in a neighborhood where the end of life is the only way to return to innocence. Ursula Rucker's poetry is both lyric experience and epic confession of a neighborhood girl.

⁶⁰ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkl4HnjtaJM>

⁶¹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUM-eYziYxQ>

The issues of gender and diversity in broader sense are dealt with by slam poets who belong to LGBT and Queer population, as well. Contests such as the National Queer Poetry Slam or the LGBTQ Poetry promote performers from different parts of the world. Famous poet Andrea Gibson deals in her poetry with gender norms, politics and problems that queer activists faces on a regular basis. Apart from participating in LGBT and Pride events, Andrea Gibson often makes speeches at anti-war events and is actively engaged in activities of organizations that fight against the war in Palestine. The mentioned poet is a member of the Vox Feminista group whose slogan is the following: “console the upset and upset the lulled”.

“I Do”⁶² is a song about love. Although she talks about marriage, ceremony, tradition, church, institutions and individuals implying heterosexual relationship, Andrea Gibson’s poetry is still an ode to asexual, unconditional love without epithet, adverb or some *other* context.

Based on the analysis of the previous examples it can be concluded that each of the female performers, in her effort to resist dominant form of power, takes speech away and breaks the chain of conventional meanings and truths, thus revolutionary coming into existence. By dislocating from the time and space by means of poetry, she becomes an asexual herald of sexually conditioned reality. The need to search for identity is expressed through art, which has a role, among other things, to create new concepts in the struggle against social system.

In the essay “Technologies of Gender” Teresa de Lauretis denies the understanding of gender as sex diversity⁶³ explaining the way in which such polarization makes women different

⁶² See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoWNnt4Fdh4&feature=player_embedded#!

⁶³ De Lauretis, Teresa. “The Technology of Gender” in *Technologies of Gender – Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*, Indiana University Press, 1987, page 1.

from men. Such understanding makes the concept of sex equal to that of gender excluding differences between women and men. Teresa de Lauretis points to dangers of such division bearing in mind that the universal understanding of women within one sexual option means the takeover of dominant male option's view and therefore encourages the utilization of radical potential of feminist thought. Teresa de Lauretis calls for consideration of gender as a series of effects created in human body, behavior and relations within society.⁶⁴

Teresa de Lauretis also believes that gender can be constructed by means of technologies, providing movie as an example, and of dominant discourse that controls and creates gender representations. She still leaves the possibility of finding solution to different constructions of gender in new media technologies, as well as on a micro-plan of some political practices. Teresa de Lauretis claims that film space-off, invisible space beyond canvas frame that makes the frame visible, is an appropriate place for critical theory.⁶⁵ Slam scene is a place of gender representation and of the things such representation leaves out.

TED is a non-profit media organization devoted to "the ideas that are worth spreading". It was first set up as a conference with mission to gather people from different fields, such as technology, entertainment and design, but it extended its field of activity over time to cover other areas as well. Apart from two annual conferences in the USA and the Great Britain, TED initiated various programs, including TED Talks website, TED Conferences and TED Woman. The annual TED conference gathers famous world philosophers and activists who are invited to present and exchange their ideas in less than 18 minutes. Lectures are being held on an Internet site. It is important to note that such lectures are being translated into several languages, in some

⁶⁴ Ibid, page 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid, page 26.

cases in more than twenty of them, and can be exchanged via Internet free of charge. The project is set up with the aim to encourage the change of views on life and world in general by spreading ideas and exchanging knowledge.

The goal of TED Woman⁶⁶ is to promote women activism and participation of women in various projects related to science and art. A slogan referring to “redesigning of future” points to the new ideas with women in the background. The mentioned medium is to make room for change that is referred to by Teresa de Lauretis.

Zuheir Hamad is a poet, author, political activist and a participant in the TED Talks project. She grew up in New York where she had come as a refugee from Palestine. She was influenced by hip-hop scene and family stories about exodus in Palestine. Zuheir Hamad doesn't write only about problems of emigrants, religion and war, but also about the problem of differences in general underlining the one related to sex. She also participated in the HBO TV show “Def Jam Poetry”.

Zuheir Hamad's performance at TED Talks⁶⁷ was translated into thirty languages, including Serbian. Addressing the audience as “a bunch of TED pacifists”, Zuheir Hamad talks about war machine and things she *doesn't want*. She opts for slam rhythm and poetic *flow*⁶⁸ to show that there is some other rhythm beside the rhythm of war drams that she describes as lifeless. Zuheir Hamad emphasizes that she is familiar with the skin “beaten” by those who follow the mentioned rhythm and promote hate speech; she insists on personal rhythm and

⁶⁶ See: <http://conferences.ted.com/TEDWomen/program/>

⁶⁷ See: <http://www.ted.com/talks/view/lang/eng/id/1068>

⁶⁸ Poetic flow characteristic for slam expression.

imitates heart beating and breathing while talking about life. She criticizes preparations for TV shooting by alluding to poetry and its power to prepare us, thus negating formality and visibility on the scene that is supposed to present something that is invisible; she invites the audience to think about a woman who is not present on the scene, thus making room for representation of something that is omitted.

An upsetting story about violence, war, loss and rhythmic repetition of the word “smoke” is an expression of her fear of the unexploded. The rhythm of speech that reminds us of breathing indicates touching care for life.

As sex diversity (mostly) refers to natural endowment, there is a possibility to draw conclusion by the analysis of the mentioned examples of female slam performers that the concept of gender is deep political and social category. Moving from certain framework onto a scene and making an attempt to present female performers primarily as social-political actors instead of women, thanks to the media that allow for such presentation, opens up new paths for gender consideration. The lack of “women slam” title is a starting point for the creation of completely new identity.

Erykah Badu also thinks over the roles of “fans, friends and artists”,⁶⁹ inviting them to get to know each other by exchanging roles so as to assume each of the mentioned roles once again. She is trying to encourage the audience to think about their new identity, presenting a micro-scene as a place where such exchange is possible. Erykah Badu actually invites the audience to reconsider their understanding of something different and prove that an exchange is possible. She proves that it is possible to be both a fan and an artist at the same time, thus

⁶⁹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24XgooAIhVo&feature=related>

demystifying stereotypes about life of music stars. Music fans usually identify themselves with famous persons interpreting their life as a myth. Erykah Badu also talks about false friendship, solitude and caution as part of life of every famous person. She makes an impression that Def Jam Poetry is a place where she is able to talk about her wish to remain an artist, act like a human being and break stereotypes about fame. She is trying to send a message regarding the burden of fame and criticism of music industry that pursues the goal of creating a product, while making an artist loses his identity and art loses its sense.

“The Little Red Book”⁷⁰ is a poetic ready-made of Kelly Tsai. Kelly Tsai used Mao Zedong’s book which she considers as a rulebook to create a poem about rules. The poem talks about culturological problems and an integration of Chinese immigrants into American society. Kelly Tsai criticizes Chinese educational system, learning by mere repetition and imperatives in general by taking over expressions in the Chinese language in an attempt to embed them new meanings. Kelly Tsai suggests a commutative language game; she changed Mao Zedong’s name with the names of other statesmen trying to prove that an imperative used by state officials always functions in the same way; she also takes over the imperative “get up” to express need for revolution.

By encouraging reassessing of motives and thoughts,⁷¹ Lauryn Hill writes about contemporary society, moral, corruption, getting smart and mythology, logos and theology and global economy referring to individual interest. Her lyrics reconsider each of the mentioned

⁷⁰ See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Jgr2c_QvqM&feature=related
 “The Little Red Book” is a collection of statements and speeches by Mao Tse-Tung, leader of the Chinese Communist Party.

⁷¹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaxOfPgvH5Q&feature=related>

motives, while the title “motives and thoughts” is her enonciative choice at the end of each statement. Repetition is made to the effect of return to the essence: whose motives and thoughts are. Lauryn Hill calls into question a Hollywood spectacle, excessive disclosure and display of images and belief in the interpretation of religion encouraging the audience to think over historic truths; she also criticizes the lack of motivation among contemporaries to invest in knowledge, as well as their inclination towards mythological interpretation of reality.

Roland Barthes claims that certain preconditions have to be fulfilled in order for speech to become a myth.⁷² Myth is a system of communication or messages. It is not an object, concept or idea but form. Myth is characterized by the ability to transform sense into form, i.e. myth “steals from speech”.⁷³ Roland Barthes also explains that the language defined as a speech stolen from myth offers weak resistance.⁷⁴ Therefore, it is important to explain the concepts of language and speech.

Contemporary linguistics,⁷⁵ regardless of theoretical school, imply difference between language and speech and insist upon the fact that language is essential part of speech but still represents its articulated manifestation. Language is a social product of language (speech?) skills and an assembly of necessary conventions adopted by certain society. Speech is being manifested through numerous forms and contents; it is present in different fields (physical, physiological and psychical), simultaneously belonging to the area of individual and social and

⁷² Bart, Rolan. *Mythologies* (transl. Mitologije), Paris: Seuil, Points Essai, 1957, page 181.

⁷³ Ibid, page 182.

⁷⁴ Ibid, page 182.

⁷⁵ De Sosir, Ferdinand. *Kurs opšte lingvistike*, Sremski Karlovci: Izdavačka knjižarnica Z. Stankovića, 1996, page 34.

therefore cannot be classified into any category of human activities. Language is a separate whole and a principle of classification. It is a speech fact, but the arranged, articulated and socially conditioned one. Language is a social part of speech beyond an individual who is not able to create or change it on his own. Contrary to the heterogeneity of speech, language is a homogenous system of signs. The essence of sign is in the connection between acoustic image or signifier and concept or signified. It is important to note that linguistics is only a part of the science of semiology, which deals with the life of signs within social life and refers to both verbal and non-verbal communication.

If we take myth as a language stolen from speech, we can use normative language of social institutions as an example of the mythical manifestation of language. George Lakoff⁷⁶ uses the institutional metaphor “tax incentive”, for example. Both terms, incentive and tax, are used in everyday speech. If we combine the two into one nominal group, they will have completely different meaning; stolen from speech, they become language norm. What is mythical about them is the lack of meaning; meaning is transformed into form, i.e. mere message that is being communicated but still stays vague. Such language fails on its way towards meaning and leaves possibility for different, often dangerous, ideological decoding which occurs due to need for myth creation, referred to by Roland Barthes as well.

Slam poetry steals speech from myth in the attempt to mark marginalized culture and help it to receive a signification.

⁷⁶ Lakof, Džordž. *Don't think of an elephant!: know your values and frame the debate*, Chelsea Green, 2004, page 3-34.

Roland Barthes further explains that meaning is never on zero level in a myth, and zero level is the only one that can resist the myth. Although subject to discussion of contemporary theorists, the issue of zero level, i.e., pure, denotative meaning can be understood as a call for innocent meaning. Speech that is able to resist myth is considered a poetic speech. Roland Barthes defines contemporary poetry as regressive semiological system,⁷⁷ so while myth strives for ultra-meaning, poetry seeks for infra-meaning or pre-semiological state of speech; it is trying to retransform sign into meaning and its ideal is not to reach meaning of word but of things.

Poetry deprives of rules, upsets language, strengthens as much as it can abstraction of the concept of sign arbitrariness and connection between signifier and signified. Poetry is the only one that travels toward mere thing.⁷⁸ The main difference between myth and poetry is the fact that myth aspires to overcome system while poetry tries to deny it.⁷⁹ Roland Barthes points out that non-mythical speech also exists, explaining it as the language of a man who creates,⁸⁰ and adds that object and myth cannot exist in cases when individual talks in order to transform reality and not to keep the image of it, when language is related to creation of things and when meta-language refers to object language, myth is impossible. From these reasons, revolutionary language cannot be mythical, as in case of slam poetry; Lauryn Hill calls for reconsidering things, reassessing facts, while the Last Poets encourage the waking up of revolutionary consciousness. Slam poets are creating, thus revolutionary *becoming*, says Gilles Deleuze.

⁷⁷ Bart, Rolan. *Mythologies* (translation Mitologije), Paris: Seuil, Points Essai, 1957, page 206.

⁷⁸ Ibid, page 207.

⁷⁹ Ibid, page 207.

⁸⁰ Ibid, page 220.

Slam poetry gives new meanings to form purifying it from myth by using anti-information. Negation often serves as the best way to call system into question. If institutional discourse is mythological, there is no other way but to take it over. George Lakoff talks about such take over when referring to the takeover of harsh father⁸¹ or state institution's speech. Thanks to the power of speech over language, poetic speech that strives for meaning of things it is possible for a slam form of poetry to become just-poetry.

5. SPEECH AND CREATIVE ACT

Criticizing the definition that the language is a homogeneous system, Gilles Deleuze explains that linguists, either Roman Jakobson or Noam Chomsky, believe that language is a regulated system because linguistics as science could not exist without the linguists⁸². He believes that language is always a heterogeneous system, a system without balance, and that just such, disordered system gives sense to literature: writing in one's own language as if it is a foreign language. The aforementioned statement indicates the possibility of deliberating the language and speech outside the linguistic framework, i.e., within the philosophy of speech.

Socrates calls for a careful analysis of loan words taken from other languages⁸³ and explains that they should be viewed from the perspective of the language from which they originate and not from the perspective of the Greek language. Socrates also stresses that by adding and subtracting letters, the meaning of certain words can change. Women in Antiquity

⁸¹ Lakof, Džordž. *Don't think of an elephant, know your values and frame the debate*, Chelsea Green, 2004, page 3.

⁸² Deleuze, Gilles. *Deux regimes de foux*, Paris: Minuit, 2003, page 186.

⁸³ Platon. *O jeziku i saznanju*, Beograd: Reč i Misao, 1999, page 33.

used letters (phonemes) [i] and [ǒ], and Socrates points out that women are the ones who mostly keep the language antiquity⁸⁴. There is a possibility that the use of certain phonemes was an attempt that apart from preserving the language, stressing the meaning, one points to the meaning of things themselves. There is evidence that the mentioned custom refers to other cultures; Heian period in Japan (10th-12th century AD) is a period of birth to a female, diary literature and the Hiragana alphabet. By creating a new script and through a new literary form, the women in the Japanese court attempted to point to the situation in the country and culture. Emphasizing syllables and voice play also had a cultural value.

Most slam performers use a narrative style, as if they want to familiarize the audience with the cultural heritage, the history and the way of speaking. Insisting on certain voices, modification in pronunciation and speech in general, is a way to get to the audience. Slam invokes linguistic and cultural heritage, the foreign language within the language itself.

Socrates also insists on a thorough analysis of barbarian words⁸⁵ in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding and urges the necessity of its use in the language.

To Hermogen's question how to point to objects if we had no voice nor language,⁸⁶ and whether we would use body posture, gesture and mimicry, Socrates replies: "What other way is there?"⁸⁷ Socrates stresses that by means of the body we point to something that language was

⁸⁴ Ibid, page 33.

⁸⁵ Ibid, page 35.

⁸⁶ Ibid, page 35.

⁸⁷ *Quoted in Platon. O jeziku i saznanju*, Beograd: Reč i Misao, 1999, page 35.

not convincing enough to explain. The aforementioned statement would open new perspectives piste for deliberating about body language as an indispensable link in the chain of meaning.

Socrates also explains that syllables can have a meaning as opposed to individual phonemes. He suggests that the syllable is knowable while the phoneme is not, i.e., that the syllable carries the meaning unlike the voice.

Playing with syllables is an important part in the slam expression and a necessary poetic flow. Syllables are stressed not only for enriching the poetic style, but also for carrying a certain meaning. By lengthening, doubling and combining vocal phonemes [ɪəʳ], [eɪ], [ɪ], [eəʳ], [ɒ], by stressing syllables and enriching the already existing diphtongs and triptongs, characteristic for slam expression, new voice forms and their meanings are produced. Socio-linguistically speaking, free and combined morphological variations characteristic for a particular speech group have profound cultural reasons.

In what way a different language is formed in one language? Gilles Deleuze explains that the writers are at the same time musicians and painters⁸⁸ because speech can differ from language only in its poetic manifestation.⁸⁹ The writer has the option to choose “to say, and therefore, do”⁹⁰ and become instantly someone who creates a new parlando through stuttering, muttering, vibrato, tremolo, intonation. The writer does this because he has something to say.⁹¹ Deleuze’s attempt to offer the status of a language to such speech is an ode to literature, but also

⁸⁸ Deleuze, Gilles. *Critique et clinique* (translation Kritika i Klinika), Paris: Minuit, 1993, page 135.

⁸⁹ Ibid, page 137.

⁹⁰ *Citirano u* Ibid, page 137.

⁹¹ Ibid, page 136.

a warning to modern linguists that linguistic and cultural legacy exceeds certain limits. Being an alien in one's own language is to use reversals, to be prepared for derivatives, free variants, to play with vocabulary and syntax, to mix multiple languages into a single one, a separate speech that seeks to reach its own beyond.⁹²

The question arises whether the understanding of language as a regulated system indicates a problem of social construction of identity, nation, race and gender. An apparently neat division into masculine and feminine gender, the function of adjectives, articulation of statements in oral practice can have serious consequences too. By naming something, one separates something from something else by enriching that name, one gets the effect of oblivion about action (verb). Language affects categorization in practice and is the most powerful weapon of the social system. If the languages are mixed into a special speech, does such speech have the right to have the status of a language for itself? The mentioned question also calls for rethinking the terms bilingualism or multilingualism and major or minor language.⁹³

Multilingualism does not relate exclusively to division. Socio-linguist William Labov uses the term *code switching* for mixing one language with another, whether that occurs within the sentence or in combination of sentences in speech practice. Morphological and lexical variants involved in switching from one language to another can create a whole new speech form. Slam expression is the product of mixing, the need that cultural and linguistic heritage be transferred into the language. Poets create language in and within another language, thus pushing the boundaries. The inclination to become a majority is equally a cultural need as well as a need for language.

⁹² Deleuze, Gilles. *Critique et clinique* (translation Kritika i Klinika), Paris: Minuit, 1993, page 137.

⁹³ Linguistic term for majority and minority languages.

Speaking about creative act, Gilles Deleuze points to the understanding of philosophy as a discipline that creates and invents concepts and explains that the concepts have to be made, created; concepts are not created just like that and not only for pleasure but there has to be a need for their creation.⁹⁴ In slam, the creator mobilizes his own need so that on behalf of his creation he would have something to say.

If the information is a controlled system of words, is slam just anti-information that opposes the society of control? Gilles Deleuze points out that an artwork can be used as a weapon against the society of control. Anti-information has an effect only if it becomes an act of resistance,⁹⁵ as is the case with slam. A work of art has nothing to do with communication or information, but there is a connection between art and an act of resistance.⁹⁶ There it begins to have some connection with information; anti-information that an artwork carries resists death. Deleuze also raises the question of connection between art and the human resistance referring to the non-existing people and explains that a work of art calls the not yet existing people. The slam performer calls the non-existing people by using anti-information to point out to the already existing people and question the information about it.

Gilles Deleuze also raises the question what the voice brings to the text and explains that the text can happen as dialogue, as is the case with the performance in which two girls on stage talk about abortion. Given that philosophy serves to invent concepts, the aforementioned concepts have the speed and slowness, movements and dynamics that expands and contracts in

⁹⁴ Delez, Žil. "What is a Creative Act", in *Deux régimes de fous*, page 291-302; Paris: Minuit, 2003, page 292.

⁹⁵ Ibid, page 300.

⁹⁶ Ibid, page 300.

the text: it no longer concerns the characters, but the text becomes a character in itself, a rhythmic figure.⁹⁷ Slam in the form of dialogue is an example of how voice affects speech. The voice of performers is moving in the rhythm, controls the text, dramatizes the text and the concept. What their voice reveals is that the concepts are not abstract and the text becomes a character struggling with its own conscience.

The question arises on the need that slam is recognized globally. The reasons for the expansion of slam culture are also historical, socio-political and class-related.

Growing up in an English suburb and the issue of middle class are the topics that Anna Freeman⁹⁸ writes about. The poetic form related to voice, posture, gesture and speech in general, regardless of language variation, is similar to the previously analyzed examples. Anna Freeman talks about the lack of experience, about a girl who grew up in conditions typical for the middle class, and the insufficient knowledge of the ways of life in a marginalized suburb that she deems necessary for the slam story. Anna Freeman still finds a way to talk about the rules of middle class life and to challenge the social system in Great Britain. In that way she becomes, by taking on the speech style used by slam performers on the American continent. Withdrawing from the framework in which she grew up, Anna Freeman becomes a slam poet and in that way gives poetry a new dimension: a thematic width that refers to the problem of society in general.

Television channel BBC Two broadcast a slam poetry contest titled “Why Poetry Matters.” One of the participants in the contest is young Kate Tempest. Slam on “Cannibal

⁹⁷ Ibid, page 300.

⁹⁸ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Mj7afrx64M&feature=related>

Kids”⁹⁹ is a story about growing up in the suburbs and in the “jungle”, but also about the conditions of growing up in which the children, in quest for a family, gather into gangs. The metaphor that refers to cannibalism calls on reflection on reality in which the younger part of the population lives, reduced to the instinct for survival.

Kate Tempest is in love with poetry; aware that she was born for the spoken word, she speaks of “becoming”¹⁰⁰ an artist and a poet. Aware of the past, she speaks about how difficult it is to create and she speaks about the internal struggle with the fact that she has a “wrong face.” Kate Tempest is trying to find a place in hip-hop surroundings. The durative verb form is used in order to emphasize the continuity, continuous process in becoming an artist, to justify the need to write slam and to demonstrate the ability that slam does not refer to race, gender, or some other background.

The poetry of Kate Tempest is one of the examples that slam no longer has the attribute but it refers to the pursuit for the equality in meaning, regardless of differences in the poetic form.

In his poetic texts Souleymane Diamanka combines two cultural heritages, the French and the Senegalese, into a single one.¹⁰¹ The son of Boubacar Diamanka, famous Senegalese griot poet, Souleymane Diamanka grew up in Bordeaux, but at home he always spoke in *Pular*¹⁰² while the French language meant communication with the outside world and education.

⁹⁹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8ZzzN3EZfQ&feature=related>

¹⁰⁰ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEL9RpobWkE&feature=related>

¹⁰¹ See: <http://www.slateafrique.com/21403/poesie-souleymane-diamanka-slameur-peul-et-bordelais>

¹⁰² *Peul*, *pular* is one of national languages of Senegal and Mali.

Souleymane Diamanka says that mixing the two languages affected his later creation and understanding of culture as the richness of mixing several cultures.

Given that education in France is subject of a number of controversies, the understanding of culture as the richness of mixing is not always in accordance with the practice and language of educational institutions. ZEP zones (zones of priority education, or zones for the educationally and socially disadvantaged) are often separated from the city with a highway. Périphérique¹⁰³ is not only geographical but also linguistic, cultural border. The French Ministry of Education supports further education in ZEP zones; however, the enrollment of graduates from ZEP zones to higher studies is called “positive discrimination”¹⁰⁴ that aims to assist in the integration of graduates. Although conceived as a positive educational program, the mentioned oxymoron could conceal some other ideology: removing responsibility for historical failures. The poetry of Souleymane Diamanka is anti-information that tends to refute the institutional myths and prove that belonging to different cultures must be deliberated and be called appropriately.

Souleymane Diamanka learned his storytelling skill from his father, and the poetry that he learned in school helped him in writing slam texts later. Playing with the language that he calls linguistic gymnastics is characteristic of his poetry; holorimic figures of speech create new meanings: “*la peau hésitante/ la poésie tente.*”¹⁰⁵ Together with John Banzaï, a friend who is originally from Poland, he wrote a joint text entitled “I write French in a foreign language” in which each poet uses sounds and vocabulary of their respective language in an attempt to create

¹⁰³ The highway separates the city from the suburbia. (translator’s note)

¹⁰⁴ See: http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discrimination_positive

¹⁰⁵ “Poetry causes, tempts the hesitating skin.” (translator’s note)

a new parlendo. His father's narration, which he carefully recorded, as well as African proverbs, had a great influence on the poetry of Souleymane Diamanka.

“Paper Butterfly”¹⁰⁶ is the poetry about poetry and the power of the written word. Souleymane Diamanka sets the question of freedom of writing, compares the word with a butterfly trying to free itself from the chrysalis and in that way wants to explain that the song that others like is not only his exclusively, but it becomes a paper butterfly; freed, exchanged information.

In the analysis of the previous example, we mentioned John Banzaï, a slam poet who works with a number of musicians and artists in general. The project entitled “Uniting lines and words”¹⁰⁷ is a result of his collaboration with Xavier Devaux, artist and illustrator, and an attempt to rise above the language itself and create a *relay*¹⁰⁸ that will become a new artistic concept by merging two kinds of arts. Xavier Devaux draws a new vocabulary and syntax, restoring the original meaning of grammar: the art of writing words.

D’ de Kabal,¹⁰⁹ a member of SpOke Orkestra, also describes the difficult life in Parisian suburbs. The distinctive voice that resembles an instrument together with the text takes part in the reading of the message; by self-labeling¹¹⁰ aimed at singling out oneself or a certain social group, D’ de Kabal speaks about living in a ghetto where there is no possibility of a different

¹⁰⁶ See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq_1QnemAWc

¹⁰⁷ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6fEFmCNdiY>

¹⁰⁸ The term that relates to the connection between picture and text used by Roland Barthes.

¹⁰⁹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCAKeN3hY-k>

¹¹⁰ Mainguenu, Dominique. *Les termes clés de l'analyse du discours* (transl. Klučni termini za analizu diskursa), Paris: Seuil: Points, 1996, page 20.

choice and representation of reality in the media that exclusively refers to violence. By criticizing the system that does not solve the problem, and thus the media, De d' Kabal talks about the lack of information, misrepresentation and racist discourse. Like Saul Williams he separates two truths with the connector *but*: "The quarter is cruel, but we live here." Place adverbial *here* refers to the quarter, which results in an effect of avoiding the use of the terms synonymous with the quarter, sharing. With the help of sound and stage design in which only notable is the French flag, there is a need to stand in front of the state and say a different truth.

At the festival "Printemps des Bourges",¹¹¹ along with one of SpOke Orkestra members, Félix Jousserand, D' de Kabal performs in theater. He calls the text "Chaos" a cerebral metaphor for poetry condemning imperialism, terrorism and other terms in French that end with the same suffix. The mentioned slam speeches about the citizen of the world becoming an Algerian, Palestinian, Muslim, Arab at the time when September 11 is happening or when some other historical event takes place that is suitable for naming those who are different and therefore for singling some out. Félix Jousserand is the author of "Anthology of Slam", a poet and an active participant in slam performances, and he appears as a spontaneous interlocutor of D' de Kabal at the aforementioned festival.

An example of several statements that become one is a slam performance "Boucheauxoreilles."¹¹² Appearing on stage are three participants who alternately take part in creating one speech utterance. Playing with syllables, stressing them, they *rap* the language that resembles a music track. The mentioned slam speaks about historical meaning and definition of slam as the art of playing the game of words and sounds.

¹¹¹ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KW41rL5QWg&NR=1>

¹¹² See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aknHqSk42M&NR=1>

Poetry, among others, is a quest for identity.¹¹³ Rocé talks about finding one's own identity in a way that we will forget the name, color, face, origin and nationality. His slam is the call for us to stay alone, without friends, group, sex and gender; Rocé explains that the sex is a tool, detail, and gender is posture and role, reminding us that we do not play a role. The mentioned slam refers to the re-examination oneself to find out who we are and an invitation to get out of the frame in order to be able to create. The ability to get rid of belonging to a particular context is one of the conditions to learn about ourselves and the above text is a hypnotic, poetic call to get rid of fear and become what we really are.

Inspired by Japanese culture and poetry the “Haiku Death Match”¹¹⁴ competition in haiku slam poetry was established.¹¹⁵ Themes are free, but there is a rule that traditional, short haiku form must be followed. A haiku consists of seventeen syllables divided into three lines; the first and third line having five syllables each, while the second, middle line has seven. The website “Guerrilla art”¹¹⁶ explains the rules of haiku slam competitions and transmits the experiences of competitors. In Japan, in the seventeenth century, competitions in traditional haiku slam poetry were organized, resembling the slam competition today on the basis of which it can be concluded that the need for such expression existed in various cultures.

¹¹³ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JntdqVh8WA&feature=related>

¹¹⁴ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A1wCd-kY5I>

¹¹⁵ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsZIEODaL6I&feature=related>

¹¹⁶ See: <http://umwguerrillaart.blogspot.com/2007/09/haiku-slam.html>

The movie on establishing “Slam Africa” competition aims to promote slam poetry in Africa.¹¹⁷ The idea to promote slam on the African continent represents return to roots. A performer from Kenya, Cindy O Ghana, speaks about love and politics mixing two languages into one, of which English domineers. Given that this is a former colony, the English language is predominant.

The fact is that most slam performers in Africa perform in English points out to the need of performers to overcome language barriers in order to promote slam culture. The mentioned facts relates to the historical, social and linguistic reality of the African continent. The decision of the artists is historically justified and anti-information has far greater meaning in one of the African languages. By using the prefix “extra”, Cindy O Ghana talks about everyday life and habitual *additional* problems on the African continent.

Clint Smith is a slam poet from Johannesburg. In a slam called “Lifetime drama”,¹¹⁸ the poet warns about the problem of ignorance about HIV, but also about the violence associated with HIV. The competition in which he participates is an idea of the humanitarian organization for the fight against AIDS. Clint Smith talks about HIV through poetry and in this way he wants to convey information about one of the biggest problems on the continent.

When it comes to Serbia, slam is connected with the arrival of hip-hop music and it happened somewhat later than in the mentioned countries of Europe. Its emergence is no coincidence given the fact that in this region there is an epic, story-telling and narrative tradition ž and the need for an artistic style that should allow criticism of modern Serbian society.

¹¹⁷ See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVJd8Y_NwzQ&feature=related

¹¹⁸ See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXAGWUcTsD4>

Historical, social and ideological facts related to Serbia require serious consideration and are an ideal ground for active involvement in changes. In Serbia, there are numerous associations that do not imply the traditional definition of poetry, but rather they gather young alternative artists who promote new poetic styles, including slam.

One of these associations is “Poezin”¹¹⁹ that aims to create a poetic scene that is different from the existing literary events. “Poezin” organizes poetry evenings in nightclubs, away from the classical poetic scenes and attracts performers of alternative poetry not exclusively as a literary form, but as a performance and interaction with the audience, often without announcing the participants and changing locations, in order to enable improvisation. The fact that there is no presenter, but *Poezin* performers spontaneously appear on stage where together with the audience they decide what way the program would go, suggests a similarity to the one from the beginning of the development of alternative slam scene in the eighties of the 20th century. The first “Poezin clubbing” took place in a small club called “Academy” in Belgrade in 2010. Cooperation with this club had continued until it was closed down. Poezin performers are proud of their performances in the “Academy” at the moment when the Serbian authorities tried to close down Belgrade cult club. In addition to participation in the “Academy”, under the name Poezin XP, the artists took part in the “Wire Panic Room,” Student Cultural Center (SKC) and at “Exit Festival” in Novi Sad, as well as in “Bigz” building in Belgrade.

On Poezin’s website there is an option to apply for participation; there is an announcement of events and releases and texts as well as audio and video recordings can be found there.

¹¹⁹ See: <http://www.poezin.net/o-nama/>

Since such associations generally use the internet space for advertising rather than TV, one may conclude that the need for dislocating the scene into the cult clubs is an attempt to restore the urban Belgrade. The idea spread to other major cities in Serbia. Alternative scene is at the same time anti-information in relation to the currently dominant information on cultural values in Serbia, which is present in a variety of media and a poetic resistance to the values mentioned.

One of the famous Serbian drama artist, a writer and a performer of slam, Minja Bogavac,¹²⁰ speaks of slam as a “marginalized poetry on the margins of culture” that has found its place in the world thanks to a special poetic aesthetics and manner of performance. Minja Bogavac challenges those who understand poetry as a traditional, elitist value calling slam anti-poetry. On her blog on the B92 website, Minja Bogavac speaks about slam like this:

“The essence of slam is lightness. The essence of slam is speed. The essence of slam is the interaction and improvisation. Slam rhymes. Slam is slang. Slam is up-to-date, daily-political, post-modern, vulgar, fucked-up, joker’s, ironic, cynical, personal, engaged, ordered, foul-mouthed... full of quotations, full of digressions, full of interruptions from the audience, full of answers to the interruptions... Slam belongs to bums and jerks... slam is brash, slam is sharp, slam is engaged, explicit, slam should be banned for those under the age of 18... but slam is such that nothing could ban it!!! Slam is uncensored. Slam is damn sexy perky. Slam is open to the public and finally: slam is a discipline that requires the authors to have, in addition to poetic, a certain performing skill. Because you don’t read or write slam. You perform slam!!!! In this sense, slam is a bastard. An illegitimate child of the Mother Poetry and Father Theater, conceived in a toilet of a nightclub, while salsa music pounded...

Slam is a para-poetic, para-literary, para-theatrical and para-musical phenomenon.”¹²¹

In this way, Minja Bogavac slams the definition of poetry, giving it a completely new dimension. Knowing in advance that there is a possibility that individuals classify slam as

¹²⁰See:

<http://blog.b92.net/text/11993/100%20%25%20SLEM%3A%20POEZIJA%20ILI%20NE%20C5%A0TO%20JO%20%A0%20GORE/>

¹²¹ *Quoted in Ibid.*

subculture, she calls on return to antiquity and understanding poetry as an Olympic sport that influenced the birth of Dramatic Arts and later theater as a syncretic discipline of human spirit and art,¹²² with which she justifies her passion for performing.

Minja Bogavac has been involved in numerous projects and sees the slam scene in Serbia today in this way:

“Five years later (five years!) it all started to make sense. And really... In Serbia (the land of plums), (at least some sort of) slam scene started developing. Suddenly, there’s something to follow and to hear and to see... And it doesn’t happen any more that slam contests end up with a general fight. I got the impression that people finally realized what kind this is and what it is important for it, and what’s not. And was is about time!... We spoke about that for ages.”¹²³

One of the performances of Minja Bogavac “ŽETON ŽENSKIM TONOVIMA” in the Cinema Rex in Belgrade on March 8, 2010 relates to the aforementioned date; emphasizing the historical importance of the date Minja Bogavac criticizes the modern understanding and interpretation, ignorance and gender implication; though “suspicious, fragile and new” women's rights are not implied and March 8 is a historically important date that should not be forgotten because it is not linked to gender implication, but gender equality.

Art group “Škart” in 2008 established the “Pesničenje”/“Fist Fighting”¹²⁴ to promote unestablished artists who write outside the framework of classical poetry as well as well-known artists who want to share their ideas with the audience. Numerous poetry festivals were organized in Belgrade, gathering some well-known slam names from abroad as well as a

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ See: <http://www.pesnicenje.org/>

number of guest slammers throughout Serbia. “Pesničenje” promote books of poetry but also slam workshops and today is one of the best-attended poetry events in Belgrade.

Intellectual junk¹²⁵ is a website established with the aim to bring together people who have a need to share creative artistic and scientific ideas and those whose voice cannot be heard otherwise. Intellectual Junk publishes works of young people who do not agree with consumer policy and who react to it. One of the authors whose poetic speech can be found on this website is Marjan Todorović from Niš, a writer, musician and participant at one of the nights of poetic monologues. Telling “truth and nothing but the truth,” Marjan Todorović speaks about faith, religion and the Church, division, wars and false patriotism. With the words “in the name of God, I will kill one of you – the enemy” he criticizes the highlighted preemption and separation based on religious affiliation, but also the interpretation of the faith and boldly highlights the consumerist practice of certain church leaders in relation to individuals who he calls true believers. Frequent use of possessive adjectives and the self-labeling of certain groups with colors “white, black, yellow and red,” although typical of the discourse of separation, actually takes over the aforementioned speech in order to highlight its ideological use in the struggle against the mentioned ideology.

Theoretician Jan Assmann explains that the revival of religion is directly associated with violence, threats, hatred, fear, creating enemies as an example¹²⁶ and sets the question of links between monotheism and violence. The fact is that through language, monotheistic religions emphasize one God in relation to others, but there are certain religious motifs that are related to the language of violence. Jan Assmann explains that it is important to examine the origins of

¹²⁵ See: <http://www.intelektualniotpad.com/>

¹²⁶ Assmann, Jan. *Monoteizam i jezik nasilja*, Loznica : Karpos, 2009 ; page 15.

religious motives in order to prevent their historicizing political purposes. Jan Assmann points out that the language of violence stems from political pressure and that semantic dynamite does not work in the sacred texts of believers, but in the hands of fundamentalists who have political goals and are using religion to win over masses. The language of violence is used in political battles, with reference to the interpretation of religion by making the religious motifs historical.¹²⁷ Marjan Todorović talks about redemption; in the name of my, your or our God, without reviewing historical facts and in the name of certain religious motifs, a contemporary Balkan political scene happened.

Based on the analysis of poetic scene in Serbia one may say that the slam culture found its place in this region. The reasons for its recognition in Serbia are numerous, historical, socio-political as well as those related to gender equality. The given reasons allow space for reactions and changes. The establishment of various art associations represents a need to point to the situation in the country and culture. One of the ways is to influence the awareness about the situation in Serbia today is slam culture.

Contemplating the examples of slam culture globally leads to the conclusion that the slam scene is the place of researching the possibilities of identity. The way in which artists influence public opinion and its construction of race, identity and gender suggests that in addition to stage rhetorics, slam intervenes and inspires you to think. The purpose of such performances is not only entertaining the audience, but allowing it to see and possibly *do* it. Slam is the poetry of suffering aimed at knowledge and meaning. Slam stage is the place of negotiations between the audience and the performers, but also duty for artists to convey a personal message as well as a message that should not be read as a majority message. The slam

¹²⁷ Ibid, page 52.

performer is therefore the herald of events in society that causes the stereotypical representations, referring to failures of institutions and society in general. Slam is therefore a *media*.

Given that slam represents criticism of society through poetry, analyzing the context of giving birth to slam culture justifies the need for resistance and calls for historical reconstruction and production of knowledge and information about marginalized cultures. Contemplating the role of code in the production and interpretation of meaning points to a whole chain of difficulties that may be encountered on the way from sending to receiving messages. The decision to explain slam as richness of diversities in the poetic form should prevent the possibility of a different reading of the term poetry.

Examples of female slam performers leave the possibility for observing gender beyond known, stereotypical framework relating to the visible biological differences but gender as a socially conditioned category. The question of mythologization of language and the way in which slam steals speech from myth, thinking about the difference between language and speech opens new pistes for changes in thinking about language as an exclusively arranged system and therefore possibly enables becoming a new language. Given that for creating concepts necessity is needed, becoming anti-information is necessary in the struggle for meaning.

Routes for further exploration and analysis of culture itself should refer to semiotics of the body, i.e., body posture, gesture and mime of performers. Analysis of nonverbal, speech manifestations should also help on the way to meaning.

Given that language participates in creating an institutional, political and cultural setting, it is necessary to analyze the way in which it functions in the media production of meaning. The position of Stuart Hall is that the media play a central role in the social production of meaning, but that the audience does not interpret the messages just like that; if it is manipulated with messages for political purposes, it is possible to cause panic and to give it a role in resolving the crisis. The mentioned theorist also explains that people simultaneously produce and consume culture and that culture is not something that can easily be evaluated or studied, but it represents a serious critical overview of social practice and participation in practice. Given that history and culture affect the identity, it cannot be considered a completed, but rather a lasting process.

One of the most famous contemporary French linguists Alain Bentolila supports Deleuze's notion that language is not created to address our other me, but rather a stranger (where the stranger is someone who does not speak our language) to tell them the weirdest things possible.¹²⁸ The mentioned linguist explains that the language gives the best of itself when we bring it to the top limits, where words lose their breath in an attempt to unburden them of the unknown that presses them; where we know of the Other the least, and he knows about the same about us, where the Other is an object of our desire for exchange. At those altitudes Na tim visinama discovery wins over prediction, and winning the sense is both an invitation and a challenge, a promise and a request.¹²⁹

According to Gilles Deleuze, it is worth studying the way in which individuals and groups constitute themselves as subjects and the extent in which they elude the dominant forms

¹²⁸ Bentolila, Alain. *Propre de l' homme: lire, parler, écrire* (prev. *Svojestveno čoveku: govoriti, čitati, pisati*), Paris: Plon, 2000, page 26.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, page 27.

of power by creating new ones.¹³⁰ Although the current, spontaneous tactics of resisting social system, as it is the case with slam poetry, it is the one moment that, according to Deleuze, we must understand as an opportunity. In the analysis of slam culture as an example of culture of resistance, the mentioned opportunity is reflected in the deprivation of speech u otimanju govora, the creation of vacuoles of communication, the triggers necessary for get out of control to which Gilles Deleuze refers. Believing in the world, like slam poets believe in a dream coming true, we could speed up the events and create a new space – time. According to Deleuze, the ability to resist control should be assessed at the level of our every move; if we assess that in *becoming* we need both the creativity and the people, the micro-scene should be transferred to the global level, and the moments in which the aforementioned culture becomes a sign should be documented through the global media.

¹³⁰ Delez, Žil, *Predgovori 1971-1990*, (Loznica: Karpos, 2010), page 253

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