

In the Shadows: Phenomenological Choreographic Writing

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Abstract:

This article introduces a piece of choreographic writing. It likewise discusses the kind of site-specific choreographic process of opening up to what in everyday life is not apparent and left in the shadows that generated the writing. The objective of the choreographic process was to allow the impact of the bodily sense of being in contact with an urban location to permeate the authors' activities in writing. To support this intention, they generated a phenomenologically informed performative score of experimental writing that aims at appreciating the vitality of the sensuous. The first part of the submission presents the actual choreographic writing as an evocative piece of choreography that can be read independently of the second part. This latter part contains an exploration into conceptions about choreography and writing. Here the article draws specifically on Jean-Luc Nancy's insights to articulate the kind of phenomenological approach the authors engaged in. It aims at establishing their artistic process as a phenomenologically oriented method in expanded choreography and argues that the writing they generated exscribes their encounter with the Hakaniemi bank in Helsinki on a late December day. It likewise details the significance the body bears on their take on choreographic writing and points towards the manner in which this writing contains traces of the inexpressible and non-thinkable.

Keywords:

Choreography, writing, body, location, sense, exscription, phenomenology, Nancy

Scriptum

The spatial waters and skies pierce an urban landscape.

Edges, rigorously structured space.

Muddy deep water.

A challengingly cold breeze.

A loose stone paving.

A seagull swimming the bay.

The hubbub of roaring cars.

A circumscribed islet tightly guarded by streets, lanes, alleys, bridges and a highway.

Efficient function.

A junkie stooping on the shoreline, freezing.

Trees growing in boxes escaped into hibernation. Moss and lichen deploying their tired generosity. Passersby proceeding in their ways.

Boatless and shipless docks echo the past.

Aversive melancholy.
Do not fall under. Will anybody be saved?
Rows of empty metallic benches. The Hakaniemi bank at some prior moment.
One pitiful boat returning from sea.

Suddenly, without warning, wet lime tree trunks in a row
slide under the breastbone.

The chilly dimness lacks breath, holds tightly.

Humidity envelops trees, pavement slabs and me.
Merciless coldness with the wind from the west creeps into the bones: becoming austere like
the greyish air around.

A triangular-like square at the edge of the sea,
along the road with its constant hum of traffic.

This site is almost forgotten, soon-to-be-forgotten as such: the shadows of tomorrow's ruins
linger around.

Severe edges with historical layers of moss, lichen, graffiti, metal, cigarette butts,
pieces of chewing gum and plastic all immersed in this unfenced cage of December.

Here, where the light must be imagined or breathed from the surface of the sea
and where each step awakes a direction, sensation or nameless touch
under the compressed grey sky.

An edge,
water piercing the urban landscape.

The hubbub of roaring cars. Streets, lanes, alleys, bridges, a highway.
Rigorously structured space. Efficient function?

The boatless docks of the circumscribed islet echo the past.
Moss and lichen deploy the tired generosity of some trees escaped into hibernation.

A junkie stooping on the shoreline, freezing by the muddy water.
Aversive melancholy.

Will anybody be saved? One pitiful boat returning from sea.
The Hakaniemi bank, do not fall under.

An edge, a square,
a rigorously structured islet almost forgotten, circumscribed by streets, alleys, bridges and the
see. The hubbub of roaring cars.

Hibernating lime trees held tightly by the humid and merciless coldness.
Moss, lichen graffiti, metal, cigarette butts, chewing gum, plastic and a junkie linger
in the melancholy of the soon-to-be-forgotten.

The muddy sea and dim, compressed sky no longer breathe in the aversive austerity.
One pitiful boat returning from sea to the empty dock.

The Hakaniemi bank now becoming a nameless ruin.
Will anybody be saved from falling under?

The constant hum of cars efficiently structures the boatless docks,
the echo of past moments immersed in the pavement slab, cigarette butts, chewing gum and
lime trees.

Tired light lingers around the trunks, benches and moss
breathing the austerity of the site.
One generous touch of breath awakes sensations. Is it imagined?
What escapes?

The sky is almost frozen, compressed by aversive melancholy.
Historical edges fall, soon, warnings of the not imaginable.

Layered with humidity and greyish wind, the dimness becomes severe, merciless,
trying not to fall under the shadows.

The circumscribed steps return to the edge, the sea breaths already under the breastbone.

Shadows hold tightly.

Tomorrow's ruins roar and metal namelessly touches the stones and edges of a rigorously
structured space. The hubbub of roaring cars underlines efficient function.

One pitiful boat returning from the muddy waters to the shipless doc echoing the past.
The light of the sea now a fall into aversive melancholy.

Hibernation in the merciless cold of December.

It is grayish and compressed skies, freezing wind and muddy waters.

It is moss, lichen, wet trees, loose stone paving, pavements, graffiti, metallic
benches, chewing gum, plastic, a junkie lingering on the shoreline.

It is a lone seagull swimming the bay, a pitiful boat returning from sea, empty docks, the roar
of cars on the streets, roads, highways on the triangular Hakaniemi bank square.

All this austerity creeps into one's bones, lacking breath, with a tight hold.
Gray, aversive melancholy.

Passersby proceed in their way, but can any of them be saved from this?

Stooping over the bank without a sense of direction.
The breath of the sea awakes a melancholy enveloped in the chilly dimness.
Shadows creep over the benches and the severe edges of the site,

moss and lichen proceed over the plastic and the metal.

The compressed breath of lime trees echoes on the wet stone paving,
air enveloped in a metal touch.

The bridge escapes into the tightly holding shadows of history.
Forgotten steps echo around and return to the sea.

Wet trunks, with efficient greyness alongside the alley, fence the nameless ruins as the
hubbub of cars pierce the triangular-like square.

Austere melancholy creeps in and brings about the forgotten ones,
a boatless sea falls under.

No warning. Only the severity of the wind, air frozen by empty breaths.

Swimming in the sea of melancholy without prior moments tires one, who has already
escaped from somewhere.
No return.

Suddenly humidity becomes a cage.
Waters and skies are directed to the site where light can be breathed.

Rows of sensations bridge the moment to the past.
A loose sensation escapes, is it imagined?

Swimming in the light of sea, will the past become muddy here, in this site,
the Hakaniemi bank?

Soon the melancholy dims,
lichen grow under the breastbone.
Cigarette butts and traffic compressed,
sliding into nameless shadows,
the merciless wind cannot be caged.

December has become a rigorously structured fence against the light, it functions efficiently
and does not fall. The light of the sea freezes, it is immersed in the emptiness.
Will the light be saved?

There is a light of the sea in December, despite the chilly dimness.
The humid, gray and mercilessly cold air announces a compressed sky that envelops wet tree
trunks, edgy pavement and a triangular-like square. Like a nameless touch it announces the
austerity in which moss, lichen, graffiti, metal, cigarette butts, plastic, chewing gum, linger.
They sever the unfenced cage of tomorrow's ruins. . . at the edge of the sea.

Tight rows of boatless docks guarded by the sea, in this rigorous landscape where trees have
escaped and light has become tired of its generosity, never to return?

Swimming in the sea of melancholy:
empty benches roar around, frozen by moments of the past.

A moment, the breeze returns and turns the waters muddy,
challenging.

The shoreline, circumscribed by an emptiness that has not lost its function.
Bridges fall, seagulls and boats freeze, deep edges of metal boxes escape into the bay.

Passersby deploy the space, stoop at the edge of the bank,
and return to their efficient function.

The echo of hibernation roars, grows and proceeds generously.

Bridging muddy waters and boatless docks,
a pitiful function echoing aversive melancholy of the past.
The islet of hubbub and lichen falls under the highway,
the structured lanes and alleys roar away from the sea.

The function, to structure the tired, frozen landscape
is about to fall.
Anybody saved?

And trees,
trees return, pierce generously the Hakaniemi bank,
and deploy the edge of the shoreline: waters return.

Wet lime trees, like a breastbone, hold the coldness tightly in the shadows of the compressed
sky.

The dim is a nameless humid touch that creeps into the bones, like austere shadows.

Soon-to-be-forgotten historical layers of moss, lichen, graffiti, metal, cigarette butts, chewing
gum and plastic immerse the trees and pavement without warning. They are ruins lingering
around the square at the edge of a sea enveloped by constant traffic.

An unfenced cage where light is breathed from the surface of the sea.
Each breath awakes a direction that is soon-to-be-forgotten – a shadow, a ruin
of tomorrow.

Historical layers of bones, moss, lichen, cigarette butts, graffiti, chewing gum, plastic and
metal envelop the trees. A westerly wind creeps into their bones on the triangular-like square
at the edge of the sea.

Nameless and without warning, its severeness holds tightly.
Lacking breath, the sky is compressed and filled with the constant hum of traffic.

An austere touch!

A seagull guards tightly the shoreline of muddy waters and skies.
The cold breeze swims across the boatless and shipless sea.

Rows of empty moments, a pitiful edge and a loose stone paving.

Some prior moments return, fall, and return.
Frozen melancholy saved in the echoes of hibernation.

Deep waters structure the edges of the landscape
paving the way to trees, lichen and moss
challenging the function of the space.

Proceeding coldness grows from the waters, lines of escape pierce the space, fall under,
one is saved from the function that swims loosely in the sea.

Bridging moments
what a rigorous structure
that will fall into the waters.

From cold breeze melancholy returns,
efficiency structured by the shipless docks and empty alleys.

wet trunks

chilly dimness

humidity

greyish air

merciless coldness

wind

triangular-like square

hum of traffic

tomorrow's ruins

severe edges

moss

lichen

graffiti

metal

cigarette butts

plastic

unfenced cage of December

nameless touch

compressed sky

light of the sea



Figures 1–9: Hakaniemi bank, Helsinki.
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Post-scriptum

On choreography

Of our interest is the fact that choreography relates to the act and process of writing. In the artistic approach that we have developed, site-specific embodied relatedness finds its choreographic expression in language-based writing. We consider this approach an extended form of choreography. Therefore we frame our general discussion in dialogue with authors who have problematized and practiced choreography as a form of writing. In its more conventional meaning, choreography is about the regulation, recollection and writing up of the steps and movement sequences performed by the human body (see Allsop & Lepecki 2008). Recently, choreographers and other artists have nonetheless begun utilizing choreography as a concept relating to artistic work that does not necessarily involve such performed movements. Indeed, choreography has increasingly become to be related to as an open-ended approach to frame or organize the movement of diverse actors and materials (Foster 2010a; 2010b; Lepecki 2010). In the wake of this trend, choreography has also been explored from the perspective of ‘graphia’, questioning how it can be rehearsed through written scores, drawing, letter writing and other forms of experimental writing and reading (e.g. Klien et al. 2008; Brandstetter 2011; Gansterer et al. 2017; Lilja 2017; Longley 2016; Kellokumpu 2020; Gaudreau 2020; Kramer 2021). Aside from involving the agency of more than human actors or performers, here extended choreography stretches into language and is dependent on the affective and imaginary movement of textual signification. And it is the choreography-related conventions of writing that we are in our own fashion forwarding as an artistic practice.

It is not completely unexpected that artistic approaches intertwining choreography and language-based writing are now being forwarded by many. Overall, writing has had an important impact on the evolution of western dance art in the form of dance notations, dance criticism and dance history, among others. Writing, dance and choreography have been interlinked to the extent that André Lepecki points out that “dance cannot be imagined without writing” (Lepecki 2004: 124; see also Lepecki 2010; Blades & Meehan 2018). He opines that ‘choreography activates writing in the realm of dancing to guarantee dance’s present is given a past, and therefore, a future’ (Lepecki 2006: 125). He additionally notes that it is in a constant ‘dissatisfaction before its own project’ that choreographic writing aims at capturing dance that disappears in the act of its materialization, it aims at capturing ‘irretrievable nows’ (Lepecki 2006: 124–125). The choreographic writing that we generated performs a defective and reiterative capture of a time-dependent bodily encounter with and motional exploration of a particular urban location.

The previous text in the section titled *Scriptum* is the result of our process of choreographic writing that has strong phenomenological underpinnings, which we continue to elaborate upon throughout the following sections of this article. On the one hand, we were curious of such a choreographic process, which involves place in a way that gives it agency and challenges conventional place-related actions and meanings (Hunter 2015). We appreciated this insight by attuning to especially the inconspicuous features of the urban site we worked in

and allowing them to have an impact on our embodied relatedness. On the other and in line with dance historian Susan Foster, we were curious to explore how writing moves. In considering how to transpose the moved into the written, she states: ‘Describing bodies’ movements, the writing itself must move. It must put into play figures of speech and forms of phrase and sentence construction that evoke the texture and timing of bodies in motion’ (Foster 1995: 9).

We likewise appreciated the self-displacing and non-intentional features of writing. These are addressed by Lepecki in the following manner:

Writing is that which catches movement – but only after entering an endless self-displacement (the self-deferment and generative force of any mark). And movement is that which releases writing from any representational hopes, from any illusion of its subserviently serving a fixed, ‘conscious presence of full intention’ of anyone who produces a mark. Thus, writing as movement performs a displacement, a dislodging with profound political consequences: the ungrounding of the author (the choreographer, but also the dancer) as the always self-present, self-conscious, self-identifiable intentionality. In the same way, choreography, if it commands, if it demands, does so in ways that exceed the intentions of choreographers, dancers, critics, audiences. . .

(Allsop & Lepecki, 2008: 7–8)

We aimed at allowing the chosen urban location we lingered in to write through us, and to do so beyond our intentions. Our choreographic process involved writing in two ways: it included a score to support our bodily attending to the urban location as well as a process of writing that produced a choreographic outcome in writing, that is the *Scriptum* presented above. In generating the text, we were involved in both a movement-based bodily exploration of the site as well as writing down and elaborating upon the linguistic response that arose in us in so doing.

In considering this process choreography, we follow the conception of choreography as being about open frames, or principles that structure movement and events related to agency, bodies, objects, materials and places (Foster 2010b; Lepecki 2010). In this conception choreography is also often understood to generate experimental problems that produce material forms of writing and theorizing that disrupt our conventional ways of conceiving of, for example, embodiment, interaction, movement, material and choreography itself (Joy 2014; Cvejic 2015; Lepecki 2016). Aligning with these views, Lepecki describes choreography “as the polarizing performative and physical force that organizes the whole distribution of the sensible and of the political at the level of play between incorporation and excorporation, between command and demand, between moving and writing” (Allsopp and Lepecki 2008: 4). In sum, we therefore argue that choreography is about establishing relationalities with different subject matters, practices, conventions, and contexts. It is an evolving critical and even theoretical practice that intertwines movement, actions, thinking, writing, and reading. Dance scholar Jenn Joy opines that “[t]o speak of choreography or to speak choreographically is also to speak of history, of writing and of dancing as entangled forms” and characterises choreography as “a form of knowledge production and distribution, an economy of transversal ideas” (Joy 2014: 15, 17). As part of an evolving constellation of artistic convention and appreciating the fact that “the writing implicit in choreography is already complicated by its many correspondances” (Joy 2014: 16), we generated an experimental and transmedial choreographic practice. We moved beyond the conventional choreographic medium and extended it by approaching similar practices to that of creative or experimental writing.

The score

To understand our choreographic approach and the discussion about it in this article, this section presents the steps of our artistic process. To commence our site-specific exploration and the choreographic writing, we established the following kind of phenomenologically influenced score. In generating this score, we made an adaptation of the phenomenological method as a form of attentive wonder and the notion of the choreographic score as both a form writing down movements and an assignment for performing (Järvinen 2017; Burrows 2010). This was done together and phase 1 and phase 2 were developed before working concretely at the site in Hakaniemi bank in Helsinki. Phase 3 was developed after we finished phase 2.

Phase 1

1. Explore the site by being attentive to how it resonates in and extends your body. Move in response to it. After some time in the site and sensing its impact respond by writing down single words or two-word phrases in your notebook.
2. In the next few days, allowing the impact of the site to linger with you and using the words written at the site, write five to ten sentences, again conveying the sense of the contact with the site.
3. Then send your words and texts to each other.

Phase 2

1. Allowing the silent impact of the site as well as the resonance of the already written words and sentences to inform your writing:
 - a. Write sentences or a short text by using the first list of words that you yourself did not generate.
 - b. Write sentences or a short text by using the first sentences that you yourself did not generate.
2. Then send these new sentences or short texts to each other and use all the previously produced texts in the next phase of writing.

Phase 3

1. Again allow the silent impact of the site as well as the resonance of the already written words and sentences to inform your writing:
 - a. Write sentences or a short text by using the first list of words generated by both of us
 - b. Write sentences or a short text by using the first sentence groups generated by both of us.
 - c. Write sentences or a short text by using both the first list of words and the first sentence groups generated by both of us.
2. Edit all the texts generated into one piece of choreographic writing.

On the phenomenological approach

But what does our choreographic approach have to do with phenomenology more closely? Overall, the score could be understood as a kind of reduction, supporting our sensuous and perceptive orientation in the site in a manner that let us relate to it afresh and come into contact with its unnoticed features. Through the first phase, we opened up to wonder about our embodied relatedness with and experiences of the Hakaniemi bank. Additionally, the score offered a means of descriptive articulation of our bodily exploration as well as a kind imaginary variation through which to give expression to the sense our encounter with the bank generated. After all, in aftermath of working in the site, we palpated the sensuous quality of the encounter through a continued process of writing (Finlay 2011).

What is more is that phenomenological research is typically interested in immediate experience. Similar to this interest, in our choreographic process we firstly attended to our immediate or direct experience in order to account for our relatedness to our surroundings. While we did so on an affective, sensuous and perceptive bodily basis, we also engaged in linguistic description of this relatedness. Co-relatively, the phenomenological method typically inheres rigorous description of lived experience. In addition, as we are also dealing with developing and arguing for an extended form of choreography, we could be understood to forward a practical phenomenology, as discussed by Max van Manen. He notes that ‘phenomenology of practice is *for* practice and *of* practice’ and that in it ‘writing reflects *on* and *in* practice, and prepares for practice’ (van Manen 2014: 15, original emphasis). Our approach to choreographic writing allows our relatedness to the chosen site, that is our embodied practice, to find expression in evocative language and to generate artistic work. Albeit, from a phenomenological viewpoint, aside from a piece of choreography, the *Scriptum* could also be considered phenomenological evidence of a processual experiential event of movement and writing.

Whilst the method we generated is adaptable as a single-person exploration, from its beginnings it is our collaboration through which it emerged. In fact, it is our inter-relatedness that the choreographic process highlights, both in sharing the exploration of the same site simultaneously as well as in our continued shared writing process. Linda Finlay writes about collaborative or relational phenomenological research by emphasizing that it is through ‘being-with another that both researchers and co-researchers have the potential for learning and growth’ (Finlay 2011: 165). Here conducting research happens through the in-betweenness generated by the ‘dialogue (verbal or non-verbal)’ ‘between researcher, co-researcher and the phenomenon being studied’ (Finlay 2011: 160). These between spaces offer opportunities to be in contact with and learn from the ambiguities and unpredictability of the not-yet-known (Finlay 2011). For us it offered opportunities to address the inconspicuousness of the urban location as well as to mull on the impact it left us with in writing. Our processual choreographic work required continued co-operation and sufficient time for the practical method to emerge as well as for us to gain sense of the urban site and find adequate articulation of this sense in our shared writing. This it did as we together envisioned and planned the first score through discussing our ideas, choosing the urban site that was one we both regularly passed as we went to work. Our process of co-creation continued when we actually explored the site together and, in aftermath, proceeded to develop and engage in our process of shared writing. The latter

meant moments of separate writing as well as sharing what we had produced and a final editing to bring all the material together.

While appreciating van Manen's and Finlay's reasoning, our phenomenological thinking is particularly indebted to Jean-Luc Nancy's insights that we here present in order to further highlight features of our embodied inter-relatedness and process of co-creation. We understand our "we-ness" to be about a sharing and a communication that, following Jean Luc-Nancy's ([1996] 2000) terms, is dependent on our individual singularity. It is our concrete acts of relatedness, first through discussing, then through moving and being in contact in the same site on the basis of shared instructions and finally through writing, that brought about a commonality. In them there was a sharing of sense, in which the silent meaningfulness of this relatedness emerged in us separately and divergently. Yet it simultaneously called for being shared as part of the mutual journey. We lingered at the Hakaniemi bank according to how it called each one of us to sense, observe and move in it, simultaneously we also were aware of each other as part of the environment. What caught the other's attention sometimes also impacted our own awareness and we silently came to conclude our exploration through increasingly withdrawing our attentiveness to the site and being more mindful first of our writing and then of each other.

In his thinking, Nancy aims to overcome the connotations of an isolated subjectivity and underlines that our existence emerges in our acts of relatedness, the comings to being-with that we are. "The being of community is the exposure of singularities" (Nancy 1991: 30) as they are revealed in their inter-relatedness, or as they "co-appear" (Nancy 1991: 28). In his view, we therefore are about a singular plural co-existence through and through. In fact, he himself does not actively forward the use of terms such as 'first-person perspective', 'dialogue' or 'intersubjectivity', as they connote that our social realm arises from and is dependent on separate subjectivities (Nancy 1991; [1996] 2000). Nancy's views imply that, whilst in the mutual process our singular relatedness to each other and the site were divergent, these divergencies founded the sharing and that the sharing allowed the divergencies to continue their becoming and exposure. It is this continued exposedness of our relational exploration that directed and layer by layer left traces in what we generated in writing together. Our shared work in fact seemed to proceed and emerge on its own, as we were very appreciative of and inclusive of each of our rhythm, actions and thinking.

Jean-Luc Nancy's notions on attentive contact and the body further illuminate how we consider our co-authored, co-created or co-choreographed writing to involve phenomenological features. In his book *Listening* (2007), he offers insight into his take on the phenomenological method concerning music and listening. Here he discusses a pre-intentional listening beyond-meaning, in which one becomes immersed in the music. In such attentive contact, he recommends that one should treat "pure resonance" "as the very beginning and opening up of sense", something "beyond-sense or sense that goes beyond significations" (Nancy 2007: 31). He suggests that in such situations one should "treat the body, before any distinction of places and functions of resonance, as being, wholly (and "without organs"), a resonance chamber or column of beyond-meaning" (Nancy 2007: 31). In his view, here one should "envisage "the subject" as that part, in the body, that is listening or vibrates with listening to – or with the echo of – the beyond-meaning" (Nancy 2007: 31). Here Nancy is underlining an immediate contact and immersion in a manner that resonates with the first step of our site-specific exploration and choreographic process. We wanted to probe into how the location's silent impact weighed on us as bodily beings and how we could appreciate and transmit its sense further. We encountered and opened up to the urban site without any attentive

observation and by allowing our body to be permeated by it. Concretely this meant that we, for example, stood, sat and squatted in different locations in the site allowing it to have an effect on us through all our senses. We actually waited until the impact of the site urged us to move, observe something specific and change place. Through so doing, we gradually also began to gain awareness of what in everyday life is not apparent and often left in the shadows. We noticed among other things that we first became engaged in a general orientation to the site, noticing the larger opportunities for movement and observation it offered. We strolled in it and gazed at its peripheries and only gradually did we begin to observe details. In both cases we encountered features we had not observed before, such as the vastness of the sky, the stern domination of large buildings on the opposite bank behind the bay, the silvery colour of the water reflecting the grey skies as well as the unattractiveness of the damp coldness enveloping the site.

What is noteworthy here is that for Jean-Luc Nancy the body is not firstly or mainly a determinate and known entity. The existence of concrete reality weighs on the body and it is by being in contact, in touch, with other bodies that a sense emerges in which things gain value in relation to each other. It is in relation to others and the world that our own bodies are felt in their apparent distinctness. Nancy himself writes that: 'The body does not know; but it is not ignorant either. Quite simply, it is elsewhere. It is from elsewhere, another place, another regime, another register' (Nancy 1993: 200–201). He also points out that in opening upon the apparentness of reality '[a] body does not have weight, it is a weight' (Nancy 1993: 198) and that [a]ll bodies weigh against one another' (Nancy 1993: 199). Underlining the function of touch, he further writes that:

The 'body' is grounds for not having any object (grounds for not being a subject, subjected to not being subject, as one says 'subject to bouts of fever'). The substance that only touches on other substances. A touch, a tact, as 'subject' before any subject. Uninscribable, exscribing everything, starting with itself.

(Nancy 1993:199, original emphasis)

Interestingly then there is no totality of the body for Nancy, instead there is locality, the here and there of sharing and making spaces, in which the here is exposed in its movement. (Heikkilä 2007: 117). There is no pure space or time either, but only places which are simultaneously locations and extensions of bodies. This underlines that the body in itself is not known and that it is the relational contact that forms any distinct sense of and for the body that we have. This is so, since there is a difference between touching and the touch, and this interval exposes sense, is exposition itself (Heikkilä 2007: 271). What this actually implies is that in the processual work of planning the score, concretely endorsing it and writing the two of us became very much intertwined, becoming singular plural in the fashion that our collaboration, the site and its writing called for.

What the interval points to is that in the exscription of the body, it is ex-scribed, written out and in this writing has a momentary distinctness (Heikkilä 2007: 270). In turn the body of sense relates to the understanding that the body is sense itself and every discourse is from the body. And it is in the *tone* of the place in which a body exposes itself and utters itself. Therefore, bodies are always also bodies in a process of becoming and in creating themselves. Philosopher and art theorist Martta Heikkilä describes this in the following manner:

From this follows that a thing is only when it is exscribed. The being of existence is not unrepresentable: it presents itself exscribed. Sense, in turn, is the sharing and splitting of language, thanks to which language does not complete itself, nor initiate itself, but is the difference between languages, double articulation, the *différance* of sense, the sharing of voices, writing, and its exscription.

(Heikkilä 2007: 119–120)

While exscription relates to language, it also points to the manner in which the body exists by being exposed to the world. The body is extensive and spread out and always a departure from itself as it comes back to itself, and the distance between the two is its sense (Heikkilä 2007: 120). These Nancyan insights argue for the relatedness that found our known bodily existence as processes of becoming, in the case of our choreographic writing framed by our interest in site-specific bodily exploration of the inconspicuous. For us the process of co-creation allowed us to engage in a previously unexperienced relationship with the site. On the basis Nancy's thinking our bodies' relatedness can be understood to be exscribed into the choreographic writing we generated together. What is more Nancy's notions also enabled us to think about writing as a reiterative, bodily choreography that we continue to address shortly in the next section.

On choreographic writing as exscription

It is the above-described sense of the body that we aimed at attending to in exploring our chosen urban location, the Hakaniemi bank in Helsinki. What bears pointing out is that we as middle-aged female dance professionals both have lengthy experience in site-specific dance performance and various approaches to contemporary dance choreography. We thus were rehearsed in being bodily and motionally sensitive to our environments, here we however allowed the bank's resonance to move and extend us. We explored this bank on winter solstice, December 21st, the darkest day of the year. The bank is the departure point of small ferries and boats cruising the archipelago of the Helsinki area and docks restaurant boats, but this all in the summer season. Now the bank was consigned into inactivity. Like many urban places in Helsinki, it was circumscribed by the sea, roads, traffic, a market square, business and apartment buildings. It is also a disappearing site as the city has planned future high-rise buildings in its place. While we often pass by this place, for the purposes of our choreographic process, we lingered at the bank inspiring its features and complexity for approximately an hour just after noon. As we did so, we moved as the site called us to: walked in it, squatted, sat, got on our knees, reached up, looked in all directions, turned around, touched surfaces, smelled the air, listened to the noise, and endured the cold and damp weather. Here we also jotted down the first words that came to our mind, as if from nowhere, from the place itself we gather. Later we continued our writing on the basis of these words and through them by allowing the resonance of the bank to speak further. In the final *Scriptum*, the generated text fragments found their place and relation to each other on the basis of how they resonated with each other and further conveyed the sense of the not immediately apparent aspects of the Hakaniemi bank.

Nancy considers the body to be in a continuous process of becoming through renewed encounters and processes of exscription. However, exscription also relates to Nancy's manner of philosophizing. According to philosopher Susanna Lindberg, he writes out of phenomena that leads them beyond the language of philosophy. His writing is writing out of the movement aroused by the contact of the writer being exposed and vulnerable to the world as well as the

world being exposed to the writer. In addition, it is noteworthy that exposedness and exscription are events that come upon and happen to us as bodily beings and in them bodies write themselves towards other bodies (Lindberg 2010). In our writing we aimed to be true to the sense of the urban location at the Hakaniemi bank and the words the location generated in us in a similar fashion.

Nancy himself writes about writing in the following manner:

If I write, I create sense-effects – I place the head, the tail, the stomach – and thereby I displace myself from bodies [...] And so we have to write from a body that we neither have nor are, but where being is exscribed. If I write, this strange hand has already slipped into my writing hand.

(Nancy 2008: 19)

In our view, he thus clarifies how it is the bodily contact or touch that happens in different locations that forms writing, and this is what we have tried to appreciate. He likewise philosophizes on the event of coming-into presence, which for him means presence before signification. This event we have likewise aimed to respect in our choreographic writing by attending and responding to the call of the elsewhere, nascent bodily sensations, movements, observations, thoughts, both at the Hakaniemi bank and in our continued process of writing. What we noticed and were surprised by was that as the writing proceeded and became edited into its final version, we no longer could decipher what portions of the text were written by whom and felt we were not in control of the text. The Script turned out to be strange to us too, as if it directly spoke of the elsewhere itself. We conclude by concurring with Nancy's notion that the artist when making art sees

coming towards him a monster who holds out to him the unsuspected reverse side of presence, its displacement, its detachment, or its folding into pure manifestation, and the manifestation itself as the coming of the stranger, as the birth into the world which has no place in the world, as the birth of origin itself, or as the appearing of appearing.

(Nancy 1996: 76)

As a piece of choreography, the Scriptum exscribes our processual bodily and writerly relatedness to the Hakaniemi bank in Helsinki on a December afternoon in 2020.

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