

Recenzija knjige Mojce Ramšak *Antropologija vonja*

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O d čutnega obrata v antropologiji v 80. letih 20. stoletja je preteklo precej časa, preden smo v slovenski etnologiji in/ali kulturni antropologiji dobili obsežen in poglobljen prvenec, znanstveno monografijo, ki sistematično in primerjalno obravnava družbeno-kulturne vidike in pomene vonja ter sposobnosti vohanja. Dr. Mojca Ramšak, redna profesorica kulturne antropologije na Univerzi v Ljubljani in na Alma Mater Europaea – Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, je tematiko raziskovala že med pandemijo covid-19, svojo znanstveno monografijo pa je objavila letos (2024). Številni ljudje s(m)o se po preboleli novi koronavirusni soočili z bolj ali manj začasno oz. s trajno izgubo sposobnosti zaznavanja vonja, spremenjenim vohom, z vohalnimi halucinacijami oz. zaznavami vonja, ki ga ni v zraku, ipd. Čeprav so se prve raziskave vonja v slovenskem nacionalnem prostoru začele že leta 2019, gotovo ni naključje, da je vzniknilo širše zanimanje za senzorične raziskave v zvezi z vonjem, med pandemijo in še po njej, ko so se razmahnile raziskave vonja tudi v povezavi z mednarodnimi okviri, npr. v projektih Odeuropa, Horizon 2021–2023 ter Odotheka 2021–2024.

Morda je k poznejši obravnavi vonja in vohalnih sposobnosti v medkulturni perspektivi v slovenskem nacionalnem prostoru (v primerjalni perspektivi z drugimi čutnimi kulturno pogojenimi zaznavami vida, zvoka, dotika in okusa) kot tudi drugod prav tako prispevalo dejstvo, da v t. i. »zahodni« kulturi vonj in vohalne spretnosti ne kotirajo visoko na lestvici čutnega zaznavanja. Družbeno okolje, v katerem živimo ljudje, namreč definira pomembnost in hierarhizacijo čutov, kar je povezano s preživetvenimi strategijami. Razvijanje senzorične sposobnosti in občutljivosti za vonjave ter pripisovanje

posebne (manj)vrednosti vonju je prav tako pomembno povezano z dimenzijami družbenega okolja. Prav glede vohalnega vidika čutnega zaznavanja naravnega in kulturnega okolja smo ljudje, socializirani v kulturno normo t. i. zahodne evropske družbe, ki narekuje molk oz. preziranje vonjav, prepoznanih za neugodne. Ob tem velja tudi, da prijetnih in diskretno prisotnih vonjav mnogokrat niti ne zaznavamo, kar izrabljajmo, denimo, strategije trženja vonjav.

Estetsko opremljena knjiga, ki je prijetna tudi na oko, je zasnovana iz predgovora – prvega vdiha, uvoda – globljega vdiha ter desetih osrednjih poglavij. Jedrna poglavja zajemajo metodološki oris antropologije vonja ter vohalne dediščine, jezikovne dimenzije ideje vonja, vonj v medicini, olfaktorni imaginarij, poleg kultiviranja voha v literaturi in kultiviranja miazem ter arom. Osrednji del knjige obravnava pravne regulacije vonjav v okviru nacionalne države Slovenije in Evropske unije, ki zajema zakonodajno ureditev (delovnega) okolja, živil, pijač, tobaka ter parfumov, pri čemer izpostavi tudi pravne praznine, ki omogočajo trženje z neoriginalnimi dišavami prav zaradi pravne praznine. Glavna poglavja *Antropologije vonja* zajemajo tudi obravnavo vonja pri trženju, v spolnosti in erotiki ter v kulturni dediščini in muzeologiji. Knjiga se sklene z zaključkom oz. zadnjim izdihom. Vsebinsko knjige dopolnjujejo številne preglednice, shematski prikazi tipologij in konceptualizacij vonja ter fotografije številnih upodobitev vonja in vohalnih zmožnosti, npr. v kiparstvu in likovni umetnosti, poleg materialnih predmetov iz kulturne dediščine. Monografija je opremljena tudi z obsežnim stvarnim kazalom ter s seznamom virov in literature, ki bralcem omogočata še podrobnejši pregled posameznih vidikov obravnave olfaktorne tematike.

Posebno pozornost antropološkega branja pričujoče knjige nedvomno pritegne njena epistemološka plat, kjer sta predstavljena antropologija čutov in njen raziskovalni domet, ki zajema preučevanje fizičnih in kulturnih vidikov vonja ter vlogo vonja v senzorijskem sistemu vseh petih človekovih čutil. Antropologija čutov namreč preučuje zgodovinsko-kulturno specifične in kontekstualne dimenzije čutnih zaznav, ki so pomembno povezane s spomini, čustvi, z izkušnjami in s kognicijo. V knjigi se avtorica ukvarja z nevrofiziološko dimenzijo vohanja in vonja. Posveča se miselnim konceptom različnih čutnih redov različnih kultur in pomenom čutov v vsakdanjem življenju. Knjiga izpostavlja kulturno specifične variacije čutov in čutenja, kot npr. izrazito kulturno specifičen primer malezijskega lovsko-nabiralniškega ljudstva Batek Negrito, ki v svoji kozmologiji sveta vsemu pripisuje vonj, tudi nebesnim telesom, npr. neprijeten meseni vonj soncu in prijeten rožni vonj luni. Miselni koncepti se posvečajo tudi delitvam glede na spol: npr., na Papi Novi Gvineji je notranjost žensk konceptualizirana kot temna, sočna, smrdljiva, medtem ko je notranjost moških bela, trda in brez vonja. Percepcija vonjav, ki se glede na olfaktorni imaginarij pripisujejo ženskam, je odvisna od moči, ki je dodeljena ženski v določeni družbi. Za številne raziskane skupnosti, kjer nad ženskami dominirajo, imamo izsledke o predstavljanju ženske, povezane s slabim vonjem. Slab vonj je povezan z njeno moralno, s »predzakonsko nedotaknjenostjo« oz. z »življenjem na koruzi« in s tem pripisano le njeno moralno izprijenostjo ipd. Spolna dihotomija vonjav med moškimi in ženskami odraža družbeno moč enih ter drugih in jim pripisuje vonjave z negativnim ali s pozitivnim označevanjem.

Za antropološko epistemologijo so pomembni tudi opisi izsledkov poglavitnih raziskav kulturnih vonjav v globalnem okviru ter razgrnitev fragmentarnih in parcialnih omemb vonjev v slovenski etnologiji, kulturni antropologiji ter kulturni zgodovini. Znanstvena monografija *Antropologija vonja* se tako osredinja na (a) antropološke predstavitve lingvistično-se-

miotičnih analiz vohalnih pojmov; (b) antropološke komparacije različnih kulturnih pomenov vonja v posameznih kulturah in družbah; (c) obravnavanje (spolnega) vedenja in (religijskih) ritualov, pri katerih ima vonj pomembno vlogo; (č) vlogo manipulacije z ambientalnimi vonjavami v potrošniških družbah ter (d) možnosti manipulacije z vonjavami pri predstavljanju kulturne dediščine v muzeološki praksi, pri razstavljenih galerijskih in muzejskih artefaktih ter pri performansih.

Znanstvena monografija prinaša tudi izsledke glavnih raziskav o kulturi vonjav, med katerimi omembe fizičnih in čutnih značilnosti preučevanih ljudstev izven Evrope v 19. in 20. stoletju odstirajo vpogled v kolonialno večvrednost Evropejcev, rasiziranje ljudstev, ki so jim psevdoznanstveniki pripisovali intelektualno inferiornost in ki so jih uvrščali v različne rasne tipologije, povezane z večjo sposobnostjo zaznavanja vonjav, kar je prestavljalo poseben vidik domnevne duševne degeneracije. Seveda so te posplošitve veljale tudi za nižje družbene sloje v evropskih družbah. Nedvomno so omenjene raziskave o dimenzijah moči izjemnega pomena za raziskovanje širokega nabora čutnih domen in odsevajo določeno medkulturno senzorno simboliko.

Knjiga prinaša tudi analitično-deskriptivni pregled zgodnjih terenskih raziskav moderne kulturne in socialne antropologije. Zgodnja antropološka dela med drugim zajemajo tudi parcialne opise vonjalnih zaznav med terenskim delom. Franz Boas (2009), ki je bil na terenu na Baffinovem otoku pri Inuitih, npr. opisuje vonj medvedje maščobe, uporabljene za impregnacijo šotorov; Bronisław Malinowski (1932) se je v antropoloških raziskavah, opravljenih na Trobriandskih otokih, posvetil obravnavanju vonja pri telesni privlačnosti in odbojnosti v spolnem življenju »divjakov«, njihove vonjalne magije pred poroko ter vonja v povezavi s čarovništvom in čarovnicami. Tudi poznejši antropologi so se občasno posvečali opisom vonjev. Npr., Claude Lévi-Strauss je dokumentiral vonjalne vidike svojih terenskih izkušenj v Braziliji. V »potopisu« *Tristes tropiques* (1955) je med drugim opisal

neprijetne vonjave živil in ladje, s katero je plul. Poleg tega je tudi v knjigi *Le cru et le cuit* (1964) obravnaval pomen vonja in drugih čutov, npr. obravnavo vonja v mitih, kontraste vonjev med neprijetnimi in prijetnimi, med vonjem po razpadu in vonjem, ki je veljal za dobrega.

Antropologe so zanimali sociokulturni pomeni vonjav in vprašanje, kako človek voha v fiziološkem ter nevrološkem pomenu, v povezavi z vplivom kulture pri tovrstnih zaznavah: kako kultura vpliva na to, da nekaj človek zazna in zaznanemu pripiše pozitivno oz. negativno vonjalno izkušnjo. Knjiga Mojce Ramšak oriše kulturnozgodovinske raziskave, povezane s telesno higieno, razsmrajevanjem oz. dezodoracijo okolja. Posveča se tudi medkulturnim primerjavam simbolnih pomenov čutnih zaznav arome ter nizanju preglednih zgodovin čutnih zaznav, zbornikov, ki so pomembni za kulturno obravnavo in razumevanja vonja ter poznavanje zgodovine posameznih vonjav, kot je npr. biografija parfumov, ki je odražala blokovsko delitev sveta med t. i. hladno vojno.

V preglednem poglavju raziskav o vonju se avtorica posveti podrobnemu branju polihistorja Janeza Vajkarda Valvasorja (2017) in njegovega dela *Slava vojvodine Kranjske*, ki lahko predstavlja spoznavno orodje za domnevanje vprašanja obravnavanje vonja v 17. stoletju, saj so v njegovem delu izpostavljene posebne vonjave: vonj cvetic, zdravnih zelišč, vonj hrane in pijače, kutinovega sira, usmrajenega vina, tudi vonjave materialnega sveta, npr. industrijskega sveta, kot je npr. kamšt, neprimerne nekrepostnega in krepstnega življenja. Valvasor je npr. opisoval vonjave ljudi in se posvečal percepcijam vonja, ki jih je pobral iz drugih virov, pri čemer je kritiziral primerjavo moralnih in vonjalnih modalitet (npr. primerjava moralne sprevrženosti in slabih vonjav, značilnih za nemoralnost). Konceptualiziral je tudi odvrčanje ljudi s slabimi vonjavami ob etnografskem opisu varovalnega nošenja smrdljivega kokošjega mesa med nedrjem pri mladih furlanskih ženskah, s pomočjo katerega so odvrčale avarske zavojevalce. Tudi pregledno branje etnoloških in kulturnozgodovinskih del,

ki opisujejo prakse, navade, rituale in ohranjanje spominov s pomočjo vonjav, prinaša vpogled v olfaktorne dimenzije na Slovenskem, četudi so vonjave v teh praksah omenjene zgolj fragmentarno, a vendar zato nič manj pomembno, saj predstavljajo izhodišča za poglobljenejši pristop k obravnavi vonja.

Velika znanstvena vrednost je v nazorno predstavljeni metodologiji raziskav voha in vonja ter z njim povezane kulturne dediščine (muzejskega konzervatorstva, vonjalne rekonstrukcije in poustvaritve, vonjalne scensko-ambientalne ter umetniške (preoblikovane) vonjalne predstavitve). Poleg klasičnih terenskih in kabinetnih metod kulturne ter socialne antropologije so izpostavljene še inovativne tehnike, kot so npr. vonjalna etnografija kot del senzornih etnografij, čutenje z udeležbo, uporaba in kreiranje vonjalnih zemljevidov, oblikovanih s pomočjo vonjalnih sprehodov, krožni vonjalni grafikoni ter metode merjenja z različnimi merilnimi pripomočki, kot so olfaktometri, vohalne kamere ter e-nosovi. Posebej prepričljiva je v predgovoru nazorno predstavljena avtobiografska metoda, ki ima drugod v evropskem prostoru prepoznan velik epistemološki potencial, a je med etnologi, socialnimi in kulturnimi antropologi slovenskega nacionalnega prostora zapostavljena in manj prakticirana, poleg tega imajo nekateri antropologi do njene uporabe tudi zadržke/predsodke zaradi domnevne subjektivnosti. V *Antropologiji vonja* najdemo podroben opis metodologije preučevanja vonjav, povzete po Davidu Howesu (1991) ter Davidu Howesu in Constance Classen (2014), ki je lahko tudi odličen vir metodološkega usposabljanja na področju senzorne antropologije za (bodoče) antropologe ter muzealce, in predstavitev sistemov razvrščanja vonjav v naravoslovju, psihologiji in antropologiji, za katere najdemo tudi vizualne shematske prikaze, ki jih je izdelala avtorica.

Poleg avtobiografskih in antropoloških ter kulturnozgodovinskih vonjalnih zaznav se avtorica podrobneje posveti tudi v jezik vpisani idejni predstavitvi vonja in njegovemu ubesedenju, ki nastaja v interakciji voha ter jezikovnega siste-

ma. Monografija razgrne sodobnejše raziskave v medkulturni primerjavi in v kulturnospecifičnih kontekstih, nevrokognitivne mehanizme (od znanje vonja do leksikalno-semantične integracije in ubeseditve) in procese v vonjalni socializaciji ter vonjalno terminologijo v sinhroni ter diahroni perspektivi. Ob tem pomembno vlogo igrajo tudi druga opisana nejezikovna kulturno posredovana komunikacijska orodja, npr. obrazna mimika, gestikulacija, in piktogramska upodobitev. Pozornost je posvečena tudi preučevanju vonjalnega izrazoslovja in kulturno-jezikovnim značilnostim vonjalnih besednjakov, zlasti še simbolno-pomenskim dimenzijam vonjav, ki se izrisujejo v metaforah, uporabljenih v različnih vrstah diskurzov, npr. povezanih s spoznavno dimenzijo in priklicem spominov na vsakdanje življenje ter njegove ritualne ritme. Posebna zanimivost v knjigi so konceptualne metafore vonja in večpomenskost vonjalnih izrazov. Avtorica naniza primere rab konceptualnih metafor, npr. »vonj je zasledovalec«, »vonj je zrak«, »vonj je vseživljenjski dogodek«, »vonj je arhitektura«, »vonj je predmet«, »vonj je agresor«, povezan s »sumničanjem«, a tudi »zaščitnik«; raziskovanje in odkrivanje je prav tako metaforično povezano z vonjem.

Mojca Ramšak predoči interakcijo med vohom in jezikovnim sistemom, a tudi pomske dimenzije dobrih in slabih vonjav, ki so povezane s figurativnimi rabami in naslovljene na manjvredne etnično razločene (družbene) skupine, ki so tarča vonjalne mizoginije, vonjalnega rasizma in vonjalne ksenofobije. Avtorica predstavi olfaktorni imaginarij v *Svetem pismu* in *Visoki pesmi*, ki ju vzame kot vir kulturoloških analiz rabe posameznih predmetov pri svetih ritualih in rabe vonjav mire, aloje ter kadilovca kot kulturne dišave. V nadaljevanju predstavi še olfaktorni imaginarij v zvezi z izbranimi družbenimi skupinami, zaslužjenimi Afričani, temnopoltimi ženskami in ameriškimi staroselci – »Indijanci«, ki ga povezuje s kolonializmom in z rasizmom kapitalističnih zavojevalcev ter s kulturnozgodovinskim pojmovanjem vonjav tedanjega časa, s katerimi se povezuje npr. tudi Rome

in Jude. Knjiga večkrat izpostavi evrocentrično načelo pri opisovanju olfaktornih imaginarijev, vendar pogrešamo konceptualizacije iz poddisciplin oz. specializacij, kot so antropologija etničnosti, postkolonialna antropologija, romske in judovske študije, ter upoštevanje nekaterih njihovih izsledkov. Pri poglavjih, ki obravnavajo »družbene skupne«, bi knjiga bistveno več pridobila, če bi se naslonila na poglobljenejšo in kompleksnejšo obravnavo postkolonialnih antropoloških perspektiv pri obravnavi rasizma do temnopoltih žensk, moških (»Črncev«) in ameriških staroselcev ter drugih domorodcev; anticiganizma v odnosu do Romov (Agarin 2014; Cortés Gómez in End 2019; Janko Spreizer 2022); antisemitizma v odnosu do Judov; študij spolov in feministične antropologije za refleksijo mizoginije. Vprašanjem kolonializma ter razvijajočega se kapitalizma v 18. in 19. stoletju se moramo v Sloveniji antropologi bistveno koncizneje posvetiti, saj so tovrstne razprave pogosto še vedno zapisane s perspektive, ki je premalo občutljiva za rasiziranje ter brutalno kapitalistično izkoriščanje zahodnih družb, iz katerega tudi ta del sveta ni bil izvzet. Upamo lahko, da bodo v prihodnosti antropologi upoštevali, da je bilo današnje ozemlje Slovenije vključeno v imperialno zgodovino, če se bodo poglobljeneje ukvarjali z vonjalnim rasizmom.

Knjiga se sistematično loteva pregledne zgodovine medicinsko-filozofskih razlag vonja in prinaša izsledke prvih piscev ter klasičnih zdravnikov – filozofov, kot so npr. Galen iz Pergama, Celz in Dioskurid, ki so slabe telesne vonjave pripisovali boleznim in njihovim simptomom. Poleg misli grških filozofov in zgodnjih zdravnikov iz antike sta orisani tudi konceptualizacija vonjav, relevantnih za medicino v zgodnji islamski in evropski medicini, ter zdravstveno-medicinska diagnostika iz drugih kultur v diahroni perspektivi. Za humanistiko je posebej zanimiva obravnava vonja v filozofski misli oz. konceptualna zasnova filozofije vonja. Posebej velja izpostaviti tudi poglavje o sodobni medicinski diagnostiki. Bralci dobimo vpogled v razvijajoče se postopke diagnosticiranja s pomočjo novih elek-

tronskih zaznavalnih naprav vonja in okusa, kot je npr. e-nos, in s pomočjo živali, kar je razmeroma neznano polje. V medicini pri diagnosticiranju bolezenskih stanj sodelujejo posebej strenirani psi pomočniki, ki lahko pri ljudeh zavohajo specifične bolezni in zdravstvene anomalije, npr. padeč sladkorja pri diabetikih, bližajoči se epileptični napad, pomagajo lahko tudi pri diagnosticiranju rakavih obolenj, bližajoče se Alzheimerjeve bolezni ipd. Nedvomno to poglavje odpira pomembno vprašanje za preučevanje odnosa ljudi in živali, s katerim se je od nedavnega začela ukvarjati etnografija mnogoterih vrst.

Delo Mojce Ramšak prinaša pomemben uvid tudi v učenje olfaktornega imaginarija oz. socializacijo vohanja od zgodnjega otroštva naprej. Ena izmed navedenih raziskav je npr. pokazala, da imajo otroci v vrtcu sposobnost razločevanja posameznih vonjav, vendar slednjim ne znajo pripisati vrednostnega predznaka, pač pa jih povezujejo z znanimi ali neznanimi kulturnimi praksami, značilnimi za domača okolja. Posebno epistemološko vrednost pri uvidu v socializacijo vohanja in vonja imajo pričevanja oz. mitologije o t. i. »divjih« ali »volčjih otrocih«. Pričanja o divjih živalih, ki naj bi vzgojile otroke, govorijo o tem, da ti otroci niso imeli civilizacijskih navad in jih tudi ob prisotnosti resocializacije v družbenem okolju ljudi niso mogli v popolnosti razviti. Naveden je npr. primer iz Nürnberga v 19. stoletju, zapuščenega in zaprtega ter od socialnih stikov izoliranega Kasperja Hauserja, ki mu je bilo nemogoče privzgojiti prehrabne režime družbenega okolja, v katerega so ga poskušali resocializirati potem, ko je bil najden. Njegova sposobnost za razvijanje učloveh čutov se ni mogla razviti, saj so bili čuti voha in vida atrofirani.

Za literarne študije je posebej pomembno poglavje o kultiviranju voha v literaturi, pri čemer avtorica za spoznavni vir pri obravnavanju antropoloških tematik, kot so divjaki nasproti civiliziranim, vpliv vonja na spomin ter razredna razmerja, vzame tri kultne romane, tj. *Parfium* Patricka Süskinda (1986), *V Swanovem svetu*

Marcela Prousta (2003) in *Pot v Wigan* Georgea Orwella (1937).

Knjiga se posveča tudi produkciji dišav, privabljanju ljudi z vonjem ter komercializaciji vonjav. Preko kulturnozgodovinske obravnave pokaže, da je uporaba dišav in mazil prisotna tudi pri starih civilizacijah; pri Egipčanih naj bi npr. Kleopatra dišala pikantno sladko, domnevno po datljih in začimbah. Prelomno za rabo dišav z namenom privabljanja drugih datira v 19. stoletje, ko si ljudje želijo dišati drugim, kar sovpada z industrijsko proizvodnjo dišav in načrtnim hotelnjem po razsmrjevanju okolja ter ljudi. Predstavljene so tudi raziskave o prekrivanju in odvrčanju neprijetnih vonjav ljudi, v času, ko npr. v neurbaniziranih okoljih ni bilo osnovne komunalne infrastrukture, ki bi omogočala vzdrževanje osebne higiene z umivanjem in s tem tudi odvrčanje telesnih neprijetnih vonjav. Prav tako se je razvijala erotična vonjalna kultura in uporaba dišav za ta namen.

S sklicevanjem na dobre vonjave, npr. dišanje po morju, se trži določene razstave v muzejih ali turistične kraje preko kulinarike, navezujoč se na naravne vidike morske krajine, npr. morje, vonj po soli, ali prehrabne navade oz. specifične jedi, kot so npr. ribe, školjke.

Tudi veliki nakupovalni centri na potrošnike želijo vplivati s pomočjo vonjav in v svojih prostorih uporabljajo razpršilce, in to ne le v toaletnih, kjer se načrtno prikriva vonjave s pomočjo sintetičnih toaletnih vonjav, pač pa tudi drugod. Ambientalni sintetični vonji sovpadajo z letnimi časi ter s prazniki, ob katerih se z vonji spodbuja potrošniške prakse, ki sovpadajo z določenimi dogodki. Sintetične in skorajda nezaznavne vonjave se skladajo z različnimi prazničnimi časi, v katerih sicer prevladujejo kulinarčne ali naravne vonjave. Z odišavljanjem prostorov skozi razprševalce vonjav ob vhodnih vratih v nakupovalne centre, npr. s pršenjem vonja po kuhanem vinu in praznični hrani v prednovoletnem času, želijo potrošnike zadržati v prostorih in jih spodbuditi k nakupovanju. S pomočjo trženja in uporabe sintetičnih vonjav nam npr. tudi v muzejih želijo omogočiti podoživetje rabe razstavljenih pred-

metov, med katerimi so nekateri, povezani tudi s prtljago osebnih spominov ali pridruženi kulturnim spominom okolja, v katerem živimo.

Avtorica je tudi sama opravila nekatere manjše raziskave, z namenom preverjanja izsledkov sodobnih raziskav o zaznavah vonja. Raziskovala je rabe vonjev za namen trženja v specifičnih slovenskih prostorih – npr. čajnicah, kjer se uporablja vonj vanilije, šolah, kjer naj bi vonj mandarine prispeval k zbranosti, mirnosti in dobremu počutju šolarjev, tako da želijo z njim vplivati na boljšo koncentracijo pri učenju, kar je izvajala ena od šol na Primorskem. Nekatere hotelske in zdraviliščne verige uporabljajo sintetične ambientalne vonjave, ki naj bi bile njihov razpoznavni znak in jih specializirana podjetja proizvajajo le za njih.

Mojca Ramšak svojo pionirsko znanstveno monografijo *Antropologija vonja* sklene s poglavjem o vonju in kulturni dediščini, ki oriše njene pomembne raziskave na omenjenem področju. Poglavje zajema poglobljeno analizo mednarodnih in domačih dokumentov, ki pravno urejajo kulturno dediščino ter z vonji povezane registrirane znanje in prakse. Avtorica analitično povzame pravne dokumente o zaščiti vohalne kulturne dediščine, ki datirajo v konec 20. in začetek 21. stoletja ter urejajo kulturni pomen vonja in vonj kot del nesnovne kulturne dediščine. Šele leta 2021 je bil sprejet francoski zakon o čutni dediščini, medtem ko se v Unescovi Konvenciji o varovanju nesnovne kulturne dediščine iz leta 2023 vonj ne omenja neposredno, pač pa ta konvencija omogoča zaščito znanj in praks, povezanih z vonjavami. Na tej pravni podlagi so tako šele leta 2018 na Reprezentativni seznam nesnovne kulturne dediščine vpisali znanje in prakse, povezane s proizvodnjo parfuma v francoski regiji Grasse, in sicer pod ključnim izrazom »senzorični sistemi«. Po tem letu, ko se vonjave in znanje ter prakse, povezane s tem vidikom sensorija, prepoznani kot pomembni vidik nesnovne kulturne dediščine, se začne večje prizadevanje za zaščito lokalnih vonjav preko Unesca. Avtorica predstavi Unescov seznam nesnovne dediščine človeštva, ki vsebuje nominacije za vpis

na Unescov seznam, z eksplicitnimi opisi vonjav in arom v utemeljitvenem delu ter ključnih besedah. Do leta 2024 je omembo vonja vsebovalo 12 nominacij, med katerimi je zaščiteno tudi čebelarstvo v Sloveniji, ki eksplicitno omenja vonj. Prav tako omenjeni razdelek knjige na enciklopedičen način predstavlja raziskovanje in ukvarjanje z vonji v muzejih, galerijah ter knjižnicah in koncipira polje olfaktorne muzeologije, vključno z njeno specifično terminologijo. To poglavje bo nedvomno zanimivo za študente kulturne dediščine in za bodoče eksperte, ki jih zanima muzeologija, ter za kustose, ki se želijo podrobneje posvetiti prikazovanju in analizi vonjav ter z vonji povezanih kulturnih praks. V nadaljevanju poglavja avtorica komparativno pregleda olfaktorno muzeologijo v mednarodnem okviru in Sloveniji. Predstavi rezultate zbranih podatkov, pridobljenih v slovenskih muzejih med letoma 2021 in 2023, v zvezi s prisotnostjo vonjav in z zavedanjem vonjav, povezanih s specifičnimi razstavnimi muzejskimi predmeti ter z razstavnim in pedagoškim delom kustosov. Zanimivo je, da so muzeji, ki so posredovali podatke v raziskavi (od 59 povabljenih je sodelovalo 49 muzealcev iz 29 slovenskih muzejev) po oceni avtorice leta 2023 hranili več sto vohalnih predmetov. Avtorica je pridobila tudi natančne opise vohalnih predmetov, prostorov z vonjem ter snovi in bitij, ki oddajajo vonj, na podlagi česar je izdelala naslednjo tipologijo: vohalni muzejski predmeti iz slovenskih muzejev, notranji in zunanji muzejski prostori, povezani z vonjem, pisni dokumenti, ki opisujejo vonjave, pripovedi o vonjavah iz preteklih razstav oz. zgodbe kustosov in dišeči, z dediščino povezani predmeti iz muzejskih trgovin.

Znanstvena monografija Mojce Ramšak je prvenec na področju antropologije, ki se ukvarja z zaznavami vonja v etnološki, kulturnoantropološki perspektivi na holističen in primerjalen način. Ne le da etnologinja in kulturna antropologinja celovito zajame obravnavo vonja preko pregleda antropoloških raziskav, ki se ukvarjajo z vonjem kot specifičnim sensorijem, pač pa analitični pregled v nekaterih poglavjih bolj ali

manj poglobljeno dopolni z lastnimi vonjalno-etnografsko-antropološkimi raziskavami. Če sklenem: knjigo vsekakor priporočam tako širši javnosti, ki jo zanima vpogled v antropološko obravnavo vonja, kakor tudi antropologom, etnologom ter muzealcem – specialistom za kul-

turno dediščino, ki lahko svojo antropološko teorijo in prakso pomembno dopolnijo z obravnavo občutka voha, za katerega smo šele ob njegovi začasni ali trajni izgubi »po covidu« lahko uza-vestili, da je izjemnega pomena za celovito eksis-tencialno izkušnjo.

Review of Anthropology of Smell (*Antropologija vonja*) by Mojca Ramšak

After the sensory turn in anthropology in the 1980s, it has been a long time since Slovenian ethnology and/or cultural anthropology have produced a comprehensive and in-depth debut, a scientific monograph that systematically and comparatively addresses the sociocultural aspects and meanings of smell and the ability to smell. Dr Mojca Ramšak, full professor of cultural anthropology at the University of Ljubljana and the Alma Mater Europaea – Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, has been researching the topic since the Covid-19 pandemic and published her scientific monograph this year (2024). Many people have experienced a more or less temporary or permanent loss of the ability to detect smell, altered sense of smell, olfactory hallucinations or perceptions of smells that are not in the air, etc., after suffering from a new coronavirus disease. Although the first odour research in the Slovenian national context started already in 2019, it is certainly no coincidence that a broader interest in sensory research related to odour has emerged during and after the pandemic, when odour studies have also proliferated concerning international contexts, e.g. in the Odeuropa, Horizon 2021–2023 and Odotheka 2021–2024 projects.

Perhaps the fact that smell and olfactory skills are not ranked high on the scale of sensory perception in the so-called ‘Western’ culture also contributed to the later consideration of smell and olfactory skills in a cross-cultural perspective in the Slovenian national context (in a comparative perspective with other senso-

ry culturally conditioned perceptions of sight, sound, touch and taste), as well as elsewhere. The social environment in which people live defines the importance and hierarchisation of the senses, which is linked to survival strategies. The development of sensory ability and sensitivity to smells and the attribution of a particular (minor) value to smell is also significantly linked to the dimensions of the social environment. It is with regard to the olfactory aspect of the sensory perception of the natural and cultural environment that we humans are socialised into the cultural norm of so-called Western European society, which dictates silence or ignoring odours identified as unpleasant. It is also true that pleasant and discreet odours are often not even perceived, which is exploited, for example, by scent marketing strategies.

This aesthetically pleasing book, which is also pleasing to the eye, consists of a foreword – the first inhale, an introduction – the deeper inhale, and ten central chapters. The core chapters cover a methodological outline of the anthropology of smell and olfactory heritage, the linguistic dimensions of the idea of smell, smell in medicine, and the olfactory imaginary, in addition to the cultivation of smell in literature and the cultivation of miasmas and aromas. The central part of the book deals with the legal regulation of scents within the national state of Slovenia and the European Union, covering the legal regulation of the (working) environment, food, beverages, tobacco, and perfumes, also highlighting the legal loopholes that allow the marketing

of non-original fragrances due to the legal void. The main chapters of the *Anthropology of Smell* also cover smell treatment in marketing, sexuality and eroticism, and smell in cultural heritage and museology. The book concludes with a final conclusion or last gasp. Numerous tables complement the book's content, schematic illustrations of typologies and conceptualisations of smell, and photographs of numerous representations of smell and olfactory capacities, e.g. in sculpture and fine art and material objects from cultural heritage. The monograph is also accompanied by a comprehensive index and a list of sources and references, enabling readers to explore the olfactory theme's various aspects further.

The epistemological side of the book undoubtedly attracts particular attention in anthropological reading, where the anthropology of the senses and its research scope are presented, covering the study of the physical and cultural aspects of smell and the role of smell in the sensorium, the system of all five human senses. The anthropology of the senses studies the historically culture-specific and contextual dimensions of sensory perceptions, which are significantly related to memories, emotions, experiences and cognition. In this book, the author focuses on the neurophysiological dimension of smell and olfaction. She focuses on the mental concepts of different sensory orders in diverse cultures and the importance of the senses in everyday life. The book highlights culturally specific variations of senses and sensations, such as the highly culturally specific case of the Malaysian hunter-gatherer Batek Negrito people, who, in their cosmology of the world, attribute smell to everything, including celestial bodies, e.g. an unpleasant carnal smell to the sun and a pleasant floral smell to the moon. The mental concepts also address gender divisions: e.g. in Papua New Guinea, women's interiors are conceptualised as dark, juicy, and smelly, while men's interiors are white, hard and odourless. The perception of odours attributed to women according to the olfactory imaginary depends on the power attributed to women in a particular society. In many female-domi-

nated communities studied, we have evidence of representations of women associated with bad smells. Bad smell is associated with woman's morality, with 'premarital virginity' or 'living in sin', and thus only attributed to her moral depravity, etc. The sexual dichotomy of odours between men and women reflects the social power of one and the other and attributes to them odours with negative or positive labels.

Also important for anthropological epistemology are the descriptions of the results of the main studies of cultural odours in a global context and the dismantling of fragmentary and partial references to odours in Slovenian ethnology, cultural anthropology and cultural history. The scientific monograph *Anthropology of Smell* thus focuses on (a) anthropological presentations of linguistic-semiotic analyses of olfactory concepts; (b) anthropological comparisons of different cultural meanings of smell between individual cultures and societies; (c) treatment of (sexual) behaviour and (religious) rituals in which smell plays an important role; (d) the role of the manipulation of ambient smells in consumer societies; and (e) the possibilities of manipulating smells in the representation of cultural heritage in museological practice, in gallery and museum artefacts and performances.

The scholarly monograph also brings together the findings of major studies on the culture of smell, including references to the physical and sensory characteristics of the people studied outside Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. The latter, in particular, reveals insights into the colonial superiority of Europeans, the racialisation of peoples to whom pseudo-scientists attributed intellectual inferiority and who were classified into different racial typologies linked to a greater ability to perceive smells, which constituted a particular aspect of alleged mental degeneration. Of course, these generalisations also applied to the lower social classes in European societies. Undoubtedly, these studies on the dimensions of power are of paramount importance for the exploration of a wide range of sensory do-

mains and reflect a certain cross-cultural sensory symbolism.

The book also provides an analytically descriptive overview of early field research in modern cultural and social anthropology. Early anthropological work includes, among other things, partial descriptions of olfactory perceptions during fieldwork. Franz Boas (2009), who did anthropological fieldwork on Baffin Island with the Inuit, for example, describes the smell of bear grease used to impregnate tents; Bronisław Malinowski's (1932) anthropological research in the Trobriand Islands focused on odour in physical attraction and repulsion in the sexual life of 'savages', their olfactory magic before marriage, and odour in relation to witchcraft and witches. Later anthropologists have also occasionally turned to descriptions of smells. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, documented the olfactory aspects of his field experiences in Brazil. In his 'travelogue' *Tristes tropiques* (1955), he described, among other things, the unpleasant smells of the foodstuffs and the ship he was sailing on. In addition, in his book *Le cru et le cuit* (1964) he also discussed the importance of smell and other senses, such as the treatment of smell in myths, the contrasts between unpleasant and pleasant smells, the smell of decay and the smell that was considered good.

Anthropologists were interested in the sociocultural meanings of smells and how humans smell in a physiological and neurological sense in relation to the influence of culture in such perceptions: how culture influences the way a person perceives something and attributes a positive or negative olfactory experience to it. The Ramšak's book outlines cultural and historical studies on physical hygiene and environmental deodorisation. It also focuses on cross-cultural comparisons of the symbolic meanings of sensory perceptions of aroma and on a series of overview histories of sensory perception, compilations relevant to cultural treatments and understandings of smell, and knowledge of the history of particular scents, such as the biography of perfume, which also reflected the bloc division

of the world during the so-called Cold War. In an overview chapter of research on scent, Mojca Ramšak also devotes a detailed reading to the polyhistor Johann Weikhard von Valvasor (2017) and his work *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola*, which can be a cognitive tool for speculating on the question of the treatment of scent in the 17th century. In his work, he highlights specific smells: the smell of flowers, medicinal herbs, the smell of food and drink, quince cheese, fermented wine, also the smells of the material world, e.g. of the industrial world, such as kamšt (water pump), of the improper, unchaste and virtuous life. Valvasor, for example, described the smells of people and focused on the perception of smells, picking them up from other sources, criticising the comparison of moral and olfactory modalities (e.g. the comparison of moral depravity and the bad smells characteristic of immorality). He also conceptualised the deterrence of people by bad smells, using the ethnographic description of the protective wearing of smelly chicken meat between the wombs of young Furlan women to ward off Avar invaders. A survey reading of ethnological and cultural historical works describing practices, customs, rituals and the preservation of memories through smells also provides insights into the olfactory dimensions in Slovenia, even if smells are only mentioned in a fragmentary way in these practices, but this is no less important, as they provide a starting point for a more in-depth approach to the study of smell.

The great scientific value lies in the illustrative presentation of the research methodology on smell and olfaction and related cultural heritage (museum conservation, olfactory reconstruction and recreation, olfactory scenic-ambient and artistic (transformed) olfactory presentation). Besides the classical fieldwork and cabinet methods of cultural and social anthropology, the monograph also highlights innovative techniques, such as, for example, the use of the ethnography of smell as a part of sensory ethnographies in cultural and social anthropology and sensing with participation. The use and creation of

olfactory maps were created through olfactory walks, circular olfactory charts, and measurement methods with different measuring devices such as olfactometers, olfactory cameras, and e-noses. Particularly convincing and illustrative is the autobiographical method presented in the foreword, which has a great epistemological potential recognised elsewhere in Europe but is neglected and less practised among ethnologists, social and cultural anthropologists in the Slovenian national context, and some anthropologists also have reservations/prejudices towards its use, due to its alleged subjectivity. In *The Anthropology of Smell*, we find a detailed description of the methodology of studying smells, taken from David Howes (1991) and David Howes and Constance Classen (2014), which can also be an excellent source of methodological training in sensory anthropology for (future) anthropologists and museum professionals and a presentation of the classification systems of smells in the natural sciences, psychology, and anthropology, for which we also find visual schematics made by the author.

Besides autobiographical, anthropological, and cultural-historical olfactory perceptions, the author also elaborates on the conceptual representation of smell inscribed in language and cognition, produced in the interaction of the sense of smell and the language system. The monograph exposes more recent research in cross-cultural comparison and in culturally specific contexts, neurocognitive mechanisms (from odour perception to lexical-semantic integration and phrasing) and processes in olfactory socialisation, and olfactory terminology in synchronic and diachronic perspectives. Additionally, the important role play also others non-linguistic culturally mediated communication tools, that are described in the book, such as facial expressions, gesticulation, and pictogram representation. Ramšak also focuses on the study of olfactory terminology and the cultural-linguistic characteristics of olfactory vocabularies, in particular the symbolic dimensions of smells meanings, which are mapped out in metaphors used

in different types of discourse, that are related to the cognitive dimension and evocate memories of everyday life and its ritual rhythms. The conceptual metaphors of smell and the multiple meanings of olfactory expressions are particularly interesting in the book. The author gives examples of the use of conceptual metaphors (in Slovenian language), e.g. 'smell is the pursuer', 'smell is the air', 'smell is a lifelong event', 'smell is architecture', 'smell is the object', 'smell is the aggressor', associated with 'suspicion', but also 'protector', exploration and discovery are also metaphorically linked to smell.

Mojca Ramšak shows the interaction between smell and the linguistic system, and the semantic dimensions of good and bad smells, which are connected with figurative uses and addressed to inferior ethnically distinct (social) groups, which are the target of olfactory misogyny, olfactory racism and olfactory xenophobia. The author presents the olfactory imaginary in the Bible and the High Song, which she takes as a source for cultural analyses, using particular objects in sacred rituals and using myrrh, aloes and frankincense scents as cultural fragrances. She then goes on to present the olfactory imaginary in relation to selected social groups: enslaved Africans, black women, and Native Americans – 'Indians' – which she links to colonialism and the racism of the capitalist invaders and to the cultural-historical conception of the smells of the time, with which she also associates, for example, the Roma and the Jews. The book repeatedly emphasises the Eurocentric principle in describing olfactory imaginaries. Still, conceptualisations from sub-disciplines or specialisations such as the anthropology of ethnicity, postcolonial anthropology, Romani and Jewish studies are missing, as are some of their findings. In the chapters dealing with 'social commons', the book would have benefited considerably more by drawing on a more in-depth and complex treatment of postcolonial anthropological perspectives in addressing racism towards black women, men ('Black') and Native Americans and other indigenous peoples; antigypsyism concern-

ing Roma (Agarin 2014; Cortés Gómez and End 2019; Janko Spreizer 2022); antisemitism concerning Jews; approaches to gender studies; and feminist anthropology to reflect on misogyny. The issues of colonialism and developing capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries need to be addressed in future with much more precision by anthropologists in Slovenia, as such debates are often still written from a perspective that is too insensitive to the racialisation and brutal capitalist exploitation of Western societies, from which this part of the world was not exempt. It is hoped that future anthropologists will consider that Slovenia's present-day territory was included in imperial history if they engage more deeply with olfactory racism.

The book systematically surveys the history of medical-philosophical explanations of smell. It brings together the findings of early writers and classical physician-philosophers, such as Galen of Pergamum, Celz and Dioscurides, who attributed foul body odours to diseases and their symptoms. In addition to the thoughts of Greek philosophers and early physicians from antiquity, the monograph also outlines the conceptualisation of odours relevant to medicine in early Islamic and European medicine and medical diagnosis from other cultures in a diachronic perspective. Of particular interest to the humanities is the treatment of smell in philosophical thought, or rather, the conceptualisation of the philosophy of smell. The chapter on modern medical diagnostics is also particularly noteworthy. Readers are given insight into the development of diagnostic procedures using new electronic sensing devices for smell and taste, such as the e-nose, and with the aid of animals, that is a relatively unknown field. In medicine, specially trained assistance dogs are involved in diagnosing medical conditions and can sniff out specific diseases and medical anomalies in humans, e.g. a drop in sugar in diabetics, an impending epileptic seizure, and can also help diagnose cancers, impending Alzheimer's disease, etc. There is no doubt that this chapter raises an important question for studying the relationship between

humans and animals, which has recently become the subject of multispecies ethnography.

Mojca Ramšak's work also provides important insights into learning the olfactory imaginary, or the socialisation of olfaction, from early childhood onwards. For example, one of the studies cited above showed that children in kindergarten can discriminate between smells. Still, they cannot assign a value to smells; instead, they associate them with the question of how familiar they are with cultural practices typical of their home environments. The testimonies or mythologies of the so-called 'wild' or 'wolf children' are of particular epistemological value in insight into the socialisation of smell and olfaction. The accounts of wild animals supposedly raising children suggest that these children did not have the habits of civilisation and, even in the presence of resocialisation in the social environment of humans, could not fully develop them. For example, in the case of Kasper Hauser abandoned and imprisoned in Nuernberg in the 19th century and isolated from social contact, it was impossible to inculcate him with the dietary regimes of the social environment into which people tried to socialise him after he had been found. His ability to develop his humanised senses could not develop, as his senses of smell and sight were atrophied.

The chapter on cultivating the sense of smell in literature is of particular relevance to literary studies. The author uses three iconic novels – Patrick Süskind's (1986) *Perfume*, Marcel Proust's (2003) *In Swann's World*, and George Orwell's (1937) *The Road to Wigan* – as a source of insight to address anthropological themes such as savages versus the civilised, the impact of smell on memory, and class relations.

The book also looks at the production of fragrance, the attraction of people through smell and the commercialisation of scent. A cultural-historical approach shows that the use of fragrances and lubricants is also present in ancient civilisations: for example, Cleopatra is said to have smelled spicy-sweet, to the Egyptians, presumably of dates and spices. The turning point

for using fragrances to attract others dates to the 19th century when people wanted to smell good to others, coinciding with the industrial production of fragrances and the deliberate desire to deodorise the environment and people. Studies on the masking and deterrence of human odours are also presented when, for example, in non-urbanised environments, there was no basic municipal infrastructure to maintain personal hygiene by washing and thus deter body odours. There was also a developing erotic scent culture and the use of fragrances for this purpose.

Certain exhibitions in museums or tourist destinations are referred through the smell of the sea, and through gastronomy by marking the natural smells of the maritime landscape, the smell of salt, or by culinary (eating) habits, and specific dishes, such as fish, shellfish.

Large shopping centres also seek to influence consumers through scents and use diffusers on their premises, not only in the toilet areas where synthetic toilet scents deliberately mask odours but also elsewhere. Ambient synthetic scents coincide with the seasons and holidays, where scents are used to encourage consumption practices that coincide with certain events. Synthetic and almost imperceptible smells are consistent with different festive seasons, otherwise dominated by culinary or natural smells. By scenting the premises through scent diffusers at the entrance doors of shopping centres, e.g. by spraying the smell of mulled wine and festive food in the run-up to New Year, they aim to keep consumers indoors and encourage them to shop. The marketing and use of synthetic scents in museums, for example, also aims to allow us to experience the use of the objects on display, some of which are also linked to the baggage of personal memories or the associated cultural memory of the environment in which we live.

The author has also conducted some small-scale research to verify the findings of contemporary research on the perception of smell. She has investigated the use of scents for marketing purposes in specific Slovenian spaces – e.g. tea rooms, where the smell of vanilla is used. Man-

darin smell is used in schools, which is supposed to contribute to the concentration, calmness and well-being of schoolchildren to influence better concentration in learning, which was carried out by one of the schools in Primorska. Some hotel and spa chains use synthetic ambient scents, which are supposed to be their hallmark and are produced by specialised companies only for them.

Mojca Ramšak concludes her pioneering scientific monograph, *The Anthropology of Smell*, with a chapter on smell and cultural heritage, which outlines her important research in this field. The chapter includes an in-depth analysis of international and domestic legal documents regulating cultural heritage and registered knowledge and practices related to scent. The author analytically summarises the legal documents on the protection of olfactory cultural heritage dating back to the late 20th and early 21st centuries, which regulate the cultural significance of smell and smell as part of intangible cultural heritage. It was not until 2021 that the French law on olfactory heritage was adopted, while the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2023 does not mention smell directly but allows for the protection of knowledge and practices related to smells. It was only on this legal basis that, in 2018, knowledge and practices related to perfume production in the Grasse region of France were thus inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under the keyword sensory systems. After this year, when scents and the knowledge and practices associated with this aspect of the sensory are recognised as an important aspect of intangible cultural heritage, a significant effort to protect local scents through UNESCO begins. The author presents the UNESCO List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity, which contains the nominations for listing on the UNESCO list, with explicit descriptions of odours and aromas in the rationale and keywords. By 2024, 12 nominations referenced scent, including the protected beekeeping in Slovenia, which explicitly men-

tions scent. This section of the book also presents the research and engagement with scents in museums, galleries and libraries in an encyclopaedic way. It outlines the field of olfactory museology, including its specific terminology. This chapter will be undoubtedly interested for students of cultural heritage and future experts interested in museology, as well as curators who wish to focus on the display and analysis of smells and smell-related cultural practices. In the following part of the chapter, the author provides a comparative overview of olfactory museology in the international context and Slovenia. She presents the results of the data collected in Slovenian museums between 2021 and 2023 regarding the presence of odours and the awareness of odours related to specific museum exhibits and curators' exhibitions and teaching work. Interestingly, the museums that provided data in the survey (49 museum professionals from 29 Slovenian museums out of 59 invited to participate) were estimated by the author to hold several hundred olfactory objects in 2023. The author also obtained detailed descriptions of the olfactory objects, spaces imbued with scent, and substances and beings that emit odours., which allowed her to classify them into the following typology: olfactory museum objects from Slovenian museums, indoor and outdoor museum spaces related to smell, written documents describing smells, narratives about smells from past exhibitions or curators' stories, and scented heritage-related objects from museum shops.

Mojca Ramšak's scientific monograph is a debut in anthropology, dealing with the perception of smell in an ethnological, cultural, and anthropological perspective holistically and comparatively. Not only does the ethnologist and cultural anthropologist comprehensively address the study of scent through a review of anthropological studies that examine smell as a specific sensory experience, but she also supplements the analytical review in some chapters—more or less in-depth—with her own olfactory-ethnographic-anthropological research. In conclusion, I would definitely rec-

ommend the book to the general public interested in an insight into the anthropological treatment of smell, as well as to those anthropologists, ethnologists, and museum and cultural heritage specialists, who can significantly complement their anthropological theory and practice by considering the sense of smell, that only when temporarily or permanently lost 'after the Covid' can we realise is exceptional for a holistic existential experience.

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