



Practicing Composition: Making Practice

Texts, Dialogues and Documents 2011–2013

KIRSI MONNI & RIC ALLSOPP (EDS)



Practicing composition: Making Practice

**Texts, Dialogues and Documents from
Erasmus Ma Intensive Projects 2011–2013
HZT, Berlin & TeaK, Helsinki**

Erasmus IP Partner MA Programmes:

**MA Solo/ Dance/ Authorship (SODA),
HZT - Inter-University Centre for Dance Berlin, DE**

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Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London, UK**

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**MA Performance Dramaturgy,
Academy of Drama Arts, University of Zagreb, HR**

**MA in Performing Arts Practice and Visual Culture,
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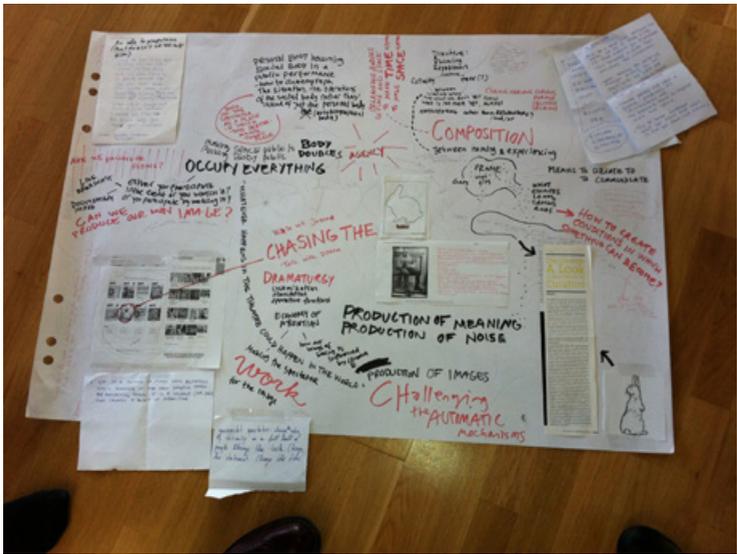


Photo: Kirsi Monni

Introduction: Poetics and Procedures

KIRSI MONNI

This collection of texts reflects some of the different discourses, practices and approaches that were explored by the participants of the Erasmus Intensive Project (IP) *Practicing Composition: Making Practice* initiated and co-ordinated by the MA SODA (Solo/ Dance/ Authorship) programme at the Inter-University Centre for Dance (HZT), University of the Arts, Berlin (2011–2013). The IP aimed to provide a framework for the live, interactive sharing, discussion and analysis of dramaturgical, compositional and choreographic approaches to the making and composition of physically-based performance that are currently in use in a number of practice-led graduate dance and choreographic Master's programmes in Europe. The central investigation of the IP was to ask how these approaches differ from or complement each other; and what kinds of pedagogical methods or approaches are used to develop, train and teach practice-led education in the composition and making of performance.¹

In the field of performing arts education the IP *Practicing Composition: Making Practice* was quite unique; it gathered together for three two-week long annual meetings the students, staff and lecturers from seven European universities and six MA programmes

1 This is how the main objectives were described in the initial Erasmus IP application. See 'Practicing Composition: Making Practice' in *Compendium of Selected Intensive Programmes with German Project Coordination* 2011/12 ed. Beata Körner, Bonn: DAAD, pp. 9–12 (in Online Brochure www.eu.daad.de)

in addition to guest lecturers from academia and the arts.² Not all the persons were present at all times; the students attended either once or twice depending on annual or biannual intakes; the MA programme in Madrid was a new participant for the third round (2013) and keynotes, lecturers and workshops varied every year. But the main participating MA programmes and universities stayed, with HZT carrying the role of the initiator and main co-ordinator, with the second IP (2012) organized by the Theatre Academy, Helsinki.³

The collection of texts which makes up *Practicing Composition: Making Practice* includes some of the keynote lectures that were held during the IPs as well as descriptions of most of the workshops, but also some new texts, dialogues and articles that are inspired by the encounters that happened and the new research relationships which were created. So this book is neither a pure documentation of the IP nor simply an account of its proceedings, but more like an enhanced documentation that goes one step further. As Goran Sergej Pristaš notes in his article in this book, “[a]ll the encounters are aleatory and their affects random”. Therefore I make no attempt to even try to guess, summarize or predict those consequences, experiences or outcomes that are followed by these encounters in the IPs. Instead I will note just a few things which would give reasons for this book being other than just documentation, but might also give a little bit of an overview.

One word or concept that objectively describes the IP would be ‘difference’ – of student backgrounds, of their phases as artists, of their artistic approaches, of theoretical discourses, of references.

2 See Appendix B for a full list of participants from 2011–13.

3 See Appendix A for an overview of the context and contents of each IP.

This partly also includes staff members, our differences in discursive familiarities or interests. In spite of differences in backgrounds the common approach to the studies as well as the mind set of the students was very ambitious and discursive, marking a clear step further from BA to MA level in art education. There has been a gradual but nowadays paradigmatic change in art education from purely vocational training to investigative curricula, to studies that are integrating practical and theoretical modes of studying, and that paradigmatic change is what this publication reflects, documents and contributes towards.

In many cases the challenges of these kinds of IP events are not only to do with the subject matter, but also with social situations and the collaborations they demand with many unfamiliar people. In these situations the lack of a common conceptual clarity and the sometimes sporadic nature of communication on the one hand is balanced by the richness and diversity of approaches, views and discourses on the other. In spite of the many challenges that arose during these IP gatherings I would like to note the overwhelming openness and kindness of the participants. I do not remember experiencing anything other than people treating each other with kindness, support, patience, openness and courage.

The Book

During the IP a lot of student feedback and other documentation material was produced, gathered and compiled. The materials varied from official reports for the EU to personal study diaries, commentaries, video recordings, photos and reference materials. Not all of it is still available or meant for public distribution, but some were, namely the workshop descriptions and some of the keynote lectures. During the final IP the idea of this present publication

was established and the guidelines for it were drawn up. The idea of sheer documentation was not intriguing. Instead enhancing the encounters and elaborating some of the themes that were introduced and handled during the IP seemed appropriate. Hence the idea of setting up dialogues between the contributors.

The IP title *Practicing Composition: Making Practice* is quite interesting in that respect. During the first IP it became apparent that the actual concept of composition was not part of the study curricula in most of the programmes.⁴ As Victoria Pérez Royo states in this book, she has seen a tendency for many of the modules that used to be called ‘Composition’ to change their names to new terms, such as ‘Research Methodologies’ or ‘Introduction to Problems of Research’. This is to avoid the “danger of proceduralism or narrow understanding of composition as an application of ready-made procedures without any deep questioning of their pertinence in relation to the research processes”.⁵ That was also the case in the IP workshops; in the title, ‘composition’ was a core concept of the IP but it was not actually explicitly dealt with as such. Instead diverse strategies for performance creation and artistic research were introduced. Still the question of composition lingered in the air.

Another core question arose around the function and understanding of the role of tools (practices, methods, strategies) in contemporary art pedagogy. The IP objectives were (as they should be in progressive MA programmes in our field) to identify and reflect

4 With exceptions of the Theatre Academy Helsinki programme where it was dealt with from an ontological stand point and ArtEZ Arnhem which had the concept of Open-Form Composition (OFC) as one of the three main strands of education until 2012.

5 See Pérez Royo, pp.91 ff.

innovative approaches to, and assumptions about, recent cross-disciplinary compositional tools and (aesthetic, cultural, contextual) strategies within the field of contemporary dance/body-based performance work.⁶ What in real life and in practice often may happen is that reflection on the underlying assumptions or theoretical base of each “tool” stays concealed or only partially investigated. This possibility was also noted in the IP, although, as I see it, the intention was exactly to avoid this, and the attitude was throughout investigative. What I mean by theoretical base or ontological reflection is the need to try to disclose and keep open the intentions and “causes” that each “tool” is indebted to. What makes a commodity differ from an artwork might be defined also from the point of view of these motivating “causes”.⁷ If with the commodity the questioning of the motivating causes has come to its end (the tea cup for example is manufactured from a suitable material by a capable manufacturer and formed to fulfill its intention: the aim of drinking hot tea), in artwork the interplay of the motivating causes are in full investigation in the creative process – although not operating in a vacuum but within an already opened world of meanings. So there is a fine line between the tool not being an instrument for commodity production, but being an instructive tool for reflection and research.

The need to tackle this problematic brought up the theme of poetics for the third IP (2013, Berlin), and in a way that has become the central theme of the texts in this book too. The question of “a tool” became a question of contemporary (individual) poetics, of

6 That is how the objectives were articulated in the initial IP application text (Allsopp, 2011).

7 About the “causes” that a work is indebted to, see Miika Luoto’s article ‘Work, Practice, Event: on the *poietic* character of the work of art’

the ontology of work, composition, production, product, process, performance, performer and performing. The discourses that were used to tackle these issues were as diverse during the IP as they are in this book. The line of thought and use of concepts differ when they are informed by poststructuralist theories or more phenomenological or art philosophical approaches. So the texts of this book do not constitute any theoretically solid approach (and neither are they aimed at constituting one) but are a composition of texts, encounters, lines of thought and practices that reflect some of the current diversities of a dance and body-based performance field and its education.

The book is structured in four sections. They do not follow the chronology of the three IPs but are organized sparsely depending on their approach to poetics and composition or dramaturgy. The sections consist of individual (keynote) articles, dialogues between participating staff or students and workshop descriptions, which are documentations of the practices that were introduced within each IP. The articles and dialogues treat the IP theme on a more ontological level whereas the workshop descriptions document the practices, in transparent, generous and open access manner.

Poetics, Ontology

In Section One *Poetics, Ontology*, the keynote texts and the dialogue treat explicitly the question of poetics and composition. In his keynote article Miika Luoto gives a profound reading of the *poietic* character of the work of art referring to Hannah Arendt, Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin and Giorgio Agamben. Luoto tackles a core question in our contemporary art world, namely the essential connection between art and production by opening up the historical backgrounds and modern interpretations of the notions of *poiesis*,

poetics, production and the work of art. For Plato “any cause that brings into existence something that was not there before” is *poiesis*. Luoto elaborates the notion of *poiesis* firstly by reminding us of the Greek distinction between *poiesis* (production) and *praxis* (action) and presenting Arendt’s distinction between labour, work and action. For Arendt labour deals with necessities of life, work provides human life with a secure place whereas action, as a sharing of words and deeds, is a revelatory power, the source of meaning in the sense that it lets things show themselves as what and how they are, in the public space.

I think Arendt’s public space is especially interesting in that it is ontologically plural; it is the condition of the reality of a shared world. We have to act in order to show ourselves in our individuality in the public space but the public realm of appearing, is woven of “the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and for which no common measurement or denominator can be advised”. I agree with Miika Luoto’s view that “[i]t would be possible and perhaps fruitful to develop Arendt’s analysis of action with reference to certain artistic practices, for instance those that do not produce a material work but a momentary and site-specific act.”

Secondly Luoto elaborates the aspect of *cause* in Plato’s statement by following the interpretation proposed by Heidegger in his reading of Aristotle. To understand that notion it has to be freed from the modern idea of causality. According to Heidegger, a cause means, “that to which something else is indebted” or that which is responsible for something else. The *matter*, *the form* and the particular end, *telos*, are gathered together by the fourth cause, the careful consideration of the craftsman, in Heidegger’s example, the causes that the “silver chalice” is indebted to. “The causes *allow* something to *show itself* and so to be present *as* something.”

I see that developing and deconstructing the different aspects of the notion of ‘causes’ in contemporary art praxis might bring up fruitful insights on the topics of tools (knowledge, procedures, skills, methods), materials, form and function. Luoto elaborates this by discussing the historical change whereby the notion of the completeness of the work as the state in which it is finished, is challenged by the notion of the idea of a constitutive openness of the work of art. To Aristotle the mode of being of the work is *energeia*, “actuality”, actual presence, which stands in opposition to *dynamis*, potentiality, the mode of being of what is merely available and useful for something, for aesthetic enjoyment, interpretation, presentation etc. This change has been so profound that finally, as Luoto states, the structural incompleteness of the work can become an explicit topic of a “poetics of the open work” – a theme which is developed with the present texts in various ways: for example, the notion of “composition as collective learning environment” by Victoria Pérez Royo, of “latency” by Ric Allsopp, of “open form” by João da Silva, of “formless” by Konstantina Georgilou, of “framing reality” by Saara Hannula, of “interruption” and “incompleteness” by Goran Sergej Pristaš.

Luoto finishes his text by considering the idea, proposed by Agamben, that the work of art may manifest in our time – when poiesis is split into technological and aesthetic production – a “negative” poiesis. In certain works of art, nothing is produced that could be used or enjoyed aesthetically. However, in such an event of production without a definable product, a nothingness related to poiesis may enigmatically speak to us. The opening of our historical place is revealed only if the very presence of beings available to us is unsecured, only if we are challenged to leave the shelter of secured positions (the sheer availability of something produced). This may

happen if we follow the unsettling character of the event of poiesis taking place in the work of art.

The second text of this section is Ric Allsopp's keynote article "Notes on Poetics and Choreography". In this rich article Allsopp gives an encyclopedic, historical and intertextual background to formulations and theories of poetics by certain philosophers and artists (Barthes, Foucault, Deleuze, Louppe, Breton). The variety of formulations show, how in modern times, the question of poetics is drawn from historical premises but is theorised, contextualised and personalised according to each frame of interest as well as being in constant flux and under investigation. For example, for Barthes poetics "is not a form of hermeneutics (interpretation) and it is not intended to find or recover meaning in a text; it describes how meanings are generated by the texts". As for poetics as a means of understanding *how* rather than *what*, that leads the notion of poetics more towards ontological considerations of artwork rather than staying in the area of "structural advice". Laurence Louppe develops this path by stating that "to dance is to show what the dance makes (of)/does to me" and in this sense a dance poetics will therefore be located at the intersection of the polarities of the body that creates or sustains the dance, and the body that receives or perceives it. The poetics "should itself be that intersection, the fluid interstice where these corporeal exchanges are negotiated". These examples of thinking about poetics also describe Allsopp's focal interest, which has been pondering the relationship between language and movement, between a poetics of writing and a poetics of dance. To elaborate that further Allsopp takes a closer look at Jackson Mac Low's (1964) *The Pronouns: A Collection of 40 Dances for the Dancers* and the reworking of it by Clarinda Mac Low (2012) that contributes to the long chain of avant-garde developments of

writing and dance since the 1940s. A chain that actually would need a whole research project of its own, since as stated by Allsopp, “both poetry and dance can operate in excess of the functions of language and discourse, opening possibilities of radical coherence and affection”.

In the dialogue “Composition: Relatedness and Collective Learning Environments” between Victoria Pérez Royo and myself, the discussion arises from the actuality of art pedagogies and artistic research from our respective, philosophical and practical, perspectives. The concept of composition (as poetics) is treated from several points of view: the dangers of proceduralism and the loss of the singularity of a (choreographic) research question; the need to create accurate and alternative terminologies instead of using stagnated ones; and the idea of shifting the notion of composition from focusing solely on individual activity and productivity to reconsidering the possibilities of collaboration and the creation of collective learning environments. Thus a progressive input between the politics of society and art pedagogy is proposed. The ontological consideration of composition also leads the discussion also towards artistic research and the problematic of methodising artistic processes. Pérez Royo tackles the issue by making a distinction between whether the method refers to the production of the work and the development of the research process, or whether it refers to the creation of mechanisms that share the process, making it understandable and traceable. Although throughout the 20th century many procedures and methods were created that served the critique of the concept of the author and opening it up to extended meaning, Pérez Royo states that in the current situation of increasing physical and subjective dispossession, artistic subjectivity can be understood as a place of political resistance. The

methods that were critically useful a few decades ago may not serve the same function any more. On the other hand, the possibilities of rehabilitating the concept of composition by approaching it from the ontological perspective of relatedness (as letting-something-be-seen-in-its-togetherness-with-something) and the possibility of modulating the conventional elements or terminology of composition according each area of study, is a topic of discussion in this article.

Pérez Royo also writes a description of the workshop given in 2013 (Berlin) under the name “Subjectivation in Solo-Work”. In this workshop some of the ideas presented in the article were implemented into practice, especially those concerning new approaches to artistic collaboration. Pérez Royo presents a practice called “translations” and provides a theoretical base for it by using Leopold Paneiro’s theories of poetry and translation, and Roland Barthes’ poetics of the text.

During and after each IP the students wrote, draw, recorded and photographed various documents where they elaborated further the IP themes. We have added just a few of these many documents to this book to give the reader a glimpse of the creative responses that were provided with the IPs.

The last text of this section is student Emilie Gallier’s short documentation where she ponders insightfully on the composing process asking: When does composition take place? Instead of placing composition at a final or late stage of the process, she considers that all the choices within the generative process constitute a compositional attitude. In a way, composition is always present, in the protocol, in all the choices and decisions along the way from the first intuition of the process to the last action.

Form, Open form

In Section Two *Form, Open form* the discussion tackles the many underlying tensions and historically formed presumptions surrounding composition and form. The texts handle the tensions between compositional ideas and social order, between representation and enactment, between form and open form, between arrangements and assemblage, between structure and emergence, to name a few of those notions that readdress or disturb habitual compositional relationships.

In his keynote article “Something Else: On Latency and Composition” Ric Allsopp gives an erudite and thorough view to approaches that have since the later half of the 20th century brought up critical yet new compositional ideas. The “meta” concept which ties together these new formulations for Allsopp is latency; latency as both the dynamic “choreographic image”, the “something else” in a poetic work that is an enactment beyond representation and also those present but not manifest “potencies of social body” that lie underneath the present gestalt, a gestalt which is reaffirmed with the repetition of compositional forms of present social orders and political structures. Allsopp presents several different strategies and approaches to composition that have given an altogether new perspective from which to ponder not only structural ideas on composition, but ideas of its function: what does a composition do within a certain situation and historical context? In this way he manages to lay out a whole field of concepts and ideas that might provide possibilities for developing new theories of choreography, starting straight ahead from the “post-metaphysical” paradigm.

Allsopp connects the major scientific revelations of the early 20th century, quantum physics and the principles of determinacy and indeterminacy, as well as psychoanalysis and the critiques of met-

aphysics, to the aesthetics and experimentation of the neo-avant-garde and its critical relation to modernist ideals of form. Following artists, scientists, philosophers such as Charles Olson, Henry Margenau, John Cage, Gilles Deleuze and Walter Benjamin from late 20th century, to recent thinkers such as Sean Cubit, Jane Bennett, Andrew Hewitt, Allsopp builds a genealogy of the evolution of current compositional ideas. Fluxus event scores from the 1960s provided a shift from “pre-conditioned object” (a term from Cage) to choreo-*graphed* composition as a latent “framework within which something can take place, a transaction can be affected”. Since then the evolution of “choreographic image” has expanded the notion of choreography to contain the idea of “the movement of materials toward indeterminate and open forms that manifest latency and reflect changes in wider political, social and cultural attitudes” as Allsopp formulates it.

One of the most current theories in the era of ecological awareness and necessity is probably Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of *assemblage*. Allsopp introduces this through a reading of Jane Bennett’s concept of *heterogeneous assemblages*. Assemblages are, in Bennett’s reading, *ad hoc* groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. They are living confederations, where each member of the assemblage has a certain vital force but is also an agency of the assemblage. It is never a solid block, but an open-ended collective, a “non-totalisable” sum in an ontologically heterogeneous field of agencies. In Allsopp’s mind the concept of assemblage could be involved within a context of composition, “which understands composition not as instrumentalising material practice, or as foreclosure, but as distributive, open and generative agency”.

In the following article “How Do I know That I Don’t Know?” Ric Allsopp is in dialogue with João da Silva on the themes of form and

improvisation, especially da Silva's own research topic Open-Form Composition, a choreographic concept conceived by Mary O'Donnell (Fulkerson) and the ideas of not-knowing and risk taking in improvisation. These themes and concepts have "been around" for decades in choreographic practice but have perhaps lacked proper (critical) historical contextualisation, which the wider frame that this collection of texts handles may provide. Da Silva's interest in improvisation is not in its "free" and "spontaneous" aspects of it but rather the interplay between knowing and being engaged with the "problem at hand" as well as the ability to commit to "what is there". For da Silva the concept of Open-Form Composition (OFC) as developed and employed by O'Donnell provides a good example of this. "It entails thinking about and doing composition by means of an understanding of form as being always already open (never-fully closed) and as such contingent". A composition of forms that are always open importantly needs the commitment, not only to the act of (the I) dancing but also to the very openness of form and work at hand. When placing improvisation within a larger frame of compositional strategies, da Silva asks significant questions – can you be anarchic and responsible? Improvise and be critical? Does improvisation qualify as a critical practice? Da Silva's answer is that "if improvisation is apprehended as a collective problem-solving technique, then problems must be clearly stated, so that you are having to bite on something which is not about you, but about the project at hand".

The second section continues with Konstantina Georegelou's keynote article "*Performless: dramaturgies of performing less*". The article starts with the description of a disturbing performance by Societas Raffaello Sanzio and turns into focused research on concept of *l'informe* (formless) conceived by George Bataille, with

its historical backgrounds and conceptualisations. Georgelou offers an intriguing journey through specific discussion in art history concerning the ontology of form and recent notions of performativity. For the background: Bataille used the concept of form to indicate something that is ontologically described and classified. So what does the formless then indicate? Or rather how does it operate? For Bataille *l'informe* is not aesthetic concept *per se* but refers to his theories of the processes of resisting social homogeneity, notions that potentially are adducing agitation, dispossession and discomfort. Georgelou discusses different conceptualisations from historians and theorists Yves Alain Bois and Rosalind Kraus as well as Didi Huberman, and a recent study by philosopher Boyan Manchev, to carefully build up her own proposition for the possible use of the term in a framework of contemporary performance and its dramaturgical strategies. Within these conceptualisations Georgelou touches many current topics such as the resistance against essentialist thinking, against the dichotomies between spirituality and physicality, and the cultural and political expectations of form and (per)forming. Following Manchev's interpretation of formless, which he sees as an experience of the limits of form, Georgelou sees that the dramaturgical operations of (per)formless invites the audience to experience potentiality, "to-act" and "not-to-act", and thus invokes the event of the unexpected. In this situation "the process of how meaning is produced is attacked and rendered inoperative rather than the meaning *per se*".

Georgelou also writes a description of the workshop she gave in 2012 (Helsinki) under the title "Dis/owning Choreography". One cannot say that the concept of formless was treated as such in the workshop which indirectly addressed the issues of making, unmaking, language and composition, ownership, authorship, collective

and sharing. These topics were treated through various operations, with reference to materials from Michel Foucault, Bojana Kunst, Mette Ingvarstsen and others.

An other workshop documentation in this section is the text “Co-Dependent Creation” by Ari Tenhula. This text and the choreographic propositions, strategies and theoretical base that are introduced are again one example of the expanded notions of choreography that represent what Allsopp described as “distributive, open and generative agency”. Tenhula draws the proposed choreographic operations from recent knowledge of how we perceive, copy and understand movement, referring to Marco Iacobini’s theories on empathy and mirroring. He then develops compositional ideas from a systemic understanding of (inter)action and agency referring to Peter Checkland’s theories. The result is *choreo-graphic* (scores), propositions that lead to dynamic and emergent compositions, which could be applied in creating choreographic situations in various social and cultural contexts.

The last short report of this section is by student Ellen Jeffrey. She participated in both of the workshops presented in this section and reflects how the new compositional ideas transform the insight of composition or working methods she is used to. She especially brings up the collaborative modes of working and compositional ideas that provide the indeterminate flux of action rather than fixed structures. “Working with others in the group – encountering their ideas and putting those ideas into practice, letting go of my own apprehensions and trying to work from a new perspective” are among her “Things I Put in My Pocket” from the IP.

Framing Reality

In Section Three *Framing Reality* the texts position the themes of poetics and composition in relation to reality. They ask how or whether choreographic and performing activities suggest new structures or choreographies that could be integrated into the way in which reality is constructed or lived through. In their dialogue Saara Hannula and Sophia New discuss these issues based on the workshops they gave in 2012 (Hannula) and 2013 (New) but also based on their own artistic research practices. New refers to her work as a performance artist and Hannula introduces the extensive work that the Finnish collective Reality Research Centre has done in developing various artistic strategies for recognising, analysing and reconstructing the ways existing relations and structures are formed. The main task of the Reality Research Center has been to “observe, question, and renew the surrounding reality through performative means”. In that endeavour the concept of “framing reality” is a useful tool. Hannula sees that in a way, all art can be seen as a way of framing reality, so as to offer a limited view or specific perspective on something. But that concept is especially useful in the field of performing arts, which create temporal, spatial and experiential frames that allow others to experience specific, often intensified versions of reality. The nearest and most intimate version of “framed reality” considers our bodies as a “field of relation out of which and through which worldings occur and evolve”, as Erin Manning articulates in the cited interview in the article. How we perform our selves in relation to a notion of subject and object and how we construct or choreograph our gender are examples of framing a certain reality that is constantly changing within different contexts as Sophia New sees it. New also brings forth the notion of how one is “undone by the other”, dispossessed by others, affected

by others and able to affect others following Judith Butler's and Athena Athanasiou's thinking. Hannula continues by pondering the certain boundlessness of "inner" and "outer" realities, and the intimate act of choreographing. She sees that when one begins to think about choreographing relations or relational fields, one can no longer locate oneself outside of what one is choreographing; one is choreographing oneself as much as the others; one is composing the relational and experiential field, not only around but also among collaborators.

In the comprehensive workshop documentation "Utopian Choreography: Developing Tools and Techniques for Choreographing Reality" given in 2012 Hannula discusses these themes further. The documentation gives a detailed description of those specific approaches and procedures that were used to elaborate the reciprocal relation with the choreographer and the choreographed, the inner and outer realities of expanded performance practices. The students Niels Bovri and Kiaran Kumar elaborate the workshop themes further with the workshop report and documentation "Letter to the Parents". They describe how they carried out the task of choreographic analyses of a specific site they had chosen. Bovri and Kumar chose a children's playground near the Theatre Academy where they participated in the children's play and afterwards made choreographic analyses of energies and rhythms that they experienced on site. Although the children were invited to come to the Theatre Academy to join the presentation, this did not prove possible, and instead they wrote a beautiful letter to the children's parents to explain and share their process.

Linked to these themes Martin Hargreaves documents the workshop on "post-identity" politics given by him and New in 2013. The workshop treated the questions of performing self, gender and

dispossession via various procedures and stages including the keynote lecture performance by Vaginal Davies titled “Beware the Holy Retarded Whore – The Temporary, Contemporary Contemporaneous Free Style”. The workshop themes were the same as those that Sophia New-discusses in the dialogue, themes which invited the students to quite internal and intimate processes thus connecting Allsopp’s ideas of choreographing “latencies” or Hannula’s “framing realities” with choreographies “that manifest latency and reflect changes in wider political, social and cultural attitudes”.

The last text in this section is a brief summary of the keynote given by Scott deLahunta in 2011 entitled “Production of Scores: a reflection on composition”. The summary is called “10 Questions about Documentation during Creation” and it can be seen as a description of various procedures used during the compositional process and how these procedures frame the reality the compositional process is dealing with.

Interruption, Action

The fourth Section *Interruption, Action* introduces a kind of precarious poetics, practices of contingency in art, performance and dramaturgy. Goran Sergej Pristaš sets up a whole scenery of dramaturgical operations concerned with the principle of incompleteness, a general principle of creation through interruption. In developing this he refers to the aleatory materialism of Louis Althusser and the notion of interstice, a space of interruption between elements developed by Jean Luc Godard and Gilles Deleuze. As a dramaturgical element interstice is foundational in cinematic dramaturgies but here Pristaš brings consideration of it to the field of a live performance. By separating elements the interstice leaves room for thematising what is otherwise invisible or abstract. Through

separation the interstice also brings elements together but it is a disjunctive operation, showing the irrationality of “false continuity”. This adds yet another discourse to our conversation on composition and poetics. Following the poetics of incompleteness and interstice Pristaš sees that “every set (conjuncture, assemblage) of a process, its every *operating* segment, results from an interruption, not from a culmination”. Although once a conjuncture is established, its elements play by the rules and stick to the laws, the laws are haunted by what Althusser calls a “radical instability”, their groundlessness and aleatory nature of the laws.

Pristaš implements and elaborates this kind of dramaturgical approaches to his work with the Croatian performance collective BADco. The article describes two dramaturgical tools developed by BADco. Firstly a choreographic software called *Whatever Dance Toolbox* and secondly a concept conceived by Tomislav Medak, *Post-hoc Dramaturgy*. Implementing these tools in their artistic process BADco develops a unique poetic language of an “exploded view of diachronic processes”.

In his workshop documentation Pristaš describes the procedures that were used in the 6-day workshop “Choreographic Unconscious” in 2012. The workshop introduced Andrew Hewitt’s concepts of “social choreography”, Frederic Jameson’s “political unconscious”, and concepts of a choreographic unconscious developed by Marko Kostanić and BADco. It then introduced several operations of deconstructing already existing choreographies as a source of a new creation.

One might say that “performing a lecture” and lecturing while performing are examples of reflective contingency in composition and modern forms of performance poetics. In their collective article and their 2013 workshop documentation Konstantina Georgelou and

Jasna Žmak discuss the premises, histories and possible futures for the genre of performance lectures. Referring to researchers Maaïke Bleeker and Aldo Milohnić, artists Rabih Mroué and Saska Rakef, they build an overview on the theme. Pondering on relations between research and art and noticing the tendency of art to seek to position itself as a relevant instance in the production of knowledge, they remark that lecture performances have sided themselves more with the performing than the lecturing part of the term. So the intention in most cases does not bring the academic and artistic types of discourses into direct connection but rather searches for new or other ways of presenting knowledge. The argumentation for this view arises from the early examples of lecture performances: Robert Morris' *21.3* (1964) and Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) where "lecturing is not used for producing academic discourse but is a site of deconstruction, criticism or analyses, all of which are undertaken through employing different performing procedures". Here the lecture performs the *presentation* of research (and not the results of the actual research) thus framing the performative aspect of knowledge distribution. Following Bleeker's analyses Georgelou and Žmak notice that in the later approaches to lecture performances the intention or focus changed to a more self-reflexive attitude to one's own doing and the conditions of production and reception. Within this approach they brought up well-known examples of Xavier le Roy's *Product of Circumstances* (1999) and Jerome Bel's *Veronique Doisneau* (2004). As an example of the most recent evolution within the genre they present the work of Rabih Mroué – *The Pixelated Revolution* (2012) and Manolis Tsipos – *I Lived My Myth in Greece* (2013). In these works the "performance lectures have become much less self-referential and self-(de-)constructive and much more about something *else*". Here the perfor-

mance lecture works more as a strategy for handling the material and a form of poetics than as a site for self-reflection. In my mind these recent works could also be seen as examples of “action” in terms of Hannah Arendt’s distinctions between work, labour and action. We have to act in order to show ourselves in our individuality in the ontologically plural public space in the shared world. As Georgelou and Žmak state, these “lecture performances can be perceived more clearly as political and social acts of thought that happen in public by means of art and in the (de)form of a lecture”.

Georgelou and Žmak gave a workshop on performing lectures in the last IP in 2013. In their documentation text they give a detailed description of how they approached the theme: firstly by exploring the constitutive aspects of lectures in terms of performance and secondly by drawing and adapting strategies from previous lecture performances and ideas on language, communication and collaboration.

The last text of this section is a dialogue between MA students and IP participants Mila Pavičević from the MA Performance Dramaturgy programme in Zagreb and Sergiu Matis from MA Solo/Dance/Authorship in Berlin. The dialogue follows the principle of creation through interruption. It is a series of interruptions that associatively handles the lines of thoughts and ideas that occupy their minds in the midst of just finishing their MA studies. In this dialogue they put the ideas they are treating within their MA theses in dialogue with each other whilst speculating about the future in the stream of referential interests and landmarks during their studies. I read it as if they are forging, in an almost frantic, passionate manner their own poetics, harnessing it out of all the influences of their education, turning the ideas and discourses gradually into their own individual poetics. Though their individual poetics seems

to be very collaborative in its manner, as the ethos of their generation has turned out to be.

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Photo: Marion Borriss



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1. Poetics, Ontology

Work, practice, event: on the *poietic* character of the work of art⁸

MIIKA LUOTO

What does it mean to be interested, especially with respect to art, in *poiesis*? What does *poiesis* make us think? Moreover, isn't there already something noteworthy in the fact that an old Greek word starts to draw our attention? Philosophical interest in *poiesis* has grown especially in the wake of Martin Heidegger and, less directly, of Walter Benjamin. And yet, as the two thinkers in different ways testify, that interest does not issue primarily from a theoretical motivation but, rather, from an experience concerning our historical situation. What is at stake in *poiesis*?

In classical Greek the word *poiesis* means both production and poetry. In fact, the double meaning of *poiesis* has been preserved and passed down to us in the name “poetics”, which classically designates discourses on poetry (and on art in general) from the perspective of its production: *poietike technē*, or *ars poetica*. For two millennia, poetics served to name the primary knowledge of art. It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that the term “poetics” was largely replaced by the term “aesthetics”. The success

8 This article follows the keynote lecture that was held in the Erasmus Intensive 2013 *Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance* in Berlin.

of the designation aesthetics points to the fact that the dominant perspective on art had changed from the production of the work to its reception, conceived of as the state of the subject judging the work on the basis of the feeling aroused by it.

How can we understand, against this historical background, the rise of the question of *poiesis*? As I try to show in the following, it cannot be understood merely as a return to poetics in any traditional sense. What matters instead is a return to the word itself behind the designation poetics, the word *poiesis*, which now speaks to us as something questionable and calls us as something to be thought. As every writer knows, words call us and speak to us before they mean something, and in that sense they are the silent material of thought. As the material of thought, words are not something that can be used, formed and made intelligent but, rather, something that dispossess us, and so expose us to what needs to be thought. At the same time, words of thought allow us to sense that every act of thinking owes its existence to something it can never master, to an obscure debt.⁹ We are ourselves neither at the origin of language, nor at the origin of thought – and considering *poiesis* will give us the opportunity to think how this is perhaps particularly true of what is called art.

What does the word *poiesis* allow us to sense and think? What is the need of thought it brings to us? Is it perhaps an urgent need? Let us start from the fact the word *poiesis* has two basic meanings:

9 The call of words and the speaking of language is a constant theme in Heidegger's later work. Here, however, I would like to refer to Jean-François Lyotard's development of the theme with respect to modern art, which, once it is set free from the aesthetics of the beautiful and of form, turns toward matter; cf. the last chapters of "Après le sublime, état de l'esthétique" (Lyotard 1988).

production and poetry. If we take production in the sense of technical-industrial production and poetry as literature, we have two things that seem to be very far from each other and without any common denominator. Although we speak, for instance, of theatre production and the production of a writer, today the link between production and poetry (or art in general) is very easily understood on the basis of a vague idea of cultural production. The question remains: is there something that essentially connects poetry or art and production together? In other words, is there another way to cross the distance separating the two meanings of *poiesis*, poetry and production, than the idea of cultural production?

Let us begin to answer the question by noting something simple: the work of art is simultaneously something produced and something productive. The work of art stems from human activity, but essentially exceeds that activity: it is a product and yet always *more* than a mere product – therefore it is called “work” and not “product”. The work is brought forth to allow the coming forth of something *else*. And yet, this “more”, this “something else”, this “differing” is nowhere other than in the work itself; it is the “working” of the work, its own productivity.¹⁰ In other words, the work *differs from itself*. This means, from the point of view of artistic practice, that the existence of the work is dependent on the creative practice begun by the artist, but the creativity of that practice is in turn dependent on the fact that its “product” proves to be creative and a beginning itself – that is, proves to be a “work”. This is the question

10 For a rigorous development of the question, see the introductory chapter of Martin Heidegger, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” (Heidegger 1980 [1950]).

with which I would like to begin here: how to think about this double production, double working, double beginning characteristic of art?

The very destiny of art in our time is essentially connected to the problem of the nature of production: this is at least what Heidegger and Benjamin, and others coming after them, cause us to think. The word production comes from the Latin *pro-ducere*, meaning literally “to lead forth” or “bring forth”. Can we develop that notion in a way that allows us to consider the double production of art? Most of the basic concepts with the help of which we think about art come from the Greeks. What do they say about production?

Plato writes in the dialogue *Symposium*: “any cause that brings into existence something that was not there before” is *poiesis*.¹¹ This means simply that there is *poiesis* every time something comes from non-being to being. Every art (*techne*, that is, know-how, skill, technique) is poietic, whether it is the art of the craftsman producing the utensil or the art of the artist producing the work. Even nature is poietic insofar as it spontaneously allows something to become manifest, like a flower blossoming in the spring or marble glimmering in the sunlight.

This Greek idea of *poiesis* may seem to be, to our modern view, a much too general notion concerning the nature of production. It is indeed difficult to see in it a proper starting point for a reflection on the relation between production and art. But let us start with the difficulty: why is it so difficult for us to understand production

11 *Sym.* 205b: *hē gar toi ek tou mē ontos eis to on ionti hotōoun aitia pasa esti poiēsis*. The quoted, and simple, translation is by Michel Joyce, from Plato, *The Collected Dialogues*, 1961. A more literal translation by Seth Benardete in 2001 says of *poiesis* that it is “responsible for anything whatsoever that is on the way from what is not to what is”. *Plato’s Symposium*, 2001.

as coming-into-presence that may take place either naturally or through human art? First of all, we lack the basic Greek distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, between production and action. Furthermore, we also lack the Greek separation of these two from “work” in the sense of labour, of encountering the necessities of life. Instead, we tend to identify these three activities in an idea of “practice”, which is based on a wholly different experience concerning human free will and natural causality. Although it means confusing activities held absolutely distinct by the Greeks, we can quite naturally understand human doing in general as “practical productive work”. For us, the nature of human *praxis* as well as the nature of production are something very different compared with the Greek *praxis* and *poiesis*, since we conceive of all human doing – including eventually freedom and creativity – as the manifestation of a subjective will that produces concrete effects. Such an understanding of human activities has become so self-evident today that it is difficult for us to recognise other ways of distinguishing between production (including the production at stake in poetry or art), action and work.

Labour, work and action

In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt attempts to work out in detail the differences between labour, work, and action insofar as they constitute the three basic modes of *vita activa*, the active human life as distinguished from *vita contemplativa*, the theoretical life.¹² She proceeds by showing that these three modes of active life are irreducible to each other and, moreover, that they correspond to three

¹² Arendt 1989 [1958].

concrete conditions of human existence. Labour, understood as necessary work, corresponds to the condition of animal life: as organic beings, we have to labour, that is, to deal with the vital necessities of life. Work, understood as the production of things, corresponds to the condition of existence Arendt calls worldliness: in order to provide human life with a secure place, we have to work, that is, to produce an artificial world of things which is lasting. Action, finally, understood as the sharing of words and deeds, corresponds to the condition of existence she calls plurality: we have to act in order to show ourselves in our own unique individuality in the public space.

According to Arendt, action is the only human activity which is properly human. Labour, defined as the fulfilment of those needs that are necessary for the maintenance of life, is not a particularly human activity, but something that human beings have in common with all living organisms. Work, on the other hand, defined as the production of artefacts, introduces a human purposiveness, but as an activity it could well be entrusted to machines. Action, in contrast, is subject neither to the necessities of life, nor to the production of an independent work. Defined as a unique capacity of initiative, of beginning, action is an essentially revelatory power. Arendt emphasises that it is the only mode of active life that reveals its agent and, in the same movement, allows things to appear as meaningful in the light of a human world.

In contrast to the philosophical interpretation of work in the wake of Hegel and Marx, Arendt does not conceive of work as the humanisation of nature. The essentially non-natural world created by human work and characterised by the durability of things, first becomes a properly human world when it is transformed by the power of action and speech into a space of appearing. Action, then, is the source of meaning, not in the sense that it endows subsistent

things with significance, but in the sense that it first lets things show themselves in the public space. Arendt's view is here simply phenomenological: meaning is not something beyond phenomena, but the particular light in which they show themselves as what and how they are. Meaning is conditioned by the irreducibility of the different ways in which the world is disclosed to us: "only where things can be seen by many and in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear".¹³ What is peculiar to Arendt's phenomenological approach to action as a mode of *vita activa* is her way of emphasising the constitutive function of plurality, something that has tended to be forgotten in the tradition of Western thought. For her, the role of plurality is ontological, as it is the condition of the reality of a shared world. The public realm of appearing, she says, is woven of "the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can be advised".¹⁴

However, action is, in its revelatory power, something essentially ambiguous. In action the agent is as well a sufferer, since the initiative of the act is from the outset entangled in an indefinable pre-existing web of human relationships, which is rewoven again and again by new partners. As the capacity for freedom, action paradoxically seems to entangle us in the web of human relationships in such a way that we appear to be less free in the sphere of action than anywhere else.

13 Arendt 1989 [1958], 57.

14 Arendt 1989 [1958].

Compared to action which is essentially unpredictable, work (in the sense of production) seem to be a much more successful mode of active life, since it is able to bring about, through the mastery of its elements, something lasting and useful, that is, the product. Therefore, Arendt tries to show, our understanding of active life becomes more and more dominated by the model of production, which eventually gives us all the basic standards with which human doing is interpreted and evaluated. As a consequence, it becomes possible to consider everything as a means to an end, that is, according to its instrumental value. If the defence of the irreducible significance of action plays such a major role in *The Human Condition*, this can be understood against the aforementioned historical tendency.

In order to return to the problem of art and *poiesis*, I would like to ask: how is art related to the distinctions worked out by Arendt? It is quite revealing, yet in no way surprising, that art is explicitly considered in *The Human Condition* in two different contexts: first, with respect to the sphere of work (production), and second, with respect to the sphere of action. On the one hand, the work of art is something produced and, as a produced thing, characterised by durability. However, the durability of the work of art is not relative to any “use”. The “work” is removed from the sphere of the use of other “products” and is therefore of a higher order – it is “permanence” through ages. Due to this particular permanence, the work of art allows the reification of thoughts – necessary for their preservation and inheritance – in the beautiful appearing of the thing. In this way, Arendt argues, art has the capacity to reveal that which within the realm of things and their

instrumental value transcends that realm and points to the space of public appearing.¹⁵

On the other hand, the work of art is something more than a thing-like product and, rather, comparable to an act, as its essential function is to reveal. Following Aristotle, Arendt argues that the work has, through artistic mimesis, the capacity to reveal precisely that which escapes all generalisation and reification: especially human relationships as they are in act, as well as the agents of action in their individuality.¹⁶ It would be possible and perhaps fruitful to develop Arendt's analysis of action with reference to certain artistic practices, for instance those that do not produce a material work but a momentary and site-specific act. This, however, is not my aim here.

I took up Arendt's analysis because it seems to be necessary, in order to approach the dimension of *poiesis*, to dismantle the confusion of action, production and work (in Arendt's terms: action, work, and labour). Her reflection might at once help us, to a certain extent at least, to free ourselves from the dominant interpretation of all human doing in terms of subjective will producing real effects. We must admit, however, that we have not been able to advance with respect to our initial question, the one that concerns the essential connection between art and production. Arendt's way of addressing the question of production within the confines of *vita activa* passes over our problem: production is considered basically from the perspective of human life, as the human capacity to bring forth a world of artefacts, not from the perspective of the event in which something non-existent becomes existent. Consequently, production

15 Arendt 1989 [1958], 167ff.

16 Arendt 1989 [1958], 187f.

is understood (in the common sense) as a process which culminates in the product, not as an event of coming-into-presence which takes place in the work. With respect to art, the limit of Arendt's analysis lies in the fact that she does not consider the *ontological* sense of production as *poiesis*. Therefore, we have to return to the Greek understanding of *poiesis*.

***Poiesis* in Greek thought**

According to Plato, as already noted, *poiesis* is “any cause that brings into existence something that was not there before”. *Poiesis*, then, means “cause”. But what is a cause? We are so used to thinking about the cause of something in terms of causality, that is, in terms of the relation between a cause and an effect, that we hardly see anything questionable in that notion. We easily think, for instance, that the cause of the existence of the work of art is the artist's productive work, which includes subjective will, learned skill, inborn talent, mastery of materials, etc. The Greek way of thinking about cause, however, is very different compared to the modern idea of causality. In order to get closer to the Greek meaning of cause, I would like to follow the interpretation proposed by Heidegger.¹⁷ It has the great merit of freeing the Greek notion of cause and, consequently, the notion of *poiesis* from the modern idea of causality.

According to Heidegger, the Greek word for cause, *aition*, means “that to which something else is indebted” or that which is responsible for something else.¹⁸ The various causes of a thing are various ways in which it is indebted to something else. Heidegger takes his

17 Heidegger 1990 [1954].

18 Heidegger 1990 [1954], 12; English translation 314.

example from the sphere of handicraft: a silver chalice used in the realm of consecration and bestowal. As the chalice is made of silver, it is indebted to the *matter* silver. However, it is also indebted to other things, since it is present as a chalice instead of, say, a silver brooch or ring. As its matter appears in the form of a chalice, it is indebted to the *form* of “chaliceness”, into which the material silver is admitted. Again, the chalice is indebted to still other things, since it is present as a sacrificial vessel instead of being present, say, as an everyday utensil. It is bound and completed by a particular end, *telos*. From our modern perspective, we easily tend to understand the *telos* of a thing as its purpose or goal. Heidegger however emphasises that for the Greek experience the *telos* of a thing is nothing external to it but, rather, its *limiting end* which brings it to completion and from which it, then, *begins to be*. Hence, the silver chalice is indebted to the *end* which allows it to be, as it limits it as a sacrificial vessel.¹⁹

Finally, there is a fourth cause of the silver chalice, namely the silversmith. However, he is not the cause of the thing in the sense that the thing is the effect of his productive work. This mode of cause, which is the most familiar one for us, cannot be found, according to Heidegger, in Aristotle’s writings. Instead, the craftsman is the one who *carefully considers* the three aforementioned causes to which the thing is indebted and, by considering them, *gathers* them together. To carefully consider is, in Greek, *legein* and *logos*, and it has the meaning of “letting appear”. So the silversmith is co-responsible for the silver chalice, but only in the sense that he is

19 Heidegger 1990 [1954], 13; English translation 315.

the starting point from which the appearing of the thing *as* a silver chalice takes its departure.²⁰

Let us note some important aspects of *poiesis* as cause revealed by Heidegger's interpretation. The thing is, in its particular mode of presence, not the effect of its causes but something that is indebted to them. The craftsman in particular is not the producer of the thing in the sense of its efficient cause. This means that he is not (as the modern way of understanding production easily supposes) the one who shows his will in submitting the disposable material to a form in order to, eventually, achieve a particular goal. Instead, he is the one who gathers together the other causes and so allows the "production" – *poiesis*, the coming into presence – take place. The causes *allow* something to *show itself* and so to be present *as* something. Such is the event of *poiesis*.

What thus becomes actual reality in its own shape, within those limits that allow it to be present, is what the Greeks called the "work", *ergon*. According to Aristotle, the mode of being of the work is *energeia*, "actuality" or "actual reality" (as it is usually translated) or "being-at-work" (as Heidegger often translates it). *Energeia*, actual presence, stands in opposition to *dynamis*, potentiality, the mode of being of what is merely available and useful for something (like the block of marble when it is "waiting" for the sculptor's art). The work, then, is essentially in a state of completion with respect to an end, a *telos*, which is, as we have seen, the very beginning of its presence. Aristotle expresses the essential aspect of completeness characterising the mode of being of the work with the help of a neologism he invented: *entelecheia*. To say that the being of the work

20 Heidegger 1990 [1954].

is *entelecheia* means to say that the work “possesses itself in its own end”, *en telei echei*, or, in other words, that it comes into presence by gathering itself, in an end-directed way, into its own shape, where it finds its completion. Such is the way in which the event of *poiesis* takes place in the “work”, in what is “pro-duced” into presence.²¹

But if we take a look at modern works of art, do we encounter them completed in this sense? Do we not, rather, understand their possible completeness in the sense that they are finished, that in them the creative process has come to its end? Moreover, do we not also recognise the possibility of encountering the work of art as not yet completed? The incompleteness of the work of art can be understood as its general openness with respect to various ways of receiving and interpreting it, as well as to various ways of exhibiting or performing it. The incompleteness of the work can also constitute a particular artistic approach: the work can be presented, for instance, as a work-in-progress made available for the audience during its development; or the development of the work can be presented, in some form of documentation, as part of the work. Finally, the structural incompleteness of the work can become an explicit topic of a “poetics of the open work”²²; the task is, then, to analyse the constitutive structures of the modern work characterised, for instance, by a deliberate and systematic ambiguity which generates an open field for different approaches, interpretations and performances.

21 For an interpretation of Aristotle that attempts to reach the Greek sense of *dynamis*, *energeia*, and *entelecheia*, cf. Heidegger, “Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις”, (Heidegger 1978).

22 Eco 1962.

Here, in the context of the question of art and *poiesis*, I would simply like to note the following: as Giorgio Agamben in particular has shown, the idea of the essential openness of the work of art easily passes over the work-being of the work, its “energetic” presence taking place within particular limits, and leads us instead to conceive of it as mere potentiality.²³ In contrast to the Greek idea of the work as the very place of *poiesis*, the being of which is *energeia*, being-at-work, and *entelecheia*, possessing-itself-in-its-end, the “openness” of the work means being-not-at-work but, rather, being-available for... The being of the work is, then, availability for aesthetics enjoyment, interpretation, presentation etc.

Understanding the completeness of the work as the state in which it is finished, and challenging that notion with the idea of a constitutive openness, are signs not merely of a modern artistic attitude, but of a profound historical change. The change concerns the presence at issue in pro-duction. Ever since the work of art entered the aesthetic dimension (explicitly in the eighteenth century), its mode of being has been moving towards potentiality and, hence, away from being-at-work. The more the work is reduced to being an object of aesthetic enjoyment (or, say, interpretation), the more its energetic character recedes in favour of mere potentiality. We can see this concretely in the way works are, in the case of visual arts, collected and accumulated in museums and galleries and, in the case of performing arts, made reachable through the organised supply of concerts and performances. The works *are* so that they are available at any moment for the spectator’s aesthetic enjoyment. Through the various modes of electronic storage, availability has

23 Agamben 1994, 91ff; English translation, 61ff.

recently become something virtually all-encompassing. If we now look at the present situation against the background of the Greek understanding of the work, we must say that, within the aesthetic dimension, the work has lost its energetic character: instead of being present in the mode of being-at-work (*energeia*, actuality), it is there in the mode of availability for... (*dynamis*, potentiality).

The difference between the two modes of presence – being-at-work and being available for... – reveals our historical distance from the Greek *poiesis*, one that cannot simply be crossed. The particularly modern idea of the constitutive openness of the work of art confronts, and perhaps critically, some of the leading aesthetic ideas still dominant today, like the idea of the integrity of the work, its presence as a meaningful unity. And yet, we have to say that the very idea of openness remains within the limits of aesthetics insofar as it passes over the energetic character of the work, its presence as being-at-work.

The place of *poiesis*

What does it mean to say that the work of art is the place of *poiesis*? First of all, what is the *place* of the work of art? We easily respond to the question by noting that the work of art is situated in a historical, social and political context, and that its place is therefore determined by an institutional framework, with which it more or less communicates. On the other hand, we also know that the work of art is an entity which should be respected in its specificity. Consequently, we face the problem of how to distinguish the work itself from its context and how to address what is irreducible in it to any external framework – this has been, historically speaking, the very challenge of aesthetics. However, the question of the place itself tends to be forgotten. What matters is neither the place in which

the work is situated, nor the particular way in which the work sets itself apart from that place but, rather, the work itself as the place of the event of *poiesis*, of the coming-into-presence.

Heidegger writes in *The Origin of the Work of Art*: “But does the work still remain a work if it stands outside all relations? Is it not essential to the work to stand in relations? Yes, of course – except that it remains to ask in what relations it stands. Where does a work belong? The work belongs, as work, uniquely within the realm that is opened up by itself. For the work-being of the work is present in, and only in, such opening up”.²⁴ Heidegger demands that we think about the place of the work as an essential constituent of its mode of being. “Being-at-work” means, then, being the opening of a particular place. The opening of a place, however, is not the effect of the work (the dimension of *poiesis* is not determined by causal relations), but, as Heidegger suggests, the primordial articulation of that place through the way in which it is occupied by the work. Hence, the taking place of the work is, quite literally, the taking-of-place, which designates not so much the occurrence of the work as its mode of being.

To think this requires, according to Heidegger, nothing less than the deconstruction of aesthetics. All the basic concepts with the help of which “art” and “work” are defined in Western thought must be dismantled, in order to open resources for a new thought of art. That new thought of art would develop itself beyond the conceptual distinctions matter/form, matter/content, sensible/ideal, presentation/presented, subject/object, etc. Such a huge operation is required not because the traditional concepts are incorrect, but

24 Heidegger 1980 [1950], 26; English translation, 41.

because they lead us to pass over the decisive question of being: what is the mode of being of the work of art and, moreover, how is the work the very place in which we are exposed to the being of what is?

At this point we should note that our question of *poiesis* is a radically different one compared to the one asked in Greek philosophy: it concerns the same *poiesis*, yet in a wholly different historical situation. The difference lies in the fact that we are unable to experience *poiesis* which for the Greeks constituted the self-evident horizon for any thought of art. We encounter the difficulty in the question: how to think about production that takes place in the product? Needless to say, this requires an other thought of production which is precisely what is at issue in the return to *poiesis*.

According to Heidegger's interpretation, *poiesis* is a move "from the state of concealment into the state of unconcealment" (*aus der Verborgenheit in die Unverborgenheit*).²⁵ What matters in such a move is not merely the change of place of something, as if it were a question of moving a thing from one place to another, but the change of place itself. However, in order to approach the singular character of Heidegger's way of questioning *poiesis*, we must pay close attention to his text. Here, I shall do that by following Samuel Weber's apt reading.²⁶

Heidegger describes the move from concealment to unconcealment with the German word *Entbergung*. It is closely related to the verb *entbergen*, the most familiar meaning of which is to "reveal". Hence, the event of *poiesis* can be understood as a move in which

25 Heidegger 1990 [1954], 15; English translation, 317.

26 Weber 1996.

something is revealed. However, if we look more closely at the word *Entbergung*, the simple idea of revealing becomes more complicated. *Entbergung* is formed from the verb *bergen*, meaning to “harbour” or to “conceal”, but also to “rescue” and to “recover”, and from the prefix *ent-*, meaning “forth” or “out”, but connoting also a change in which a former condition is negated. If we take all this into account, we can say that *Entbergung* certainly refers to revealing, but that it also includes the movement of leaving the shelter and of venturing into insecurity, as Weber notes. What *Entbergung* indicates, then, is a movement of revealing which is precarious as it includes the loss of shelter or abandonment. This is even more apparent if we pay attention to the word *Bergung*, which is somehow negated in the event of *Entbergung*: it not only means shelter or rescue, but also the salvaging of what remains after an accident or catastrophe. This indicates that *Bergung*, which is the starting point of the movement of *Entbergung*, is not an absolute starting point at all.

For all these (and some further) reasons, Weber suggests translating *Entbergung* in English as “unsecuring”.²⁷ These two words clearly have different “meanings”; however, what matters for Heidegger as well as for Weber, is not a definable meaning but, rather, the peculiar tension or ambiguity of the word. What the words *Entbergung* and “unsecurity” point to, is the unsettling character of the event of *poiesis*. Language, in fact, implies here the whole problem it is supposed to clarify: if the nature of *poiesis* is somehow revealed to us, this is due to the work of languages (including what happens between languages in translation), but only in such a way that our linguistic approach is at once unsecured.

27 Weber 1996, 66.

Technological and aesthetic production

As Walter Benjamin in particular has shown, the dismantling of the basic concepts of aesthetics must also be seen in the context of the development of technology.²⁸ In the historical situation in which new technical modes of reproduction give rise to wholly new art forms like photography and film, traditional notions of aesthetics like “authenticity”, “originality”, “creativity” and the “proper place” of the work start to become questionable. In the case of photography and film, there is in principle no authentic or original work situated in its proper place, since a photograph or a film is, from the very beginning, a copy. These copies are there to be reproduced and reworked, as well as to be distributed in masses and shown in many places at the same time. In fact, technical reproducibility calls into question some of the leading aesthetic ideas concerning the integrity of the work of art, its nature as a unified whole. The question now is, what becomes of art when the work of art cannot any more be defined by what is proper to it, namely by its originality and intrinsic value, or its proper place. How are we to think of art in the age of technical reproducibility, when the “work” is defined more and more by a “network”, and when the idea of the work “itself” becomes deeply problematic, as it is defined by factors that were supposed to be external to it, such as the modes of its presentation, re-working, transmission and storage?

These themes made well known by Benjamin are not without essential connections with the question of art and *poiesis*. Although Benjamin does not develop the theme of *poiesis* in a way comparable to Heidegger, his considerations point to the same dimension. What

28 Benjamin 1991.

matters in the historical change at issue, according to Benjamin, is the transformation of our experience of time and space, of distance and nearness, of presence and absence – in one word, the coming-into-presence of something.

If we transpose one of Benjamin's leading distinctions into another register, the one in which we have until now addressed the question of art and *poiesis*, we can note the following: in our time, *poiesis* is split into two modes irreducible to each other: There is, on the one hand, aesthetic production defined by originality, and there is, on the other hand, technical-industrial production defined by technical reproduction. When these two modes of production come together, as happens in photography or film, aesthetic concepts prove to be questionable with respect to the critical possibilities of art, while technical-industrial concepts remain wholly outside its dimension.

At the same time, the experience of the split of *poiesis* in two distinct spheres includes the experience of the need to cross the separation: there is, in the sphere of technical production, a need for originality as there is, in the sphere of aesthetic production, a need for reproduction. This is a phenomenon that has been addressed by some important artistic movements of the 20th century, especially by pop art and ready-made art. In fact, as Giorgio Agamben argues, these art forms seem to be based on a deliberate confusion of the two modes of production.²⁹ This can be explicated in a schematic way as follows: in ready-made art, an object is transferred from the state of technical reproducibility to the state of artistic creativity and originality, so that the spectator is faced with an object

29 Agamben 1994, 94f; English translation, 63f.

of technical-industrial production which enigmatically seems to be loaded with aesthetic authenticity. In some of the works of pop art, by contrast, an object of artistic creativity seems to be stripped bare of its aesthetic authenticity, so that the spectator encounters a work which has assumed the status of the technical-industrial product. If we understand these artistic practices not merely as reactions to a particular situation in the art world, but as responses to the split of *poiesis*, we can see that they reach quite deep into what is at stake here.

Let us take as our example a work of art that has become iconic, if not a cliché. In the year 1917, Marcel Duchamp submitted to an art exhibition a common industrial product, a porcelain urinal. He had signed the object with the name R. Mutt and given it the title *Fountain*. Although the work was rejected by the committee, Duchamp let it be displayed and photographed in a studio. The original object was eventually lost, but replicas later commissioned by Duchamp now stand in museums and collections as records of a major event in the history of modern art.

Although the work – or act – has since become so famous, it is still worth asking the question: what happened here with respect to production? Following Agamben's suggestion, we can say that the object was released from the sphere of technical-industrial production characterised by reproducibility and forced into the sphere of aesthetic production characterised by originality. What matters here is not merely an institutional provocation, a way of challenging the rules of the art world, but rather a creative play with the double status of production governing modernity. It is the work itself which, in its strange mode of presence, brings forth the split of *poiesis* in two wholly different spheres. For a fleeting moment – the instant of the estrangement effect – the work seems to cross the

distance separating technical and aesthetic production, but only to make manifest the impossibility of such a final solution. What is present as a technical-industrial object defined by reproducibility cannot attain the status of an aesthetic object defined by originality. Therefore, as Agamben says, the “object cannot attain presence and remains enveloped in shadow, suspended in a kind of disquieting limbo between being and nonbeing”.³⁰

One can claim, however, that this is precisely what constitutes the enigmatic meaning of the work. *Fountain* pushes the modern split between technical-industrial production and aesthetic production to its extreme point and, in this way, points beyond the split to the original dimension of *poiesis* that still withdraws from us. As Agamben says, production as *poiesis*, as coming-into-presence, is brought here to a point of crisis, since nothing comes to presence in the work, except precisely the privation of potentiality that cannot be actualised.³¹ The privation of potentiality, which takes place in the work’s hovering between presence and absence, is nothing negative but, rather, the very gift of the work.

In what sense is there a gift, that is, in what sense is there a work of art? The creative play on the double status of production does not lead to a work which would, finally, attain the status of actual reality and which would, as Aristotle says, possess itself in its own end. In this sense, then, *Fountain* perhaps remains in the mode of potentiality, that is, of mere availability for... However, since it refuses to offer itself both as an aesthetic object, defined by availability for aesthetic enjoyment, and as an industrial product, defined by

30 Agamben 1994, 95; English translation, 64.

31 Agamben 1994, 96; English translation, 66.

availability for consumption, the potentiality of the work is turned inside out, toward nothingness. In this negative sense, then, the object possesses itself in its own end and attains the energetic mode of being of the work.³²

Hence, we can say that Duchamp's *Fountain* is a "work" in the sense that it is a "product" which occupies and so opens the very place of "pro-duction" into presence. Its gift is not a positive given but, rather, the opening of the historical place that is given for us to inhabit, granted that we follow the unsettling movement of pro-duction in which something is revealed only by being unsecured.

32 Agamben 1994, 100; English translation, 67.

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Notes on Poetics and Choreography

RIC ALLSOPP

Pre-Text: *For the third Erasmus Intensive on Composition: Poetics and Procedures this initial keynote asks what might be at stake for individual solo work, signature and authorship, and provides a background to what might constitute a poetics of radical coherence for individual practice. It aligns a poetics of writing with a poetics of movement and draws on work in both mid-twentieth century projective and contemporary poetics (Olson, Bruns, Fisher, Nichols) and a poetics of contemporary dance (Louppe) that suggests that both poetry and dance are “languages” that operate in excess of the functions of language, and open the possibilities of radical approaches to coherence and affection.*

The distinction here is between language as the act of the instant [A] and language as the act of thought about the instant.³³

Beginnings

For the last couple of years in Falmouth I have been watching a lot of dance, or more precisely, a lot of people training to be contemporary dancers. My own background has been closely associated

33 Olson 1997 [1951].

with writing in its various relations to performance, and the moving body in its relation to performance. I have continued to dwell on and wonder about these relationships between writing and dance, and to consider the parallels between a poetics of movement and a poetics of writing, in what I suppose can be called “choreography”, itself already a poetics. **[B]** What I have recently been seeing in the studio is a continuous presence or presenting of language intertwined with movement – the idea of the paratext or poetics that forms and informs studio practice for example – the forms of which inscribe themselves in space and time, becoming and disappearing in excess of language and in excess of movement. In other words, in other moves, the tendency for both language and movement to give rise to something beyond or outside the forms and intensities that make them visible and apprehendable to us. This “something else” that I have written about elsewhere is what really interests me. For now I want to talk about the conditions **[C]** – the poetics – that give rise to the possibility of “something else”.

From this “choreographic” perspective of movement and writing I want to gather together some readings and writings on poetics which will provide a background to what might already be close linkage between a poetics of dance and a poetics of writing. I want to draw on poetics in a general sense as an approach to acts of making as arts practices that can propose the possibilities of a radical coherence – or how things might hold together without falling into conventional forms and flows – and the kind of radical empiricism (or re-engagement with perceptual and affective experience as an interweaving of outside and inside) that stems from Whitehead and Deleuze. As Levi Bryant pointed out in his blog *Larval Subjects*, writing about the effects of the “textual turn”:

[I]f we wish to speak of world today we cannot do so directly, but must pass through the interval of another text, through a close reading of another philosopher, rather than to make claims directly about the world. [...] Is there a way that it is possible today to renew discourse about the world, or are we irrevocably doomed to commentaries on texts?³⁴

I suspect that my keynote is doomed to “further commentaries on”, and “connections between texts” on poetics, but I hope this might serve the purpose of providing a ground for a discussion and exploration of individual practice and its questions of how, what, who and so on. What follows is an oscillation – a moving to and fro between the terms of choreography – writing and dance – a refusal to settle into any single position – a series of breaks, or fractures, discontinuities: a constellation of readings.

Traps

I will begin with an image from the poet and painter Allen Fisher’s recent statement on poetics “*Traps or Tools and Damage*” written in 2007:

Traps are what we are all inside of, traps constitute what is known, where to place what is known, between what boundaries. Traps, and springing them, initially determine what tools are selected for description, traps are depicted in the earliest graphic art and therefore the earliest language and clear expression of consciousness. The patterns

34 Bryant 2007.

of connectedness that enable traps and consciousness to work invoke descriptions of the prey and forethought for predation. Traps can be benign like a camera capturing light, or a cider press squeezing the juice from an apple. Traps can be concealed from us inside habitual experience and conditions. Traps involve inventive perception **[D]** and thus ‘crowd-outs’ and as such provide tools, that is they bring about procedures of selection that produce pattern, and thus patterns of connectedness, through measurement, repetition and recurrence. My work challenges the conditions of being trapped by what we know; I use deliberate acquisition of knowledge, a reappraisal of poetics as method, and specific tools for transformation from damage, with a view to springing traps to meet the aesthetic and pragmatic functions of art.³⁵

What is Poetics? – Some Notes on Usage

The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory gives a useful overview of fairly current critical thinking on the usage of the term “poetics”. It refers us to Roman Jakobson’s description of the “poetic function” in his influential Code/Message model of linguistic communication which foregrounds “poetic function” as inherent in all communication and draws attention to the formal devices that structure the message. **[E]** Likewise for Roland Barthes poetics is a hypothetical descriptive model which allows the analysis of how (literary) works are constructed. It is not a form of hermeneutics (interpretation) and is not intended to find or recover a meaning in the text; it de-

35 Fisher 2007, 349.

scribes how meanings are generated by the text **[F]** and how and why they are accepted as meaningful by readers. Poetics in this usage can also be equated with Gerard Genette's notion of the "para-text" – those devices (titles, subtitles, prefaces, blurbs, programme notes etc.) which act upon the reader by raising expectations and creating a contract between reader and text. **[G]** For both Barthes (in "Death of the Author"³⁶) and Michel Foucault (in "What is an Author?"³⁷) writing is not something to be completed and therefore appropriated, but an endless practice. **[H]** Writing ceases to be either a psychological expression of the poet's subjectivity or a representation of something external to its own workings. Dancing can also be thought about (and practised) in similar terms.

If poetics – seen from the perspective of mid-twentieth century critical theory and structuralist thought – is a means of understanding *how* rather than *what* meanings are generated by texts, then how might one begin to apply the term to dance? As I have indicated, the term "choreography" already provides a conceptual bridge between movement and writing. The "textual turn" of the late twentieth century and its implications for dance when read as a form of textual practice, has tended to obscure the discussion (if not the practice) of experiential aspects of a poetics of dance. This is effectively addressed by Laurence Louppe's rhetorical question "Why a Poetics?" in the opening chapter of *Poetics of Contemporary Dance*³⁸ noting, in relation to Dominique Dupuy's poetic reading of movement as "an event which is becoming", that

36 Barthes 1993 [1968].

37 Foucault 1991 [1969].

38 Louppe 2010 [1998].

Critical perception of a work will thus be caught up in this becoming, which means that the work of movement is a becoming as much for the maker performer as for the spectator: to dance is to show what the dance makes (of)/does to me, [...]. Bodies are traversed or touched by what they do or by what they perceive. In dance, in an exemplary way, the dissemination of any possible reading (and probably of the subject of that reading) will pass through all the dimensions of experience. The danced movement will inscribe itself in the body that creates and sustains it, and in the body that receives or perceives it. A dance poetics will therefore be located at the intersection of these different polarities. It should itself be that intersection, the fluid interstice [II] where these corporeal exchanges are negotiated.³⁹

The “turn to language” is visible in her vocabulary of “reading” and “inscription” but her emphasis is on the experiential, the “fluid interstice”. This builds on the sense of the initial epigraph to the chapter taken from Gerard Genette: “Only in the active meeting between an intention and an attention is there a work of art. Art is for everyone also a practice.”

We “do” art – we engage with it – and how we “do” that is itself a poetics. Louppe begins the chapter as follows:

A poetics seeks to define and uncover in a work of art what touches us, animates our sensibility and resonates

39 Louppe 2010 [1998], 7.

in our imagination. Thus, poetics is the ensemble of creative conducts **[J]** that give birth, meaning and sensuous existence to a work. Its goal is to observe not only a field where sensing is foremost in the ensemble of experiences but the very transformations of this field. The object of a poetics, like that of art itself, is at one and the same time knowledge, affect and action. But poetics also has a more particular mission: it does not only tell us what a work of art does to us, it teaches us how it is made.

In other words, what path does the artist follow to reach the point where the artistic act is available to perception, there where our consciousness can discover it and begin to resonate with it? Yet the work's journey does not end there: it is in (re-)turn transformed and enriched as it resonates. For poetics includes the process of perception itself. **[K]** [...] it breaks with the dichotomy that opposed the actor and the receiver: it “devectorises” (to use Genette's expression) the traditional oneway conception of communication and places the work of art at the heart of a shared “work”.⁴⁰

[...] the double presence of dancer-spectator – also a corporeal encounter – actualises itself as an intensified dialogue. This dialogue is even more able to awaken aesthesias because it takes place as an encounter in time and space. This encounter cannot be “postponed” (differed). It involves, in itself an experience/ experiment of perceiving in space and

40 Louppe 2010 [1998], 3–4.

time, an undergoing of this experience – on both sides. A poetics of dance [...] has the advantage in that it explores the mechanisms of this exceptional situation. As the term [poetics] indicates, it enters the realm of forming/ transforming. [L]⁴¹ (cf. Rothenberg below)

[...] understanding dance involves knowledge not only of its products but also its practices. The art of movement can only be understood by implicating one's knowledges in it, and usually by involving oneself in its activity, in its *poiein*/ making, where creative processes are already charged with the artistic complexity that they are employed to make visible.⁴²

Laurence Louppe notes here the transitional and transformative project of poetics that partly derives from her readings of Barthes and the French structuralists, but also resonates with a wider strand of contemporary American poetics that I want to open up here in an attempt to bridge what might be perceived as a distance or at least a distinction between a poetics of dance and a poetics of writing/poetry. I want to suggest that poetic thinking – “the poetic mind” – crosses (as Louppe also suggests) these boundaries and enables us, in the act and practice of making to utilise what Robert Creeley in 1964 called “a sense of measure” [M] as a means of “coming into the world” – a phrase which provides a point of connection between Levi Bryant's object-oriented ontology, the workings of

41 Louppe 2010 [1998], 5.

42 Louppe 2010 [1998], 6.

Deleuze and Guattari, Whitehead's process philosophy and a line of radical poetics from Olson's 1950s projectivism to the present.

Creeley writes:

[...] I am not at all interested in describing anything. I want to give witness not to the thought of myself – that specious concept of identity – but, rather, to what I am as simple agency, a thing evidently alive by virtue of such activity. I want, as Charles Olson says, to come into the world. Measure then is my testament. What uses me is what I use and in that complex measure is the issue. I cannot cut down trees with my bare hand, which is measure of both tree and hand. In that way I feel that poetry, in the very subtlety of its relation to image and rhythm, offers an intensely various record of such facts. It is equally one of them.⁴³

For Jerome Rothenberg “the idea of poesis as a primary human process” is a “recovery” of the familiarity of experience [N] – a poetics of the outside. Rothenberg notes:

By poesis I mean a language process, a “sacred action” (André Breton) by which a human being creates and recreates the circumstances and experiences of a real world, even where such circumstances may be rationalised otherwise as “contrary to fact”. [...] This “power of the word”- [which is embodied and not essentially separate from movement, from dance, from choreography] – while often denied or re-

43 Creeley 1972 [1964], 34.

duced to posturings or lies in the “higher civilisations”, has continued as a tradition among poets and others who feel the need to “express the inexpressible” – a belief in what William Blake called “double vision” or, in Lévi-Strauss’s paraphrasing of Rimbaud, that “metaphor can change the world”.⁴⁴

the ‘poetic mind’ – that drive to *make it new* (Ezra Pound), to pit the old transformative ways of thought against the other, intervening drive towards an authoritative written text &, what confronts us once again, the reduction of particulars to what has become the monoculture.⁴⁵

The Language poet Lyn Hejinian in her introduction to *The Language of Inquiry* (2000) writes:

[Poetics] assume poetry [or dance] as the dynamic process through which poetics, itself a dynamic process, is carried out. The two practices are mutually constitutive and they are reciprocally transformative. [...] poetry has its capacity for poetics, for self-reflexivity, for speaking about itself; it is by virtue of this that poetry can turn language upon itself and thus exceed its own limits. Language is nothing but meaning, and meanings are nothing but a flow of contexts. **[O]** Such contexts rarely coalesce into images, rarely come

44 Rothenberg 1981, 120.

45 Rothenberg 1981, 121.

to terms. They are transitions, transmutations, the endless radiating of denotation into relation.⁴⁶

[How is this [any] different to dance/choreography?]

[...] the reasons and reasoning that motivate poet (and poem) are embedded in the world and in the language with which we bring it into view. The resulting praxis is addressed to phenomenological [perceptive] and epistemological [knowledge] concerns. But [poetics] is also a denotatively social and therefore political practice. Poetry comes to know things as they are. But this is not knowledge in the strictest sense; it is, rather, acknowledgement [**P**] – and that constitutes a sort of unknowing. To know *that* things are is not to know *what* they are, and to know *that* without *what* is to know otherness (i.e. the unknown and perhaps unknowable). Poetry undertakes acknowledgement as a preservation of otherness [**Q**] – a notion that can be offered in a political, as well as epistemological context. This acknowledging is a process, not a definitive act; it is an inquiry, a thinking on. And it is a process in and of language, whose most complex, swift and subtle forms are to be found in poetry [and dance] – which is say in poetic language. The language of poetry is a language of inquiry not a language of a genre. It is a language in which a writer (or a reader) both perceives and is conscious of the perception. Poetry,

46 Hejinian 2000, 1.

therefore, takes as its premise that language is a medium for experiencing experience. [R]

Poetic language is also a language of improvisation and intention. The intention provides the field for inquiry and improvisation is the means of inquiring. Or, to phrase it another way, the act of writing is a process of improvisation within a framework (form) of intention. In the course of the experiencing of experience, poetic language puts into play the widest possible array of logics, and especially takes advantage of the numerous logics operative in language, some of which take shape as grammar, some as sonic chains, some as metaphors, metonyms, ironies etc. There are also logics of irrationality, impossibility, and a logic of infinite speed. All these logics make connections, forge linkages. That indeed is the function of logics; they motivate the moves from one place to another. But the emphasis in poetry [as dance] follows pathways of thinking and it is that that creates patterns of coherence [whether radical or conventional]. It is at point of linkage – in contexts of encounter, at what André Breton called *pointes sublimes* [S] – that one discovers the reality of *being in time*, of *taking one's chance*, of *becoming another*, all with the implicit understanding that *this is happening*.⁴⁷

47 Hejinian 2000, 3.

Miriam Nicols makes a similar point in slightly different terms. The title of the first chapter of *Radical Affections: Essays on the Poetics of Outside* (2010) asks “How to Walk on the Slippery Earth” – a question taken from Aztec philosophy which proposes that “knowing is performative, creative, and participatory, not discursive, passive or theoretical. It is concrete, not abstract; a *knowing how*, not a *knowing that*”. The distinction between *knowing how* and *knowing that* is, according to Nichols, as follows:

Knowing that can always reveal exclusions and blindnesses in *knowing how*, but such a critique applies one set of criteria (truth in all possible worlds) to another (how to walk on the slippery earth). Taken alone, each of these methods has limits that result either in the sceptical disallowing of perceptual experience – the familiar [from which we are estranged], Olson would say – or in dangerously inflated claims for local ways of doing things. [...] Given the aim of *knowing that*, theory cannot do otherwise.⁴⁸

This is also reflected by Alan Badiou in his 1997 essay “Some Remarks Concerning Marcel Duchamp”. In his first analysis of André Breton’s statement (1922) which asks “[c]ould it be that Marcel Duchamp arrives more quickly than anyone else at the critical point of ideas?”, Badiou proposes that

Art has become a question of movement, of what we *get to* rather than the abolition of this “getting to” in a result

48 Nicols 2010, 5.

closed in the idolatrous cult of the work of art. Art is only the trace of its own action.⁴⁹

This restates a poetics of transformation and process – a poetics of measure – “what uses me is what I use” and a poetics of traps, and inventive perception.

Écriture

In a further attempt to bridge the grounds between the dancing subject and writing subject, between dancing and writing as poetic practices, another possible understanding lies in the notion of écriture – the inscription of the body in writing – developed initially by both Barthes and Foucault – which in some senses provides a parallel to the ideas of poetics that we have mentioned already. In Sally Gardner’s introduction to *Poetics of Contemporary Dance* (2010) she writes:

Loupe, after Barthes, discusses écriture [the ‘modality of writing’] as closely related to dance “style” and ‘composition’. The concept of écriture carries the necessary idea of an active writing of and through the body itself where the body is not simply the transparent vehicle or a transcendent idea. The idea of écriture is also important because contemporary dance is not simply ‘self-expression’ or ‘interpretive’: that is, although it is “individual” it is not simply personal. Discussing literary authorship Foucault says that, écriture creates a space into which the writing

49 Badiou 2008 [1997].

subject constantly disappears. (What is an Author?) The dance/ author/subject, however cannot finally disappear, and *écriture* is that which prevents the performer from being what Louppe calls a ‘presenter’ or one who “shows”, rather than one who “writes”. *Écriture* arises in the relation between the choreographer and the dancer (even if they are one and the same person) and in the work they do to define, as they compose, the dance: *écriture* inscribes the values of the movement “style” insofar as these are particular, communicable and apprehendable but are not a (universal) code. [...] As Louppe points out, there are many aspects of contemporary dance processes (including its historical beginnings) that are “invisible”, as they take place in regions “upstream” of what is usually recognised as visible or they *come from a place other than the one where legitimated conducts of thought and knowledge usually recognise themselves*.⁵⁰

For Louppe *écriture* is what founds the choreographic act, however it might be conceived or defined. For it contains the whole “work” of the dance. Later in her discussion of composition she notes that:

the whole is not only the sum of its parts: it lies in that which, at each moment, in each articulation, works on and disturbs the whole. In other words composition begins with the “invention” of the movement, the qualitative particulars of its relation to space and time: and continues

50 Gardner in Louppe 2010, xvi-xvii.

until a complete construction has been elaborated out of these same characteristics. [...] Composition in dance [...] is elaborated primarily through what Deleuze calls (*a pro-pos* of Bacon) “pathetic logic”, the sensuous and emotive contamination of one zone by another.⁵¹

This idea of “sensuous and emotive contamination” [T] brings me to an example that might arguably form a constellation (itself another form of poetics as an imaginative pattern of connectedness (Gregory Bateson), or coherence (Benjamin) visible in the night sky) of poetics or poetic approaches. The example of a recent 2012 reworking of Jackson Mac Low’s procedural poem series *The Pronouns: A Collection of 40 Dances for the Dancers*⁵² might serve here to open up both the sense of écriture that Louppe uses and to show ways in which “the regions upstream” – the invisible aspects of making work – are revealed and are brought into practice. I am aware that “proceduralism” – which makes its appearance as title (and paratext) for the Intensive Project that is unfolding over the next ten days – and its histories and implications is more than worthy of a separate keynote – and is also central to experimental and avant-garde developments in a poetics of writing and dance from the 1940s onwards – from Cage, to OuLiPo to Fluxus; from Trisha Brown, to Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker, to Thomas Lehmen; or Iannis Xenakis (stochastics) to Steve Reich (periodisation), to Jem Finer (*Longplayer*).

51 Louppe 2010 [1998], 151.

52 Mac Low 1979 [1964].

The poet David Antin describes *The Pronouns* in the following terms:

MacLow's own 1964 publication, *The Pronouns: A Collection of 40 Dances*, is probably the most brilliant and extensive example of the "dance-instruction poem" which MacLow explains in the following way: *The poet creates a situation wherein she or he invites other persons & the world in general to be co-creators* and in his "Some Remarks to the Dancers" specifies precisely how he means this:

In realizing any particular dance, the individual dancer or group of dancers has a very large degree of freedom of interpretation. However, although they are to interpret the successive lines of each of these poems – which are also dance-instructions as they see fit, dancers are required to find some definite interpretation of the meaning of every line of the dance-poem they choose to realize.

These remarks are both definitive and explicit; and [...] they indicate how well established this genre was for the early 1960' art world, and allude to the shifts away from the centrality of individual authorship towards the inclusion of the periphery – here "the world in general" – [as well as interpretation].⁵³

53 Antin 2011, 241.

Bruce Campbell in Mac Low's entry in the Dictionary of Literary Biography writes:

Mac Low's interest in event undergoes a new expression in *The Pronouns* [...]. Its initial appearance is as a self-produced mimeograph in 1964. [...] *The Pronouns* can be seen as a development of the "action pack" for *The Marrying Maiden* [a text for The Living Theatre written in 1958] by way of a performance card pack, "Nuclei for Simone Forti" [...] Typed on each card are single words drawn by chance operations from the BASIC English Word List and action phrases from a separate pack made up of words similarly drawn from the BASIC list. After Forti had improvised around some of the "Nuclei" cards in 1961, the dancer-choreographer Trisha Brown did so in 1963 and borrowed the pack for teaching purposes in California.⁵⁴ [cf. as an example Thomas Lehmen's *Schreibstück* (2002) and *Funktionen* (2004) both of which use "action packs"]

The critic Tyrus Miller writes:

In 1961, poet Jackson Mac Low composed *Nuclei for Simone Morris* (later retitled *Nuclei for Simone Forti*), a dance piece that derived a set of actions by selecting verbs from a word list according to a set procedure. Mac Low's *Nuclei* began from a poet's reflection on the complex interrelations of different media of meaning-making—language, writing, sound,

54 Campbell 1998.

movement—and what kinds of creative “translations” can occur when one seeks to cross from one sign-system to the other and back. True to their name, the *Nuclei* not only constructed a framework of instructions for developing different instantiations of that one work; they also generated a whole new set of texts, *The Pronouns*,^[1] utilizing the same underlying materials (the action card pack) and analogous, though further elaborated procedures for deriving texts and performances from them. The number of Mac Low’s texts, forty, related to a list of English-language pronouns, whereby each of the texts is organized around a single pronoun, ranging from the obvious “I,” “you,” and “we,” to more complex ones such as “who,” “nobody,” “either,” and “whichever.” These combine with other words to make texts with a somewhat Gertrude Stein-like flavour, combining phrases such as “Someone then says things as a worm would, / but also as one keeping sheep or seeing an offer, / while willing themselves to be dead or coming to see something narrow” (17th Dance). Among Mac Low’s interest in using the pronouns in this way was to explore how certain often-subliminal features of language imply and occasion different sorts of social interaction, segmentation, and identification.

The category of pronouns occupies a special place in language, since their meaning is determined solely by their function of marking the changing positions in a discourse or conversation, rather than by reference to any fixed object or concept. Linguists even refer to pronouns by the special name of “shifters,” because a word like “I” or “you”

shifts from position to position as different speakers occupy the place of addressing others or being addressed.⁵⁵

Clarinda Mac Low (2012) *The Pronouns (Experiment #1)*

This performance was in advance of a (re)staging of Jackson Mac Low's *40 Dances for the Dancers* in September 2012 on the occasion of JML's 90th birthday at Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, New York City.

Method: Clarinda made a solo interpretation of the poems from *The Pronouns*, using 4 poems in total, a short index of different ways of interpreting the poems. For the poems that used “nobody” (27TH DANCE-WALKING -22 March 1964) or “no one” (28TH DANCE-MAPPING) as a pronoun, the poem was read out loud only. One poem (10TH DANCE-COMING ON AS A HORN) was performed as a running commentary-patter-storytelling-action-based version and one poem (2ND DANCE-SEEING LINES) was danced.

I would like to show a clip of the “danced” section (2nd DANCE – Seeing Lines) here as an example – but first:

2ND DANCE – SEEING LINES (6 February 1964)

She seems to come by wing,
& keeping present being in front, she reasons regularly.
Then—making her stomach let itself down

55 Miller 2012.

& giving a bit or doing something elastic
 & making herself comfortable—
 she lets complex impulses make something.
 She disgusts everyone.
 Later she fingers a door
 & wheels awhile
 while either transporting a star or letting go of a street.⁵⁶

[Try reading this. Try writing this. Try also translating this. What might that mean? The logic of sensation, rather than the logic of meaning?]

Example: *The Pronouns (Experiment #1)* [see www.clarindamaclow.com]

Walter Benjamin on copying and transcription: [U]

The power of a country road when one is walking along it is different from the power it has when one is flying over it by airplane. In the same way, the power of a text when it is read is different from the power it has when it is copied out. The airplane passenger sees only how the road pushes through the landscape, how it unfolds according to the same laws as the terrain surrounding it. Only he who walks the road on foot learns the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery that for the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front.

56 Mac Low 1979 [1964].

Only the copied text thus commands the soul of him who is occupied with it, whereas the mere reader never discovers the new aspects of his inner self that are opened by the text, that road cut through the interior jungle forever closing behind it: because the reader follows the movement of his mind in the free flight of daydreaming, whereas the copier submits it to command.⁵⁷

What forms of attention (poetics) are involved in these translations and transformations?

Jackson Mac Low's "non-intentional procedures" – chance operations; reading through a text acrostically etc. – aim to avoid the intrusions of the author as ego and to foreground language as such. A primary motivation was to evacuate from the writing process the trace of ego associated with Kantian "taste".⁵⁸ This idea, associated with both proceduralism and the culture of spontaneity, the evacuation from the writing process of subjectivity and the ego (that "shifter") is current also in the beginnings of conceptualism as asserted by Sol LeWitt in his *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art*:

To work with a plan that is preset is one way of avoiding subjectivity. It also obviates the necessity of designing each work in turn. The plan would design the work. Some plans would require millions of variations, and some a limited number, but both are finite. Other plans imply infinity. In

57 Benjamin 2009 [1935].

58 See Patrick F. Durgin, "New Life Writing" (2012).

each case, however, the artist would select the basic form and rules that would govern the solution of the problem. After that the fewer decisions made in the course of completing the work, the better. This eliminates the arbitrary, the capricious, and the subjective as much as possible. This is the reason for using this method.⁵⁹

A Poetics of Performance

In 1971 Jerome Rothenberg published a text entitled “New Models, New Visions: Some Notes Towards a Poetics of Performance”⁶⁰:

The fact of performance now runs through all our arts, and the arts themselves begin to merge and lose their old distinctions, till it's apparent that we are no longer where we were to start with. [...] The origins we seek [...] take in all times and all places

(4) From this there follows a new sense of function in art, in which the value of a work isn't inherent in its formal or aesthetic characteristics – its shape or complexity or simplicity as an object – but in what it does, or what the artist or his surrogate does with it, how he performs it in a given context

(5) There follows further, in the contemporary instance, a stress on action and/ or process. Accordingly the perfor-

59 LeWitt 1997.

60 Rothenberg 1971.

mance (or ritual) model includes the act of composition itself: the artist's life as an unfolding through [her] performance of it

(6) Along with the artist, the audience enters the performance arena as participant – or, the audience ‘disappears’ as the distinction between doer and viewer [...] begins to blur.⁶¹

Some of the implications of the “turn towards performance” in the 1960s and 1970s as indicated by Rothenberg can be seen in more recent models of poetics – for example Gerald L. Bruns in *The Material of Poetry* (Bruns 2005) proposes three theses for a poetics which are centrally concerned with materiality and performance:

Thesis 1: poetry is made of language but is not a use of it [V] – that is poetry is made of words but not of what we use words to produce: meanings, concepts, propositions, descriptions, narratives, expressions of feeling, and so on. The poetry I have in mind does not exclude these forms of usage – indeed a poem may ‘exhibit’ different kinds of meaning in self-conscious and even theatrical ways – but what the poem is, is not to be defined by these things. [...] poetry cannot be adequately conceptualised, valued, understood or (much less) produced when in the service of the forms of discursive practice of which these terms [such as communicative, expressive, narrative, transparent] are constitutive. The double bind occurs when we discover that

61 Rothenberg 1981, 168–169.

much of contemporary poetry is in fact made from nonpoetic, everyday, socially and even intellectually distinctive forms of discourse.⁶²

This might well describe a post-Judson approach to movement, using a choreographic turn substituting the term dance for poetry.

Thesis 2: poetry is not necessarily made of words but is rooted in and in fact already fully formed by, sound produced by the human voice (or voice and mouth) even when these sounds are modified electronically. [...] sound poetry where voice and mouth are no longer (just) instruments of speech or of musical sounds but become themselves vehicles or [...] events of art [...] Poetry in this event crosses over into the culture of performance art, whose aim or effect is “disturbation” [W].⁶³

Thesis 3: poetry does not occupy a realm of its own. It is not a purely differentiated species confined to a merely aesthetic, neutral, or disengaged dimension of human culture. Rather, precisely in virtue of its materiality, poetry enjoys a special ontological relation with ordinary things of the world. [...] Imaging a poem of pure extension, that is one that does not mirror the world but contacts it as if language were a mode of touching and not just saying. [...] Emmanuel Levinas thinks of language not as a mode of cognition and

62 Bruns 2005, 7.

63 Bruns 2005, 8.

representation but as a mode of proximity, sensibility or contact, as if language were corporeal like skin. For Levinas the proximity of other people is ethics. “The proximity of things” [X] he says “is poetry”. It is conceivable that poetry is objective, and thus as resistant to interpretation, as any event of nature. [...] In order to experience this (or any) poetry at all we have to integrate ourselves into the world or space in which the poetry is composed, become natives of this or that place on the argument that what counts as poetry is internal to the social, historical, and cultural spaces in which it is written and read.⁶⁴

I want to show an example of poetic practice that both problematizes how we might think about and in particular be enabled to read certain experimental practices (as Gerald Bruns suggests. But first a short narrative clip from Jean Cocteau (1949) *Orphée* – (The Radio Transmissions) to introduce another example.

See: Cocteau, Jean (1949) dir. *Orphée* - Radio Transmissions
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dn8m6GwC-jA>

Bob Cobbing’s “Random and System” begins:

poetics of domestic noise/ fabric of the everyday/ a silent
 tongue sounding/ an eye scanning/ does a blank page not
 have a duration/ is it silence or noise/ we tongue it with
 our eyes/ polyphonic skin of event/ on the pool of mean-
 ing making/ active erasure of existing common sense /
 interrogating conventional boundaries/ through gesture

64 Bruns 2005, 9.

and posture/ through habitus and through manipulation/
 human society as a conversational swarm/ formlessness
 if indefinite community/ populations/ multiplicities terri-
 tories/ [...] “Random and System” (1999)

Example: Bob Cobbing (1968) Marvo Movie Natter www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2HHSe9IJF8

The poet Lee Harwood writes: “Voice in the next room, voice heard through the static on the radio transmitter. Not clear enough to hear exactly what is being said, but a voice so urgent that we have to listen, to work with it, to wait beside the receiver with pencil and paper for the ‘message’ to get through, but not now the neat phrases of Heurtebise, Cocteau’s car radio wrecked in the dump.”⁶⁵

Nicholas Johnson writes that “[m]any of these images suggest the basics: liquid, line, shadow, fold. If image & text get treated in the same way then they exist on the edge of comprehensibility as either image or text or both.”⁶⁶

Miriam Nichols’ re-reading of projective poetics, a poetics of the outside makes the following point about the “reading” of perceptual experience in poetic work which would include work such as we have just heard/experienced:

Olson (1950) famously appealed to perceptual experience as a means of renewing poetic language and restoring the “familiar” – intimacy with nature and the body – to the human species. In the 1970s and 80s, however, it was

65 Cobbing 1999: np.

66 Cobbing 1999: np.

precisely perception that fell under Jacques Derrida's post-structural critique of phenomenology, a critique that many academics took to be definitive. Over the same period Jacques Lacan's neo-Freudian psychoanalysis became important in the literary world, and this was another kind of discourse that consigned experience to the imaginary realm of *méconnaissance*, a space to be exposed by the analyst and deconstructed by the aware critic as 'always already' mediated by the unconscious and the symbolic order. These philosophies focus on the production of experience through the socialisation process: whatever counts for reality at a given moment is to be regarded as a heavily mediated sociolinguistic construct rather than a spontaneous experience. From this perspective, there is no specifiable 'outside' to consciousness [...] In contrast, Olson and others of his company were interested not in how experience is produced, but how the human species might be redefined and repositioned in relation to planetary life. In the theory decades, however, the vocabulary of projective poetics, steeped as it is in mythopoesis, seemed naive in its situating of humanity in a cosmos 'outside' the mind when psychology and postmodern philosophies had so firmly moved everything in.⁶⁷

67 Nicols 2010, 3.

Endings

The logic of sensation, as a “restoration of the familiar” (Olson/Rothenberg) perhaps finds an equivalent in Olson’s “One perception must immediately and direct lead to a further perception.”⁶⁸ Not simply to explain what poetics *means* but to explore what it *does*, how it works – *know how* rather than *know that* (or *know what* in Lyn Hejinian’s terms). The question of poetics here – how the artist (dancer/writer/choreographer) assembles the “experiencing of experience” as a shared perception is in a sense what the endless practice of making involves us in – how to avoid “aboutness” – the “act of thought about the instant” in Olson’s words – whilst maintaining reciprocal legibility or a sense of acknowledgement is perhaps a question in these coming days.

Jennifer Daryl Slack notes that Deleuze “explores Francis Bacon’s practice of painting without telling a story, which liberates ‘the figure’ from the mode of representation and accesses the sensation that exceeds meaning and representation.”⁶⁹ The rubrics or “givens” that converge in a logic of sensation are “sensations with intensities: coloured, textured, flavoured, shaped, accumulated, coagulated.” Rubrics are not things, objects or ideas as such, but already affective movements, flows, blockages and intensities that suggest that both poetry and dance can operate in excess of the functions of language and discourse, opening possibilities of radical coherence and affection. Poetics or “a poetics” is not simply a background or underlying structural aspect of a work, or a means of de-

68 Olson 1997 [1950].

69 Slack 2005, 131–140.

termining meaning, but a convergence of logics beyond “aboutness” that provide the conditions for the emergence of “something else”.

POETICS AS: [CORRELATES WITH [A] – [Y] ABOVE]

A. act of immediacy	- Charles Olson
B. choreography	- writing movement/movement writing
C. condition	- negative capability/positive capability
D. traps or inventive perception	- Allen Fisher
E. formal structuring device	- Roman Jakobson
F. generator	- Roland Barthes
G. contract between reader and text	- Gerard Genette
H. (endless) practice	- Michael Foucault
I. fluid intersection	- Laurence Louppe
J. ensemble of creative conducts	- Laurence Louppe
K. shared process of perception	- Laurence Louppe
L. formational and transformational	- Laurence Louppe
M. sense of measure	- Robert Creeley
N. recovery of familiar	- Jerome Rothenberg
O. flow of contexts	- Lyn Hejinian
P. acknowledgment	- Lyn Hejinian
Q. unknowing and otherness	- Lyn Hejinian
R. experiencing experience	- Lyn Hejinian
S. sensuous contamination	- Gilles Deleuze
T. <i>pointes sublimes</i>	- André Breton
U. transcription	- Walter Benjamin
V. catalyst	Gerald L. Bruns
W. disturbance	- gerald l. bruns
X. mode of proximity	- Gerald L. Bruns/ Emmanuel Levinas
Y. logic of sensation	- Gilles Deleuze

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Composition: Relatedness and collective learning environments⁷⁰

KIRSI MONNI & VICTORIA PÉREZ ROYO

Kirsi Monni: So, I would like to discuss the term composition with you, in relation to current dance and choreographic practices in the field of MA programmes. In our previous e-mail exchanges and conversations you have been quite reluctant to keep using this term. Why is that?

Victoria Pérez Royo: Composition is not just a neutral word. It is also an umbrella concept under which part of the work of educational artistic environments is organised. That's why, as a practice, as an educational technology, and as a component of artistic research it is, above all, a structure, a dispositif that organises relations and shapes subjectivities. That said, it is also related to concrete educational paradigms as well as to certain conceptions of artistic practice.

I wouldn't like to directly reject it, but I do feel an urge to identify some of the risks that uncritical adoption of this concept, or the common traditional understanding of it, could lead to. Here I

⁷⁰ This text is the result of an exchange (live, via skype, e-mails) from October 2013 to August 2014. We have synthesised the text from all these conversations in the form of a dialogue, one that seemed to us the most appropriate to display our affinities and differences concerning the term composition.

am not talking about dismissing the multiplicity of practices that have been developed under this umbrella in different composition modules in BA and MA programmes, because we all know that the relevant point in education is not the name of the subject but the ethical, the political position of the teacher and her experience. Rather, I propose to briefly tackle the different dangers I currently see in stripping the term composition of its potentialities; imagining what the interesting questions and aspects might be that we would like to keep and foster, were we to create such a module in our respective MA programmes, according to our understanding of research in the arts.

KM: What kinds of dangers are you referring to, for example?

VPR: One of the most worrying would be proceduralism, which would narrow the understanding of composition to the application of ready-made procedures without any deep questioning of their pertinence in relation to the research processes in which they are used, even before the student has identified an interesting research question or an attractive problem to inhabit. In this narrow sense, composition would be an activity that would hinder genuine questioning of the research materials, leading, without major resistance, to the fabrication of an artistic product. In recent years I have seen a tendency for many of the modules that used to be called Composition to change their names to new terms, such as Research Methodologies or Introduction to problems of research. Maybe these shifts signal this same fear of proceduralism that I am identifying. I think that nowadays we are increasingly aware that every research process in art must create its own means of attempting to answer the questions raised.

KM: I agree. That's why I've been intentionally deliberating on the term, trying to tease out the premises on which it rests and to

see whether it still has something important to offer to contemporary choreographic practices. The first stumbling block that hinders fresh thinking about the term composition seems to be the habit of identifying it with a certain historical aesthetic paradigm, modernist movement-composition and its most conventional grammar. But in general language the term is understood extremely broadly, signifying all kinds of composing arrangements from material objects to situational relations, and is used in all fields of activity from computer science, mathematics and linguistics to law and history. In this respect I see that the ontology of composition might be a rewarding area of research, especially now that the performing arts are a field of interdisciplinary compositions, collective collaborations, multi-medial, site specific and reciprocal events. I'm thinking about your point that using the term composition in artistic processes might prevent real research. I wonder what is it about the concept of composition that conditions the research to be less real? Would any concept or context really determine the realness of the research but rather other aspects of it? On the other hand, it is interesting to ponder what those contextual frameworks would be that are more current nowadays if not composition? I understand that you were referring to a situation where composition is understood as something separate that is applied on top of the materials rather than as research into the premises of the composing mind in question.

VPR: In applying the conventional notions of composition, I think there is a risk of paying too much attention to the skills of handling materials and less to the actual search of the student. I remember Lévi-Strauss' description of how philosophy was understood and practised when he studied at the Sorbonne. According to him, it was reduced to a series of tasks such as "elaborating

constructions ever lighter and more audacious, resolving problems of balance and implication, inventing refinements of logic; and the more absolute the technical perfection, the more complete the internal coherence, the ‘greater’ was the system in question”⁷¹. Students were masters of dialectical argumentation and were able on the spot to prepare a one-hour conference on a randomly selected topic. The essential threat behind this conception of human thinking is clear: “Know-how had taken the place of passion of truth”⁷².

Of course procedures can be a great help in practical terms. The choreographic tools that Jaqueline Smith-Autard proposes,⁷³ for example, can have great instrumental value. But if we understand art as research, this proceduralism could present serious problems, similar to the ones Lévi-Strauss saw in his philosophical education – it “exercised the intelligence but left the spirit high and dry”⁷⁴. If the meaning of composition is narrowed down to a palette of procedures, this would hinder reflection based on the problems the very materials raise, killing precisely what constitutes the motor of the research, the specificity of the territory in which one is working.

This availability of working procedures in artistic research is a delicate question; on the one hand, it can help the student to follow paths different to the ones to which she is accustomed, to devel-

71 Lévi-Strauss 1961 [1955], 56.

72 Lévi-Strauss 1961 [1955], 55.

73 For example, in the table of contents of her book *Dance Composition* it is already possible to see the tools she proposes in order to practice composition. In *Methods of Construction* 5. they are listed: motifs, repetition, variation and contrasts, climax or highlight, proportion and balance, transition, logical development, unity. (Smith-Autard 2004.)

74 Lévi-Strauss 1961 [1955], 55.

op other ways of working and to find a possible way to continue when she feels blocked. But on the other, I tend to mistrust these ready-made procedures, since they can be felt to be “solutions”. They would then flatten the necessary intensity of the seeking and problem-creation aspect inherent in every artistic process. This intensity is precisely what focuses the required attention on certain aspects that make up the singularity of the work of art. In the process of research, finding a solution is never an action similar to that of selecting one among a whole range of possible ones, but a great discovery.

KM: That Lévi-Strauss example is apt indeed. It describes the common problematic between theorisation and lived world, representation and non-thematic experience, the *experience* and the *abstraction*. I understand that in knowledge production there is a strong tendency to let the theoretical representation override the ontic experience. In this respect, artwork is an exception in the way in which this tension is internalised in the gestalt/composition of the artwork, in the inseparable nature of the “*logos*” of the construction and the being of the materials.

For me the origin of the aforementioned problematic arises from our consciousness, which demands the interplay and simultaneity of the experience and the abstraction. For example the sufferings of our lives would be unbearable without our ability to reflect on the experiences within the given situation and to transform and abstract them to reach communication and sharing through that transforming process. In the context of creation, of *poiesis* (bringing into existence something that was not there before), we oscillate between the creative impulses of Dionysus and the form-giving and distancing aspect of Apollo. And here we can easily lose track when the form-giving aspect is institutionalised as a method and

separated from the real interaction with the motivating “causes” (the world-relation in question, the materials’ own being) so that they disappear from sight, or are not informing the creative process as real “unsecuring”, thriving questions.⁷⁵ The poetics becomes a sheer grammar, a prescriptive model that is applied whatever the experience or problematic at stake, which is the case I think you were referring to.

But again, the way I would like to comprehend composition in its ontological sense, is on the one hand to ponder it as an *event*, to ask what is happening in the composition, what is at work in it, and on the other hand to reflect all *poiesis* as forms of composition in terms of relatedness, and in terms of the “causes” that have affected that particular relatedness. The composed reality, the “togetherness in relatedness” is prevalent, the question is how we frame or comprehend that, what preconditions our ways of perceiving that. Our world (of meanings) is a composed world, reality that we can try comprehend, to unravel, to de-construct, and to compose anew. As an artistic activity composition describes the ability to draw on the potentialities of a specific “togetherness in relatedness” thus composing the world (of meanings) anew.

When I am thinking of composition as an event and an activity, I am actually talking about *reciprocity*, *dialogue*, *negotiation*, *relationship* and *transformation* between the motivating “causes” (the world-relation in question, the materials’ own being) and compos-

75 With the term “causes” (or motivating “causes”) I’m referring to Miika Luoto’s article *Work, Practice, Event: on the poetic character of the work of art* in this book, where he discusses e.g. Heidegger’s interpretation of *poiesis*. I understand it as follows, that the production and the existence of a work/composition are indebted to the “causes” which allow it to be.

ing subject. So when a composing process “researches” with these kinds of “elements”, a composition could be considered more like an “event” than an product where the questioning has reached to its end. In spite of how definite or fixed the actual shape/choreography is, what is *happening* in a composition is an *event* of certain “*togetherness in relatedness*”. What is shining through in a composition is its singular and specific manner of “togetherness in relatedness”. The formulation of this comes from my adaptation of Heidegger’s elaboration on *logos* in *Being and Time*: *logos* is letting-something-been-seen in its togetherness with something – letting it be seen as something.⁷⁶ (Maybe it is worth noting that this “togetherness” should not be understood as tensionless comfort; I understand it as creativity, as revealing, unconcealing power.)

I see that the aforementioned ontological view could rehabilitate the concept of composition in dance pedagogies; at least it has worked for me. I see that even the use of those compositional elements you mentioned could be dealt with, not as procedures to their own ends, but means of constructional reflection and focus by questioning their relationality anew. For example asking, how do I perceive, recognise or frame my motivating causes, my “motifs”, the handling of them and how have they been dealt with in relation to each other? I don’t think that the Smith-Autard’s list of compositional elements has been formulated without any relation to the lived world but are (rather conventional) abstractions from the way our consciousness recognises, orients and organises our being-in-the-world in general. I mean that the world emerges as patterns (day-night) as repetition (days-nights), as variation (Sun-

76 Heidegger 1962 [1926], 56.

day-Monday), as contrast and highlights (Saturday) etc. But I see that it is artistic laziness if one does not thoroughly investigate these constructing and organising elements in relation to one's particular study. I would, for example, see that depending on my framework I could work with these kind of modulations of the basic list: variation -> difference, repetition -> recognition, contrasts -> opposites, complexity -> plurality/heterogeneity/multitude. It might be that we really need another set of terms if we want to explicitly deal with more subtle or unfamiliar fields of perception, for example those in which Erin Manning has describe how non-hierarchical the perceptual world of an autistic person is, thus leading to differently composed world of meanings.⁷⁷ For me differently composed, is still composed, consisting of some motifs that have been recognised, some contrasts, some spatial-temporal organisation.

But yes, I admit, the danger of proceduralism lurks there immediately when using this conventional terminology and that has to be actively resisted. In any case, using whatever terminology, one has to ponder every time anew, what are the motivating "causes", what conditions the composition? This leads me to the question of different modes of knowledge as tools. The practical-theoretical knowledge of compositional processes would be interesting to share with first of all philosophy but also the sciences, that might help us to avoid interacting only with the conventions of a pre-given aesthetic realm.

VPR: This is a very nice description. However, If I had to define the activity of the artist, I think I would rather use another set of terms. In a conversation between my colleague José A. Sánchez, the artist Cristina Blanco and me, we tried to trace the contours of the

77 Manning and Massumi 2013.

field of artistic research in the confluence of three essential factors: imagination, subjectivity and problems⁷⁸. The latter term refers to a conception of artistic activity as discovering and inhabiting problems. The relevant action then is not to avoid or solve them, but to inhabit them, and see their singularity is fully developed, to create tools and procedures ad hoc, absolutely particular to the project. This is not incompatible with your description, it is just that I place the emphasis on other aspects of artistic work.

KM: I like very much the idea of “inhabiting the problems” and bringing up imagination, subjectivity and problems as essential factors for artistic research. However, I would like to bring the terms *research*, *procedure* and *method* to our discussion since they appear a great deal in the arts nowadays. I wonder whether there are some underlying contradictions regarding the way in which these terms are often used and whether deliberating on them might reveal something relevant here. In my understanding, the essential feature of scientific research is its systematic manner: one has to carefully follow the chosen methodology. Methodology is the know-how of the procedure, the instructions on how to conduct the research. In a way it is an abstract representation of and a prescription for the research process, it tells you the basic guidelines for how to proceed. And the choice (or creation) of the methodology is justified by the relationship of the research question and the theoretical framework. But in the process of artistic creation the methodology in itself might be a problem if it conducts the procedure such that open interaction with the materials’ own being and agency disappears in favour of methodological consistency. Yet we often call the

78 Pérez Royo & Sánchez & Blanco 2013, 51–62.

process of artistic creation research and use the terminologies of method and procedure along with it.

Then we have the newish academic discipline of artistic research and its degree requirements and university degrees. What are the main distinctions between the academic discipline of artistic research and the research process of artistic creation? I often confront this issue in my work, in supervising doctoral students for example. One aspect is that along with a commitment to academic artistic research comes the need to formulate and articulate the research problem and to systematise to a certain level the procedure of dealing with it in order to be able to submit research results for examination and dissemination.

This is by no means an easy task. Inhabiting the problem, as you beautifully described, dwelling in the reciprocal and creative relationship with the materials on one hand and thematising, abstracting and articulating a specific problem and then methodising the handling of it on the other hand. When we are talking about a method in an artistic process we are talking about a certain systematisation and my question is, is it possible to apply a “method” without it conducting the process somehow? And how do we understand the term method in this context? Why do we want the students to be exposed to varied methods and tools in the first place? Well, I recognise a need for reflective discourses; a need for tools that are somehow systematised and therefore transparent, inclined to criticism and which can be used for analysing the object of the work in order to achieve some distance between the manner of the dealing with the materials, the composing process and the self. But in the end, I think everyone develops her/his own poetics, it is a deeply personal thing, although it is also deeply rooted in a web of pre-existing relations and already opened world.

VPR: I think here we are using the term method in relation to two different activities, and therefore in two different senses: one referring to the production of the work and development of the research process (creation of an interesting problem, demarcation of the area of research, invention of tools to tackle the question, etc.), and the other related to its communication (creation of mechanisms to share the process with others, making it understandable and traceable, and therefore open to critique). I think that both are deeply entangled, as I have tried to expose in other contexts⁷⁹, but I think it is adequate to differentiate them here in respect to our discussion about method.

In relation to this second aspect, communication, I totally agree with you. If something characterises research, it is that it must be open to critique, it must be shared in a wider community. I am not so sure though whether the activities that are developed in this respect can be identified with what is called method or with composition. It is of course an area in which there is still great potential for development, especially in respect to the challenge that artistic practice can represent for the renewal and opening up of traditional protocols of communication in humanities.

The first field of activities is the proper area in which the term method can be tackled, in my opinion, although if referring to artis-

79 Pérez Royo 2012.

tic research I again would prefer to use another set of terms.⁸⁰ But I do agree with you. Within the framework of BA studies, I think that exposing students to methods and tools can be of great help: maybe BA students are not able to create their own and therefore they need to go through the process of appropriating others, adapting them to the specificity of their processes. However, MA students in my opinion should be able to develop their own methods. Maybe they can use others' tools, but in this case the interesting work lies in finding other uses and purposes for them and so in re-inventing them. Each piece of artistic research is absolutely singular and specific, it is this radical uniqueness that gives entity to the work and meaning to the search. Without it we would strip it of one of its most relevant aspects, the motor of the process. But I will try to answer your question in a wider historical framework. Why use methods in artistic practice? I could differentiate two different tendencies developed throughout the 20th century, one referring to the figure of the author, the other to the spectator.

In relation to the first, a distance to one's own research process through the use of ready-made working procedures has been promoted in order to escape artistic subjectivity, which was felt to be

80 I am concerned about an excessive fixation on the method in the realm of artistic research, when in the field of science it has been already questioned and criticised in many ways. The paradigmatic case is Feyerabend, who significantly, after being a falsationist disciple of Popper, changed to become its most aggressive attacker. His critique of the dogma of scientific method was articulated under the proposal of an epistemological anarchism (that implied a methodological anarchism also) and suggested a pluralist scientific practice of critique of the hegemonic mechanism of knowledge reproduction. It was inspired precisely by artistic practices such as Dadaism, for example. In my opinion it would be problematic now precisely from the sphere of the arts to focus too much on the method. (Feyerabend 2010 [1975]).

a burden, loaded as it was with an exaggerated emphasis on the figure of the author and a conception of the artist's activity based on self-expression. Throughout the 20th century many procedures were developed in the arts field, such as Cage's and Cunningham's chance operations and the mathematical and linguistic structures of Oulipo, to name but two examples. These experiments were successful as a close scrutiny and a profound critique of the concept of the author and in opening it up to extended meaning and new practices. However, it is also true that the big artistic figures keep on working perfectly at market level. But I see a great difference nowadays in relation to artistic subjectivity: in times of physical and subjective dispossession, of dispositive modelling movements, gestures, behaviour, opinions, and discourses, in a growing process of de-subjectivation, artistic subjectivity can be understood as a place of political resistance. Instead of coming back to "I express", subjectivity is not something to avoid nowadays, but something to foster from a political point of view. On the other hand, chance operations can be useful in creating a distance in relation to one's own accustomed ways of doing, getting out of habitual ways and forcing oneself to step into unusual fields or to favour experimentation. But they can also be very effective in feeding a continuous and unstoppable production of art works. There are many artists attempting to create alternatives to the market system, such as Paz Rojo's work, for example, which is paradigmatic in her tenacious persistence in her search of a movement and a presence that are not capitalisable. The solutions I perceive now as majoritarian do not insist on creating a distance to oneself, but put the emphasis precisely on the cultivation of subjectivities that present alternatives to the hegemonic trend.

The other reason why procedural systems were so relevant in the 20th century is related to a growing interest (especially in the decades of the 50s and 60s) in processes of audience emancipation. Chance operations, procedures of permutation and variation such as the ones that Eco describes and analyses in his essay *Open Work* (1962) for example, are perfectly suited to this desire to grant audiences a more active role in relation to the work of art. But in this respect too we are now in a different situation. The interest now, as far as I understand it, has shifted to multidirectional collective work together with the audience, where the emphasis is put on a community autonomously creating their own rules of interaction and profiting from this exchange. One significant event in this respect is the organisation of the last edition of the festival In-presentable, curated by Juan Dominguez but organised through spontaneously developed strategies, very similar to Open Space Technologies, that were devised by the whole group of 100 participants, all professionals in the field.

It may seem that we are far away from the original question of composition, but in my opinion we are not. I think this emphasis on collectivity is a relevant question, particularly when thinking about the potentiality of composition as a platform for collective learning, which corresponds with the move towards a culture of learning that has been visible in the activities of the last decade in research centres, art institutions and in a multiplicity of artists' initiatives in Europe.

KM: Before I ask you to elaborate on the idea of composition as a possible context for collective learning, I would like to still continue briefly on the question of the author's role and position in the creative process.

What I actually meant when talking about the distance between the manner of dealing with the materials, the composing process and the self, was referring to a subtle area of receptiveness and reflection. In my mind the term composition is referring to the “togetherness in relatedness”, to the “causes” that have conditioned the composing process. In this respect, if I am receptive, I am directed to perceive and maybe comprehend how the material I’m dealing with is composed in itself, what is the manner of its own being, what is its own compositional “logos”.

Concretely, if I am making a composition with a handful of matches, I’m dealing with organic wood, its colour and texture, its stiffness, lightness, symmetry, homogeneity, repetition, potentiality for fire and of course its cultural context. If I want to establish a new relationship with it, to create an emergent composition I have to place myself in a receptive relationship with the matches’ own way of being, not relating to them from the point of view of mere availability, not using them within my ready-to-hand world for my representative purposes. I need to free them from the purely instrumental position, release them from my governance. I have to place myself in a genuine dialogue with them in order to be able to create something third – not me, not them, but something that has occurred from this new relationship, the third, the composition.

Talking about the ethical relationship with the matches is of course somewhat irrelevant here but transfer this concrete example into complicated cultural contexts, talking about the bodily existences that are different, other species and then the perspective changes. What I’m talking about is for me largely an ecological and ethical attitude and is very much informed by late Heideggerian thinking. In this respect the compositional reflection is a way out of the purely instrumental and representational use of the materials

(or people) to a more reciprocal relationship with the materials and author's intentions.

I understand how important it is to emphasise and cultivate, as you said, subjectivities that present alternatives to the hegemonic trend. To rethink the subject from the bodily perspective is undoubtedly one of the main concerns of contemporary choreography, as for example André Lepecki has articulated. The emergence of the subject from the subjugation of the homogenising demand for abstraction, typical in dance history, or the realisation of the homogenising force of the prevalent hyper-capitalist economy is of the utmost importance.

I don't see that this is necessarily contradicting what I tried to articulate earlier. Using the knowledge of composition, reflecting the constructional elements and their premises does not homogenise the subject unless it is applied in that way. On the contrary, one might assume that the analyses of the motivating "causes", of what is conditioning the composing process and what are the compositional elements used will reveal whether some aesthetic convention or political assumption is conditioning e.g. the sameness of all the motives.

VPR: I think your understanding of composition as "togetherness in relatedness" as you beautifully describe it would definitely avoid the risks associated with proceduralism and method in artistic research that we have been commenting on. And I am really interested in the ethical dimension that you touch upon. I think that this description of composition you offer also makes it possible to overcome another very problematic issue of research in the arts: the reduction of the rich interaction between the artist and the object of study to a merely instrumental one, according to an understanding of research

inherited from one of the founding myths of modern science⁸¹: objectivity and the clear and irrevocable separation between subject and object, an artificial separation that ignores the continuous feedback between the researcher and the materials studied.⁸² If anything is distinctive about artistic research, it is precisely that this process of work affects both subject and object. Herein lies its potential for learning and destabilising, this capacity to challenge subjectivities. This parameter of objectivity has already been criticised through the 20th century. If it still has certain validity in our field, maybe it is because two different worlds merge: a certain tradition still alive that used to understand composition within a style or a discipline or movement as the correct use and combination of its rules and grammar, and a proliferating comprehension of knowledge as a service, in line with the most recent developments of our capitalist society. These new forms of collective learning to which I was referring before are positioned against this trend. From my perspective they represent interesting experiments to reshape composition as an emancipatory praxis in educational institutions.

And this leads me to the last risk in relation to an uncritical understanding of composition that I would like to mention: an understanding of artistic work as an individual activity. This is related on the one hand to the over-emphasised figure of the author we have already referred to. And on the other hand, it corresponds to a capitalist emphasis in individual creation. The danger that

81 Fayerabend 1999.

82 This reciprocal relationship could be described with the analogy of love, as it offers a good base to radically subvert the positions of subject and object we have so long dealt with, as I have proposed in some talks still unpublished, "About research in the arts. A lover's discourse".

composition would run as a practice in MA programmes would be to ignore the whole network of people doing and thinking together, as well as the exchange of ideas, perspectives, opinions and ways of doing, assessing the single student in relation exclusively to the piece signed by her and not according to her work developed in the context of the community. Although the wide majority of MA programmes I know do acknowledge this relevant dimension and in fact propose a wide variety of formats to keep alive a constant flow of exchange among all the people involved (advisors, teachers, students, colleagues, etc.), in the evaluation process this whole interaction tends to be relegated to a secondary plane. Of course this is not due to a lack of interest on the part of the directing team, but rather to prevailing university norms. And here I am also talking about our programme – we are constantly devising more or less successful tactics in order to try to fit into university regulations the possibility of assessing collective work.

Although I am focusing very much on this collective moment of exchange, I am not implying at all that the private moment of solitude in every research is not relevant, and that it should be erased. On the contrary. It is absolutely necessary in the process and it must be handled with care, with thought put into the best times and spaces to foster it.

KM: I agree. We have a great deal to do to really implement the systemic understanding of the contemporary reality to our operational models. We are still subjugated to structures that are composed of separate bricks of different hierarchical status and central governance. But more and more I am seeing the students taking over. They do have the experience of a net-modelled interactive reality and they are keen to create their future from this position. I would like to see educational discourses able to innovate and re-

new themselves accordingly. If the term composition does have a preservative aura, linked so much to the aforementioned modernist era with its fixed structures, it is of course the responsibility of the educators to update this notion, if the concept is used in curricula. As I see it, the question of composition, the “togetherness in relatedness” is at most a question of relations – how are they composed, what conditions the composing process? I find e.g. those attempts to apply system theory-based compositional ideas quite interesting and have also been contributing somewhat to the development of them. They are lively new approaches to creating dynamic compositional structures whose constructional elements are more in the realm of perception, feedback and transformed information than fixed parameters of movement. I see here a choreographic genealogy from Fluxus and score practices of the 1960s but there are also differences in their explicit linkage to system theoretical frameworks and ecological visions of reality. But nevertheless, they are compositional propositions and are of course in danger of transforming into procedural tools once “know-how had taken the place of passion of truth” if applied in that way.

I find your ideas of shifting the focus from individual execution to collective collaboration and learning very intriguing. Collaborative working and learning has long been a core idea of curricula in our programmes at the Theatre Academy. Students from various performing arts disciplines are working together in artistic processes and to some extent in discursive studies in every year of their studies. This is partly due to our exceptional facilities with studio theatres and partly because of the core vision of the “common stage” of the student generations. There is much good in present practice but a lot to develop further in renewing the underlining understanding of its purpose. There has been a close focus on the

conventions of artistic collaboration that must produce a single artwork, a performance composed utilising each participant's discipline, although in the last few years this has started to change. But I think there is still much more to explore in the area of the radical renewal of the collaborative aspect in performance arts practices. So could you please explain how you understand a module of composition as a possible context for collective learning?

VPR: The possibilities I see of expanding the concept of composition are related to this relational moment that could allow it to develop into a practice of collective resistant poesis. In order to achieve this, it would be necessary to pay attention to two aspects: how to foster singularities and how to develop the forces and potentialities of the collective within the classroom, especially in relation to processes of collective learning, the creation of social tissue, and its possibilities for opening up spaces of autonomous critique.

The first aspect refers to the activities of helping every student to discover her particular sensibility, take it seriously and cultivate it, of fostering her particular ways of seeing and observing, which is a radically different activity to that of making the student persevere in her way of producing work. The sensibility of the person is given time, enhanced, expanded and enriched until it develops into an operating mode for the particular piece of research she is working on. For example, I am thinking of the mechanisms that Carlos Marquerie (mentor years ago to artists such as Rodrigo García or Angélica Liddell) has devised in his modules at the MPECV. He has proposed a practice of creating a diary (in any possible language or material: written diaries, audiovisual, objectual, performative ones). This activity expanded the limits of what is considered artistic work and what not and facilitated a bridge between what happens in the classroom or in the studio and outside it, giving the time to observe

the ways each single sensibility has of perceiving reality and relating to it. But actually, the most fundamental aspects of his modules are the time he gives to the presentations of the students' experiences and products, and above all his great capacity for listening,

The second aspect focuses on the processes for facilitating an enrichment of this singularity by means of dialogue and exchange.⁸³ The significant critiques that Bourriaud's relationality has born⁸⁴ were more than enough to make us suspect celebrations of the idea of relation beyond a thorough analysis of its motives, contexts and means. But the recent collective political experiences in Spain urge me not to reject a series of concepts that might signal ways out of the recalcitrant individualism we live in.

Theories about cognitive capitalism have made it possible to clearly perceive how the very capacities that define us as humans (talking, communicating, having empathy, relating to others, etc.) are now precisely the ones that use capitalism in its late phase of expansion. But instead of complaining about the little margin for action that the biopower leaves us through its conquest of new territories such as affects and the intimate sphere, I am interested in the affirmative biopolitics⁸⁵ that appeared precisely thanks to this expansion. In a good Marxist tradition, what is at stake is thinking of history dialectically: the barbarism of capitalism also represents historical opportunities for emancipation. If the productive hegemony of today is that of immaterial labour, it can also work as biopolitical

83 A concrete proposal of a module of composition focused specifically in these two aspects is presented in the paper "Subjectivation in solo work" in this book.

84 Bishop 2004 and Foster 2003.

85 Hardt and Negri 2004.

production forms of life, subjectivities, knowledge, social relations and affects that oppose biopower. “Mediatisation is predisposed to cooperation, globalisation can be the becoming-world of each of us, biopolitics can be the cure and the gathering of forces”⁸⁶. In this sense, the very relationality that the system fosters has a value in so far as it can also be seen as a self-constituent activity that creates society and subjectivity. This would be the genuinely political dimension of our being in relation: the creation of dissident subjectivities and social bonds.

I think that nowadays there is a variety of initiatives in the field of dance and performance working in this same direction. I am thinking for example of the initiative “¿Y si dejamos de ser (artistas)?” [What if we give up being (artists)?] (in Madrid, June 2013) or Cláudia Dias’ research on collective real time composition. She is very much aware of its political aspects. I quote part of the description of a workshop that she was invited to lead in Madrid (a collaboration between MPECV and the Reina Sofía Museum): “A laboratory where it is possible to try out other ways of doing, capable of thinking and acting over the (cultural, social, political) present from an aesthetic perspective. That is, a laboratory that is located at the interstices where art and politics meet – in this area where collective declarations are devised and re-design in dissensus” [My translation]. It is remarkable, in relation to the idea of distance that we were tackling before, how she was utterly critical to what she calls the hyper-creativity of participants, something that I think she considers the scourge of artists. In opposition to this, the focus of her work is located on the tension between the materials that

86 Negri 2014, 38.

are created collectively and their potentiality. In contrast to this hyper-creativity, she makes the group concentrate on highly attentively listening to what is created by the collective action.

The interesting point in relation to horizontal collective learning environments is that they have a potential not only for creation, experience and learning processes, but also for creating a commonality, and they attempt ways of community participation that might give a powerful meaning to the relationship between education and emancipation.

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Subjectivation in Solo Work

VICTORIA PÉREZ ROYO

This text is documentation of the workshop held in October 2013 at the HZT Uferstudios in Berlin. The workshop was planned and facilitated by Victoria Pérez Royo and Kirsi Monni within the context of the Erasmus Intensive 2013, Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance.

Participants: Elisa Arteta (Madrid), Tamsyn Butt (Laban), Luciana Chierigati (Madrid), Catherine Elsen (Laban), Claudia Fuentes (Madrid), Leila Kourkia (TeaK), Ixchel Mendoza (SODA), Laura Potrovic (ADA), Ibon Salvador (Madrid).

The fundamental question of the workshop was to examine ways of articulating the link between individual and collective learning. It was an attempt to work in a collective while paying attention to the complexity of group dynamics, observing and respecting the different times of individual work as well as the poetics of each singularity. The idea of a collective proposed was not based on consensus and agreement, but on a dissensus that should spring from the differences among the poetics of each of the participants.

In order to organise the dynamics of exchange of poetics we made use of the metaphor of translation, which seemed the most useful at that moment. This concept was understood in a very par-

ticular way, based on two literary operations developed by the poets Silvana Franzetti and Leopoldo María Panero.

In *Edición bilingüe*⁸⁷ the Argentinian writer Silvana Franzetti follows the usual distribution and graphic conventions in books of poems, in which the original text in italics is on the left-hand page and the translation on the right, so that the task of comparing vocabulary, or syntactic structure or tracking the alterations produced in the process of translation is facilitated for the reader. The originality of Franzetti's work lies in the fact that she has translated her own poems from Spanish to Spanish, playing with the notion of variation and following a series of devised rules. This operation is based on a fictional split of the author, so that the necessary alteration is created in order to be able to develop the exercise of appropriation of materials and their slight transformation. The purpose of devising an artistic strategy such as this particular exercise of translation lies in the openness and interminable character of every piece of art. Panero formulated it this way in a text in which he exposes a theoretical justification of his particular logic of translation that he upheld and practised: "every work, if it is really complex, is subject to endless developments".⁸⁸

He understood this activity as an extension of the translated text: "Translation has to develop – or improve – the original, and not just move it, as any piece of furniture, from one room to another".⁸⁹ Following this logic he aimed at revealing latent senses of the first text that would manifest in its translation. However, in

87 Franzetti 2006.

88 Panero 1972.

89 Panero 1972, 7.

a later period of his work Panero radicalised his understanding of translation, even devising a new term for it: “perversion”, a play on words with “version” and “per-version”. Thanks to infidelity, to a *perversion* of the original text, the translator is actually able to be loyal to it: “Perversion is the only literal, faithful translation, and this thanks to adultery, to infidelity”.⁹⁰ Panero conceived translating not a servile task, but as a true literary and creative operation that works through the affirmation of the difference the translator makes heedless of the question of preserving a supposed identity of the work: if translation is always based on a reading, which is by necessity personal, subjective and different to the original, the focus is now set on explicitly fostering this difference and working creatively with it.

The workshop departed from an analysis of the translations by these two poets in order to facilitate a first approach to different strategies of translation as a creative operation. After that, the participants were asked to select artistic materials they had previously developed, which they thought would be interesting to rework in order to disclose its potential, to figure out future developments or to go deeper into the understanding of their own creative operations present in them. These materials were to have a maximum length of five minutes, so that the activity of translation did not expand to an unmanageable size.

The working procedure from there on consisted of three activities: 1) The presentation of each participant’s materials followed by a variable period of time dedicated to individual work on the trans-

90 Panero in Blesa 2011, 30. All quotations by Panero in this text are my – faithful – English translations.

lations. 2) Showing of the translations, all in a row to facilitate an understanding based on comparison of similitudes and differences. 3) And finally, a discussion by the whole group on each one of the *translations*. The focus in this discussion was set not on qualitative terms, but rather on the work of revealing the hidden dimensions of the first materials that the subsequent translations brought to light, as well as on the aspects that were obliterated in the translations.

The goal of this system was to foster two different aspects: on the one hand, a very intensive work of creation departing not from one's own assumptions and more natural tendencies, but from the challenge of materials created by other subjectivities. In this process a particular mechanism of differentiation (finding one's own artistic sensibility through contrast) and of assimilation (appropriating someone else's materials) were brought into play. On the other hand, the collective activity of discussion was oriented towards fostering a deeper consciousness of each participant's own poetics and ways of working, as well as the development of each participant's sensibility and capacity for appreciation of artistic work.

This was a process of understanding experiences of diversity, exchange and transformation in the wider frame that the term composition allowed, putting forward an idea of collective working that was not based on agreement or on the production of a common product, but rather on the simultaneity of work in different research processes. A very adequate concept to better understand how this circulation and exchange of subjectivities actually can take place is the concept of quasi-object developed by Michel Serres.⁹¹ This neologism allows him to develop an understanding of the collective

91 Serres 2009 [1980], 224–234.

that is not exclusively based on identity, but rather on the activity of sharing. He explains it by means of a series of very suggestive metaphors and images. The most important analogy in his reflections is obviously the parasite (it is also the title of the book), a being defined both by its substance as well as by the relations it creates (living-with). The concrete image he examines first in order to negatively define the quasi-object and to reject an old conception of the collective is the wall (the “we”), which is built by means of an operation of the addition of single bricks (the “I”). This image offers an understanding of the collective as a static whole composed of previously defined identities. In contrast to this, Serres proposes the analogy of ball games. In them the collective is created by the fluctuation of the individuals towards and away from the ball, and the movements of passing it to each other. According to this analogy, through the quasi-object something happens that Serres describes as revolutionary: the centre of each player (subjectivity) is not located in the individuals playing, but in the ball they share (and that they do not retain, as bad players would do). As a description of ball games this idea of retaining the ball would be utterly irrelevant, but as an ontological metaphor for the constitution of subjectivities it is essential: “Skill with the ball supposes a Ptolemaic revolution of which few theoreticians are capable, since they are accustomed to being subjects in a Copernican world where objects are slaves”.⁹²

The revolutionary aspect of the “skill with the ball” lies in the fact of recognising that the ball is not just an object we use, command and control, but that it is a quasi-subject, as it creates agency, it determines the actions of the players: they are at its disposal and

92 Serres 2009 [1980], 226.

not exclusively the other way round. In Serres' words, according to an ontological description: "Playing is nothing else but making oneself the attribute of the ball as a substance".⁹³ This original description of the logic of the relationship between ball and players suggests the creation of a collectivity that does not focus exclusively on the different individual interests, but is built around the ball, or better put, around the act of passing the ball – articulating and giving shape to the particular interests through the very relation. This activity is in fact what constitutes the "we" and nothing else. And this means a fundamental transformation in our understanding of subjectivity. This in turn shows "that we are capable of ecstasy, of difference from our equilibrium, that we can put our centre outside ourselves".⁹⁴

The quasi-object represents a good concept for understanding a possible mechanism to put subjectivities in relation to each other, a generator of intersubjectivity through exchange. However, something in this description is missing. It does not pay attention to the moments which do not focus exclusively on the ball and its circulation, but in the times in which the player is alone and recovers strength, thinks about a possible next move and reflects about what has happened, which are also fundamental moments in a collective.

93 Serres 2009 [1980], 226.

94 Serres 2009 [1980], 228.

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Some Thoughts on the Intensive Project⁹⁵

EMILIE GALLIER

In the development of an artistic process, when does composition take place? When does it manifest? We have discussed a distinction between generative mode and productive mode. Within these modes, which we could consider as two times within the chronology of the process, what is the place of composition? We usually think of composition as a final or late stage of the process. I have never been quite satisfied with that. In the practice with Willy Praeger and Igor Koruga for “Will we separate or not after these 3 days?” my intuition that composition would find its place all along the process, was validated/ comforted. All choices within the generative process constitute a compositional attitude: the protocol, the choices of where to start, the decisions (intuitive, or the “private politeness” – in Willy’s term – or conscious ideas). So, to the question “when does composition manifest?” I found an answer in: composition is always present, it is there, in a more or less conscious way.

How does the frame you choose (in thinking of composition at a separate late stage, when time comes “to put things together”) shape the content of your proposition? In the game experience of

95 This text was published in Gallier’s blog after the Erasmus Intensive 2011, *Practicing Composition: Making Practice*. <http://post-cie.tumblr.com/>

Thursday, the game was thought of “only as a structure, a link that connects the interests of each artist”. But these interests were eaten by the structure of the game that raised up issues of rules, of winning or losing, of criteria, values of the final prize etc. It is a mistake to think of composition separately from the material, content, intention. “Putting things together” thanks to compositional “tools” becomes equivalent to an unnecessary make-up that distracts the viewer: The creative process, the enquiry, and the strength of the artistic proposition is in the thought of connection, linkages, assemblages that act as importantly – if not more – as the materials.



Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Marion Borriss

2. Form, Open Form

Something Else: On Latency and Composition⁹⁶

RIC ALLSOPP

One loves only form
And form only comes
Into existence when
The thing is born
Charles Olson (1953) from “I, Maximus of Gloucester,
to You”, *Maximus Poems* (1960)

Preface

The following sets out to consider what the relation between latency and composition might mean in an attempt to acknowledge the ubiquitous but obscure presence of an affective “something else” that emerges in performance. It takes as its background the radical post-war poetics of Charles Olson on open or field composition, and Walter Benjamin’s theory of magical language and latency. It suggests how these might relate to contemporary shifts in compositional and choreographic thinking and its relation to enactment and social and political order.

96 This article follows the keynote lecture that was held in the Erasmus Intensive 2012, *Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience*, in Helsinki. A shortened version of “Something Else: On Latency and Composition” was published in *Inventing Futures*, da Silva João, Emilie Gallier and Konstantina Georgelou (eds.), Arnhem: ArtEZ Press, 2013, pp. 23–32.

I take the term “composition” in an expanded sense and in the present context use it more or less interchangeably with the term “choreography” to mean simply the organisation of movement within a given framework. Movement – whether the movement of bodies, of language, of sound, of objects or light – and the change that is intrinsic to it – is what happens in the multiple and complex relationships that create forms. For example in the *Maximus Poems*, the extended series of poems written between 1953 and 1970, from which the above epigraph is taken, Olson begins with the structural metaphor of the nest as a holding image for the movement and materiality of language that gives form to work. Latency – the condition or quality of being hidden – also makes its appearance in the initial line of Olson’s first “letter” from Maximus – “Off shore, by islands hidden in the blood”. The notion of latency as a dynamic rather than effect of composition, has in my view become integral to an understanding of forms of poetic and choreographic composition in the contexts of poetics and performance that follow from the mid-twentieth century aesthetic experimentation of the neo-avant-garde. The use of the term latency here also makes some passing reference to its wider usage within Freudian psychoanalysis, and more specifically, as a term used to describe dynamics within quantum mechanics.

I want to consider how these terms coalesce in what might be called “choreographic image” and its relation to composition thought of as the setting up of conditions through which the emergence of a choreographic image becomes possible. A choreographic image is not simply what appears or is represented in the systematic and coherent patterning of movement phrases in a time-based aesthetic object of performance, a definition that might be applied to the normal usage of the term “choreography”. A choreographic

image is the “something else” in my title that appears between what disappears or is forgotten, and what remains in choreography (or performance). In Jasper Johns’ words, it emerges “when a thing becomes other than it is”⁹⁷. A choreographic image is formed in the integral and reciprocal relationships between movement and its inscriptions in the work. Each of these terms modifies the other: the forgotten or disappearing forming, as it were, the negative space of what remains or appears.

I am also interested in the choreographic image as something that is not always apparent, but emerges as an affective, rather than instrumental or representational, dynamic. This is connected to ideas of latency in open or field composition, and continues to ask the question put by Olson, of what happens when attention shifts from compositional methods that are based on closed, inherited forms and structures, to open forms of composition where the materials “can go by no track other than the one the poem [or choreography] under hand declares, for itself”⁹⁸. It is also connected to the broader, but not unrelated, question of how such methods might “produce (rather than represent) new social orders”, as Andrew Hewitt puts it.⁹⁹

My approach will be transversal, running across a number of theoretical and practical models, and paratactic, placing some ideas and images side-by-side to see what resonances or oscillations emerge or are set in motion.

97 see Perloff 1999, 246.

98 Olson 1997 [1950], 1.

99 Hewitt 2005, 21.

I want to take two rather diverse starting points, one drawn from science, one from classical mythology, both of which in their different ways consider the problem of how things are made (poesis) or put together within an event-space: firstly Henry Margenau's discussion of "latent observables" and acts of measurement or perception; and secondly the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha from Book 1 of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* as a complex image of the conditions of creation or (re)composition.

Margenau's "possessed and latent observables"

In 1954, at the time Olson was beginning his *Maximus Poems* series at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, the physicist Henry Margenau wrote a paper at Yale University on latency and quantum mechanics which proposed a shift of attention toward what he termed "possessed and latent observables". The dynamics and use of language that Margenau uses would seem to be particularly applicable to the field of performance and questions of composition, and (as we shall see) it is language that structures our understanding and experience of how things are made – in short, of composition.

Margenau writes as follows:

I propose a shift of attention. The contrast, or at any rate the difference, is now between [...] possessed and latent observables. Possessed are those, like the mass and charge of an electron, whose values are "intrinsic", do not vary except in a continuous manner, as for example mass does with changing velocity. The others [...] are subject to the uncertainty principle, manifest themselves as clearly present only upon measurement. I believe that they are "not always there", that they take on values when an act of

measurement, a perception, forces them out of indiscriminacy or latency. If this notion seems grotesque, let it be remembered that other sciences, indeed common sense, employ it widely. Happiness, equanimity, are observable quantities of man, but they are latent qualities which need not be present at all times; they too can spring into being or be destroyed by an act of inquiry, a psychological measurement.¹⁰⁰

I will gloss some key points that seem to resonate with notions of composition and choreographic image.

The shift of attention that is proposed here when read in terms of performance poetics, is a shift away from an idea or usage of composition associated with arrangement, ordering, the singular attention expected of an audience, a “preconceived object” (to use John Cage’s phrase) and permanency. It is a shift of attention towards a “something else”, a latency “rendered manifest” that emerges from a set of material and immaterial conditions, as an assemblage that is temporal, changing, finite and contextual, and is founded on difference and non-identity.

Margenau makes a clear distinction between two dynamics which he terms “possessed or latent observables”. He describes “possessed observables” as having intrinsic or “possessed” values which do not vary. These can be thought of in terms of formal elements of composition, those elements which can be set and identified such as a particular sequence of movements, a particular rhythm or duration, a specific use of space. In other words all that

100 Margenau 1954, 9.

can be remembered, repeated, reproduced; the organic or classical structuring of parts into a totalising whole, that Olson refers to as “inherited line, stanza, over-all form [...] the ‘old’ base of the non-projective.”¹⁰¹

Against this, Margenau positions “latent observables” which are subject to uncertainty and manifest themselves or take on value only through measurement. In terms of performance this “act of measurement” or “perception” might be analogous to the specific conditions or framework within which an event takes place, which “forces them out of [...] latency” where latency is a condition of “remaining hidden”. The framework of a choreography for example is both an act of measurement and a mutual (or at least dialogic) perception on the part of the performer and spectator which can form a choreographic image and (in certain circumstances) forces it into being – a presence perhaps without or beyond representation.

Fluxus event-scores provide an interesting and highly condensed example of latency and latent structures that become visible or manifest through a concerted act of mutual attention – for example Alison Knowles’ 1962 *Street Piece* – “Make something in the street and give it away”. As a event-score this becomes an open “an act of measurement”, requiring a specific attention, that in Margenau’s terms provides a specific framework within which something can take place, a transaction can be effected.

What also seems to have resonance for composition in Margenau’s text is the idea that these “latent observables” are “not always there”. In other words they are not simply instrumental and subject or reducible to an observable set of compositional elements.

101 Olson 1997 [1950], 1.

Margenau observes that they can either “spring into being” or be “destroyed by an act of inquiry”, that is through the generative and destructive power of language, or through the conditioned perception of the act of composition itself. The critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin whose ideas on magical language I will return to, points to the fragility of what Margenau calls “latency” in his discussion of the “aura” of the art object that he famously defines as “the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be”. The latent is fragile in the sense that measurement and/or perception, as the task or effect of reproductive technologies, can both bring into being or destroy the aura (latency) of the art (or significant) object.

Our experience of performance often leads us to attend to those moments that produce an affect that has an intensity and immediacy “beyond” articulation which Margenau calls “latent observables”. In other words the “something else” of performance, that is beyond the formal and material conditions of its set-up and which is “not always there”, is not entirely predicated on compositional procedures, but is the effect of uncertainty or, in Benjamin’s terms, is a magical effect of language.

If latency is the “something else” that is “not always there”, then composition is setting the conditions for appearance where what appears is not necessarily definable in advance – which of course may be one of its attractions. John Cage’s discussion of composition as process in *Silence* (1958) suggests these ideas of conditions and latency are “occasions for experience” rather than “preconceived objects”:

The early works have beginnings, middles and ends. The later ones do not. They begin anywhere, last any length of

time [...] They are therefore not preconceived objects and to approach them as objects is to utterly miss the point. They are occasions for experience [...] “Composition as Process” in *Silence* (1958)¹⁰²

Since the beginnings of the historical avant-garde in the late nineteenth century, and, as a response to shifting technologies of communication especially over the last decade, experimental arts practice has increasingly provided examples of compositional and choreographic practice which depart from “composition” as the ordered arrangements of the parts within a whole; yet the “default setting” seems often to remain a view of composition and choreography where coherence, unity and the singularity of attention are still privileged.

Margenau’s “shift of attention” points to the fact that there is a constant slippage, a disjunction between the idea of composition as “possessed observable”, and the idea of latency as the “something else” of performance that is observable (under certain conditions) but not always there. The consequence of such slippage is also a shift of attention, a shift of value and emphasis away from an approach to making work that is predicated on notions of totalising wholeness, to more radical notions of coherence that might readress or disturb habitual compositional relationships.

Deucalion & Pyrrha: indeterminacy

The second starting point draws on a sixteenth century engraving by the Dutch artist Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617). My interest in

¹⁰² Cage 1958.

this image is not simply its effect as an illustrated narrative, but what it can tell us about appearance and the setting up of conditions for something else to emerge.

“Deucalion & Pyrrha Repopulating the Earth” [Fig.1] is taken from a set of twenty illustrations to Ovid’s “Metamorphoses”, in an edition published by Hendrick Goltzius in Haarlem in 1589. The myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha parallels the familiar biblical narrative of Noah and the Flood¹⁰³ and describes Deucalion & Pyrrha’s experience as survivors of a flood sent by the god Zeus to “cleanse the wickedness” of the human race, and their role as the righteous pair who subsequently repopulate the earth.



Fig. 1: Deucalion & Pyrrha Repopulating the Earth’ from a set if illustrations to Ovid’s Metamorphoses (Bk.1), engraved by Hendrick Goltzius, Haarlem, 1589.

103 Genesis 6: 9–16.

The illustration depicts in a single composite image the main narrative events of the myth – the Nereids (sea-nymphs) in the background astonished to see woodlands, houses and whole towns under the water; the landing on Mt. Parnassus of the boat (“ark” or “chest”) in which Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha have survived the flood; sprinkling their heads and clothes with “watery libations” at the springs of Cephisus; their supplication at the temple of Themis, the goddess of oracles, asking “by what art the damage to our race can be repaired, and bring help [...] to this drowned world”; to which Themis replies: “Leave the temple and with veiled heads and loosened clothes throw behind you the bones of your great mother!”. The narrative, after a short period of interpretative doubt, continues:

They descended the steps, covered their heads and loosened their clothes, and threw the stones needed behind them. The stones, [...] began to lose their rigidity and hardness, and after a while softened, and once softened acquired new form. Then after growing, and ripening in nature, a certain likeness to a human shape could be vaguely seen, like marble statues at first inexact and roughly carved. The earthy part, however, wet with moisture, turned to flesh; what was solid and inflexible mutated to bone; the veins stayed veins; and quickly, through the power of the gods, the stones [Deucalion] threw took on the shapes of men, and women were remade from those thrown by [Pyrrha]. So the toughness of our race, our ability to endure hard labour, and the proof we give of the source from which we are sprung.¹⁰⁴

104 Ovid. Bk.1, 381–415.

An early modern or humanist (sixteenth century) reader looking at this image might have seen a familiar set of iconographic personifications; the veiled heads of Deucalion and Pyrrha resonating with familiar images of blindfolded female personifications – Fortuna, Justitia, Synagoga, Night, Luxury – as well as the veiled male figures of Death and Blind Cupid all of which support a negative image of blindness, blindfolding, yet also suggest a latent appeal to other forms of seeing or not-seeing that such a veiling might bring about, for example the blind seer Tiresias in Homeric tradition whose blindness is valorised positively as insight.

A contemporary (twenty-first century) reader might find the blindfold or veiled figures resonating with the surrealist iconography of René Magritte's *The Lovers* (1928) which perhaps directs our attention towards psychoanalytic readings of latent and manifest content and the dreamwork; or Andrew

Gormley's *Re-Arranged Desert – Before/ During/ After* (1979) which perhaps draws attention to indeterminate acts of making space in the relationship between the exterior and the interior spaces of the human body; or even more recent photo-journalistic images such as Sean Smith's photo *Iraqi Detainees Led by a US Marine* (2005).

There is a distinction here in these two readings between determinacy and indeterminacy. A determination where each representation illustrates (or composes) a known and broadly agreed set of intrinsic (“possessed”) values (moral, religious, ethical) and an indeterminacy, where the depiction of what happens in the event-space might (at least metaphorically) provide an image of latency from within the event, and a magical operation from which a “something else” appears.

The image as a framework or “act of measurement” also begins to present by analogy a kind of “paratextual zone” in Gerard Genette’s terms, which is “a sphere of mobile, fragile, unstable, improbable relationships, a place of contacts and contracts and communication, or, [...] ‘transaction’”¹⁰⁵ This space of “transaction” raises a number of questions and issues around the image: what for example are they (Deucalion and Pyrrha) looking at as they throw the rocks behind them; are they “flying (or navigating) blind”; what do they see; what is the significance of “loosened clothing”? How do these paratextual elements structure the image that we see and the image that we read? The figure of the “stony creature” rising between the two protagonists provokes the disturbing question, full of latency, of what this stony ancestor is pointing to?

Vital Materiality

Jane Bennett, whose work *Vibrant Matter* (2010) on the political ecology of things and the active participation of nonhuman forces in events I will return to, referring to the work of DeLanda, comments on the relationship between bones and mineralisation in terms that resonate with this image of stony repopulation:

Mineralisation names the creative agency by which bone was produced, and bones then made new forms of movement control possible among animals, freeing them from many constraints and literally setting them in motion to conquer every available niche in the air, in water, and on land.¹⁰⁶

105 see Stanitzek 2005, 34.

106 Bennett 2010, 11.

We are, as Goltzius' image also descriptively suggests, "walking/talking minerals". We are an assemblage of vital materiality that runs through and across bodies, human and non-human, shown here as a mythopoetic image of (re)creation, (re)combination. In Bennett's words such images offer a potential benefit: "[they] can direct sensory, linguistic attention towards a material vitality".¹⁰⁷ We are not separated from the vital materiality of the non-human, a position that Olson also shares.

This idea of directing attention can be linked back to the shift of attention that Margenau proposes. In what ways does composition direct attention? Bennett suggests that whilst it is a good thing that "the impulse toward cultural, linguistic or historical constructivism politicises moralistic or oppressive appeals to 'nature'", it "tends to blind us to the force of things". A certain "naive ambition of vital materialism", might "render manifest a subsistent world of nonhuman vitality."¹⁰⁸

Bennett's phrase here – "to render manifest" – both speaks to latent value in Margenau's terms and is "to receive and to participate in the shape given to that which is received". She notes that "[w]hat is manifest arrives through humans but not entirely because of them". As we see in the image of Deucalion & Pyrrha, composition – the act of throwing rocks under certain conditions – admits of an element of latency and indeterminacy which both questions and undoes the idea of composition as a definitive structuring – is this perhaps what the "stony figure" is pointing to?

107 Bennett 2010, 19.

108 Bennett 2010, 17.

The Latent Image

If the latent is defined as hidden, concealed, present or existing but not manifest, exhibited or developed, what is its relation to the normative usage of the term “composition” where composition is defined as the action of combining the parts or elements of a whole or the forming (of anything) by a combination of parts, or an orderly arrangement? How far can latency be a composable element within composition?

This shifting relation between determinacy and indeterminacy in composition, to which attention has most recently been redirected by advances in digital technologies, seems to be at the centre of what we might, following Olson, call choreography – the movement of materials towards indeterminate and open forms that manifest latency and reflect changes in wider political, social and cultural attitudes.

Sean Cubitt’s recent (2010) discussion of latency in the moving image opens up and undoes ideas of permanency and instrumentality that he sees as the underlying principles of classical rationalism, of a nineteenth century Romantic view of composition. He argues that images are “necessarily temporal phenomena” since

[a] viewer may move past an image; an image may move past a viewer; and an image may move, whether because its light source moves (as candle-light or firelight or sunlight through leaves moves) or because the shadow or the shadow puppet, the wearer of the mask, the priest shaking his icon moves. How could we speak of an image’s unity or autonomy? It cannot stand still. [...] Movement is of the essence in imaging because there is no fullness of the image to itself. The incompleteness of the image not only drives it

to become other than the contradictory creature that it is, but requires an oblique glance in order for us to see it at all.

This “oblique glance” may well resonate with both Irit Rogoff’s notion of “looking away” and the veiled stance of Deucalion & Pyrrha’s recompositional act. Further arguing that the non-identity of images must always form difference, Cubitt points to the impossibility of composition as a coherent or permanent whole.

[T]here is no stillness available to such a contradiction, which must forever pursue and abandon coherence. Coherence, self-identity, is not only a theological category. It is the founding principle of classical rationalism; as unity it is the foundation of commodity exchange; and as individuation it is the formative ground of liberalism and bio-politics.

For Cubitt, latency as a dynamic of all images “names the disappearance and reappearance of the technical image, a material practice which makes visible, as metaphor, the emergence and evaporation characteristic of the non-identical, and clarifies the observation that no image is ever still.” Questioning on this basis the continuing relevance of a Romantic aesthetics of permanence and coherence he claims that

[t]he creation of coherent images is part of a plan of mastery: mastery of space especially, which has been a hallmark of modernity, a process marked by the gradual eradication of time, the dimension of change.¹⁰⁹

109 Cubitt 2011, 27–38.

For Cubitt, like Olson sixty years earlier writing at the edge of another technological shift, composition is a changing temporal phenomenon, not simply a spatial array. Its relevance is as a set of conditions that themselves change: in context, in dissemination, in form, in their reception, rather than as an aesthetics of permanence. In words that form the beginning of his early poem “The Kingfishers” (1950) Olson declares: “What does not change/is the will to change”.

Assemblage

I want to suggest here that a shifted attention towards composition, which understands composition not as an instrumentalising material practice, or as a foreclosure, but as a distributive, open and generative agency, involves bringing into play the Deleuzean idea of “assemblage” as reconsidered by Jane Bennett in her search for an agency for vital materiality. She suggests that:

[...] “bodies enhance their power *in or as a heterogeneous assemblage*. What this suggests for the concept of *agency* is that the efficacy or effectivity to which that term has traditionally referred becomes distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localised in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human efforts. [...]”¹¹⁰

Discussing the uneasy co-existence of mutual dependency and volatile relationships between parts that characterised globalisation

110 Bennett 2010, 19.

at the end of the twentieth century, and the consequent need for new conceptualisations of the part-whole relationship, she states:

Organicist models, in which each member serves the whole, were clearly out. A host of new ways to name the kind of relationship obtaining between the parts of a volatile but somehow functional whole were offered: network, mesh-work, Empire. My term of choice to describe this event-space and its style of structuration is, following Deleuze and Guattari, *assemblage*.

Assemblages are ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts. Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within.¹¹¹

Bennett's reading of "assemblage" underlines a shifted view of composition as a generative set of conditions rather than a coherent or permanent whole or organic unity:

[...] assemblages are not governed by an central head: no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group. The effects generated by an assemblage are, rather *emergent properties*, emergent in that their ability

111 The great modernist poetic example of assemblage and the perception of such confounding energies would be the voice of Ezra Pound in the final Canto: "And I am not a demigod, I cannot make it cohere." Pound 1962, Canto CXVI.

to make something happen [...] is distinct from the sum of the vital force of each materiality considered alone. Each member and proto-member of the assemblage has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency *of* the assemblage. And precisely because each member-actant maintains an “energetic” pulse slightly “off” from that of the assemblage, an assemblage is never a stolid block, but an open-ended collective, a “non-totalisable sum”. An assemblage thus not only has a distinctive history of formation but a finite life span.¹¹²

The agency of assemblage as “emergent properties” here resonate with the idea of choreographic image.

Transition

The vocabulary once again (as in Olson’s “Projective Verse” from 1950) begins to shift away from “composition” and “order” to “assemblage”, and “recombination”, and begins again to privilege (in Olson’s terms) the openness and indeterminacies of *enactment* versus the closures of *explanation*. Dance tends to enact something rather than explain something; choreography is a means of finding ways to transmit the forms of such enactments; or of setting up the conditions *within* which movement is enabled to enact (and re-enact) something rather than represent it. For Olson in *The Special View of History* (1970)

¹¹² Bennett 2010, 23–24 (my italics).

[t]he organic is one, purpose is seen to be contingent not primordial: it follows from the chance success of the play of creative accident, it does not precede them. The motive then of reality, is process not goal. Only in the relative of the coincident and the proximate can (because that *is* the actual) the ideal (which is the possible) emerge.¹¹³

What are the conditions then that can give rise to the emergence of the possible? The anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski writing in the 1930s on the language of magic and gardening in the Trobriand Islands (which deals with what Jerome Rothenberg has rather wonderfully called the “*meaning of meaningless words and the co-efficient of weirdness*”) claims that

All [...] acts of magic [...] consist [...] in one type of performance. Each rite is the “production” or “generation” of a force and the conveyance of it, directly or indirectly, to a certain given object which [...] is affected by this force.¹¹⁴

Olson’s reading of Malinowski’s emphasis in favouring enactment over explanation notes that his work

strikes away the idea that a story is symbolical (that it stands for something, instead of being that something); and at the same time that it is meant to explain anything [...] Malinowski is asserting the primary truth that the human

113 Olson 1970.

114 Malinowski in Rothenberg 1983, 109.

fact is that there is no desire to explain – there is solely the desire to experience: that this is what is meant by *knowing*: to know is to experience, & vice versa: to experience is to know (*histor*). That is, *to tell about it* and *to tell about it as others have told it*, is one act, simply, that the reality itself is one, now, & then.¹¹⁵

Malinowski's conception of "force" and its immediacy leads on to a discussion of magical language as immediate linguistic transmission as conceptualised by Walter Benjamin.

Benjamin and Magical Language

In a recent essay "The Language of Things and the Magic of Language" (2006) Kathrin Busch argues that Benjamin's critique of an instrumentalist concept of language which reduces language to a mere vehicle of communication whose "object is factual" and whose "addressee is the human being" is to underestimate it. It leads him to widen the concept of language to include "any perceptible articulation which may be understood as a formative principle of expression generally." Benjamin thereby asserts a *poetic* as well as an *instrumental* use of language which is applicable to choreography, music, performance, painting and so on as modes of expression.

He distinguishes between expression *through* language, which he understands as instrumental and manifest; and expression *within* language, which he understands as poetic, magical and latent.

115 Olson. No.10, 64.

A specific content is communicated *through* language – as befits its instrumental use. [...] In contrast, something else again is communicated *in* language: a very particular type of meaning emerges in the expression or in the manner of speaking and this meaning in no way has to match the content of what is being said.¹¹⁶

It is this “something else” that I am interested in – the “something else again” that is conveyed through choreography, through poetry, and through imagery that provides access to the latent potential (potency) that is in particular (but not exclusively) associated with art making. Busch points out that this more radical argument “that the form of speech can produce a completely different, independent and above all latent meaning must be made and it is in poetry that this becomes particularly clear”, and by extension choreography, performance and other modes of expression.

The poem cannot be wholly translated into something expressible, hence the trend toward the indeterminable in poetic speech and its resultant magical character. For in poetic language, something else beyond the named content is given expression, something akin to a mood or an atmosphere that is neither semantic nor communicable at the level of word meanings, something that cannot be wholly translated into a meaning.¹¹⁷

116 Busch 2006, 1–6.

117 Ibid.

She goes on to assert that this “other message is communicated directly – without the detour through meaning whereby language itself is the medium of this implicit transfer” and that it is this immediacy of communication “that Benjamin calls ‘magical’ since language acts here as a medium – very much in the sense accepted by occult practice – for a potent transfer.” She notes that Benjamin is drawing on the work of the ethnologist Marcel Mauss whose *General Theory of Magic* was published in 1902.

Mauss argues that the effects produced by magic are essentially based on an underlying causality, although cause and effect here belong to different orders. In magic, the effect is not produced mechanically and is not the tangible result of ritual acts: it goes beyond them. The effect transcends the register of its causative operations.¹¹⁸

Mauss’ view that in magical operations the effect is neither mechanical nor the simple result of ritual acts but goes beyond them provides the basis for Benjamin’s theory of magical language, the dynamics of which are then mapped out by Busch.

Now this switch of orders [or cause and effect] is of the utmost importance as it relates to Benjamin’s theory of the magic of language. It is this switch alone that allows the implicit potency of language to become apparent. They are, as it were, woven into the form of the language so that the potent force and its content are inseparable.¹¹⁹

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

At the centre of the consideration of a choreographic image and how it relates to latency and composition is that argument that

[w]hat cannot be said, or put into words, can be expressed in language: indeed it can be transferred linguistically. These implicit effects of the form of language mean that the inexpressible can occur or become apparent, but it doesn't follow that they are necessarily present or representable. With this thesis of the magic of language rather, a layer of language is revealed in which latent meaning are conveyed.¹²⁰

Busch makes note of a further conceptualisation that has a history within performance that can be traced back certainly to Artaud in "The Plague and the Theatre" (1938) as well as a more recent reconceptualisation in terms of the viral – for example in BADco's "Deleted Messages" (2005) where the metaphor of contagion and viral transmission is used as a central compositional and dramaturgical dynamic.

In the theory of magical practices, this transmission of what is latent and purely implicit is conceptualised as contagion [...] it is in this concept of a transfer that is both immediate and latent but contagious and affective that the crucial difference from theories of performativity lies: in these, what is expressed and what is caused are one and the same. The performative speech act produces exactly

120 Ibid.

what it names. With the idea of the magic of speech, on the other hand, Benjamin seeks to conceptualise a linguistic potency, in which something else is transferred in language beside what is represented verbally.¹²¹

If, following Benjamin by way of Katrin Busch, we have suggested the potential for magical operations in language, for the presence of a “something else” beyond the instrumental, then I am interested in how this might then also relate to acts of composition or choreography. The Language poet Lyn Hejinian asserts that language allows us to “experience experience” – language that in Benjamin’s extended sense includes dance, movement and is inseparable from the affective force of choreography and movement which both precedes and exceeds a linguistic order.

Shifting Composition

I have tried to bring together a framework for the conceptualisation of the choreographic image, the form that enables and allows immediate transfer of the latent, the “something else”, to become visible or affective. It is reasonable to ask how different conditions – compositional forms – might enable us to generate or manifest latencies that can, in Cubitt’s sense resist an underlying repetition of social orders and political structures. As John Cage and others (notably the Language poets in the late 1970s) pointed out, the processes of life are the processes of art and our ability to alter and change our social and political order is not therefore disconnected from our ability to rethink compositional and choreographic processes.

121 Ibid.

What contemporary models can we look at? I shall take three brief examples:

Bifo (Franco Beradi) writes in his short booklet *transverse/transversal* for this year's dOCUMENTA(13) in Kassel, of the necessity to adapt our "european" culture and life-style to a mode of exhaustion, to move from ideas of revolution as an "old metaphor for social change" based on the belief that the "infinite complexity of social life can be reduced to a totality", and move towards a mode of "insurrection" as a "process of recombination". He asserts that "insurrection means rising up, but also deploying the inner potencies of a body" to disentangle the "potency of the social body from the present gestalt".¹²² In trying to rethink compositional terms, Bifo is arguing for the efficacy of recombination versus composition, a rethinking of the conditions that allow the latent to emerge. Error, misuse, misunderstanding, misapprehension, misperformance will be the tools for the coming insurrection; "exodus" as leaving, withdrawing, looking away, "the creation of a new space for production and exchange [...] will be the methodology for autonomy"¹²³ Elsewhere in the booklet he includes a copy of document from AND AND AND *Occupy Wall Street* which notes that "[a]rt can also be that burst of creation which does not properly belong inside the domains in which it first emerges".¹²⁴

Andrew Hewitt claims in his influential *Social choreography: ideology as performance in dance and everyday movement* (2005) that "choreography designates a sliding or grey zone where discourse

122 Bifo 2012, 17.

123 Bifo 2012, 18.

124 Beradi 2012, 27.

meets practice – a zone in which in an earlier era it was possible for an emerging bourgeois public sphere to work on and redefine the boundaries of aesthetics and politics.” He reads choreography “neither as aesthetics nor as politics but rather as articulation – not as one term in a relation but as a discourse, and performance, of that relation” – a positioning of the relational that resonates for example with the term “performance writing” which understands writing and its performance as an articulation of a changing set of relationships. Hewitt asks how choreography enacts rather than simply reflects, social order, and what social work does it perform?¹²⁵ He sees the aesthetic as the “realm in which new social orders are produced (rather than represented) and in which the integration of *all* social members is possible”.¹²⁶

Marina Garcés – a political philosopher and activist based in Barcelona with an interest in performance and the social which she theorises as the “anonymous we”, writes in “The Inquiry after a Shared World”, an essay for Catalonia’s participation in the 2009 Venice Biennale:

[...] in political philosophy the need to conceive of what is held in common and recover the concept of community is becoming greater. There is an attempt to reformulate [...] the question of “we” and its potential for social emancipation and transformation. Our question [...] is to what extent in this rehabilitation of the community is it forgotten that the world is what it makes possible to say “we”. [...] [W]

125 Hewitt 2005, 25.

126 Hewitt 2005, 21.

hat we experience in common is often conceived of as an interruption, as a suspension of meaning or as a process of opening up and meeting without any kind of mediation. The experience of “we” does not involve things. Rather than a common action there is a joint appearance, a sort of being-placed-together. But how are we to live together?¹²⁷

Is composition then in its sense of unity, permanency, an alienating or estranging force, a force that divides and separates, that, in Marina Garces’ terms, interrupts and suspends meaning? And how might a rethinking of composition along the lines that I have tried to suggest here embrace the implications and practices suggested by these three models?

Epilogue

Olson on many occasions refers to a fragment from the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraklitus – “we are estranged from that with which we are most familiar” – in the sense of an estrangement from our enactment or praxis in the world. For Olson and perhaps, following Cubitt and Bennett, for us such “estrangement” is not only associated with loss of “the unique distance” of aura in Benjamin’s definition, but, as Sean Cubitt, and perhaps our “stony creature” too, points out, with the loss of the dimension of change itself.

The creation of coherent images is part of a plan of mastery: mastery of space especially, which has been a hall-

127 Garces 2009.

mark of modernity, a process marked by the gradual eradication of time, the dimension of change.¹²⁸

The image of Deucalion & Pyrrha, a visual analogue of choreographic process, combines an image of composition as a mode of transformation and transmission – as a “looking away” and as a “pointing towards”. Perhaps the stony figure in the Goltzius illustration is pointing backwards to the catastrophe which is both behind us and before us. The shift of attention to how we think about choreography/composition as an act of making, an enactment beyond representation, an enactment that manifests the latencies of “something else”, of the not-yet visible, that dissolves or reconfigures the boundaries of the “preconceived object”, is a shift of attention away from the individual and towards the common. As Olson puts it in *Letter 6*:

There are no hierarchies, no infinite, no such many as mass,
there are only eyes in all heads,
to be looked out of (Olson, Letter 6, *Maximus Poems*)

128 Cubitt 2011, 28.

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How Do I Know That I Don't Know?¹²⁹

JOÃO DA SILVA AND RIC ALLSOPP

João da Silva: [...] or alternatively how do I create the conditions from and within which I cannot know, or better can “unknow”? – that would be an alternative route to discussing how my PhD project may relate to some of your thoughts on poetics and composition at large.

Ric Allsopp: How you are approaching that question in your PhD?

JdS: My PhD project is looking into the nature of risk-taking in large group dances that include improvisation and that comes very directly from a dissatisfaction with how risk in improvisation is often talked and written about. I have not yet found a home in most of what I have read about improvisation, in particular how risk-taking is presented, which very often has to do with a rhetoric around the spontaneous and the “unknown”. Very simply put, in this rhetoric when you improvise you take a risk not only because it is live, but especially because you haven't planned or prepared in advance what to do, which is what you would do with(in) a set choreography. For me there is much more to say about how one

129 This text is the result of a conversation between João da Silva and Ric Allsopp on 9 July, 2014 in Düsseldorf.

encounters the so-called unknown in improvisation and I suggest that that entails a great deal of knowing. How that may qualify as risk-taking cannot be determined *a priori*. It will always be contingent to the situation at hand.

Moreover, my own experience of improvising and talking to a lot of other improvisers is that the so-called unknown happens very seldom. It is rather something that you work for and it is no wonder that experienced improvisers practice a lot of improvisation in order to be ready for the potential encounter with it and the possibility of being surprised – a surprise that generates a difference that perhaps forces you to think differently about yourself and the world. It is not self-generated. It is rather a capacity to recognise and a readiness to be open to it when it happens. So for me working towards an encounter with the unknown has a lot to do with knowing (not necessarily consciously), with an ability to engage with what is there, taking place. One could say that you get to know what you do not know when you are surprised or forced to think. How often does this happen in an improvisation?

I have listened to a few of your lectures and have read some of your work on poetics. How you have been talking about “radical coherence”¹³⁰ has inspired some of my questions about improvisation, risk-taking and knowing: can one be radically coherent through

130 “Radical coherence” entails an approach to making work and an understanding of composition that is not primarily predicated on its observable, formal elements, that is, all that can be measured, “remembered, repeated, reproduced” so that these end up forming an organic, coherent whole, but is rather an approach to composition that also accounts for the appearance of “things” (what Allsopp calls the “something else”) that can not be definable or rationally known in advance. In other words an approach to composition that includes uncertainty and contingency. See Allsopp 2013.

improvisation? We know that in the past it has been possible, but what about today? I tend to think so (perhaps this is more wishing than thinking, I don't know) – but then I also think that in order for this to happen improvisation needs to be brought into ... no, not *into* a continuum, but rather into a helix-like structure where choreography and/or composition (the usual other of improvisation) is an inherent constituent part of it, where improvisation and choreography (composition) are in a differential and dynamic relation of contrast, not of opposition. In my PhD project I suggest that Mary O'Donnell's work and her understanding of Open-Form Composition (OFC)¹³¹ is a very good example of this. For her, OFC entails thinking and doing composition by means of an understanding of form as always-already open (never fully closed) and as such always contingent. This could be said to be the same when thinking of form in

131 “Open-Form Composition” (OFC) relates to the historical use of the term in reference to Earl Brown, John Cage and others in the 1950s, and refers to forms that are designed to give some sets of choices and freedoms to the performers. It can also be understood as a vast field stretching from the historical avant-garde, through projectivist poetics (Olson) and the “culture of spontaneity” in the USA, all the way to the reconsideration of practices that have in the recent past informed what has been called (not without counter argumentation) “conceptual choreography”. Daniel Belgrad's book *The Culture of Spontaneity* (1998) provides an excellent historical perspective for it. Journals such as *Maska* (Ljubljana), *Fracija* (Zagreb) and *Performance Research* (London) have also covered the contemporary territory in the field of dance. Importantly, the composer Earle Brown used the term in the early 1950s inspired by Pollock's action paintings of the late 1940s, in which the immediacy and directness of “contact” with the materials was of great importance. Brown's conducting techniques and experiments with “time notation”, improvisation, and Open-form Composition as structure have all become part of contemporary compositional usage. In 2002 Open-Form Composition became one of the three main educational strands within the ArteZ Master of Choreography Program in Arnhem, NL (till 2007 called Dance Unlimited and in 2014 it became the Master of Theatre Practices). For an examination of the term as employed by Mary O'Donnell see: da Silva 2010.

terms of knowing “it”. If form is always already open (contingent), so is our knowing it.

I wonder how issues of knowing or composing form in a large group dance that includes improvisation might connect to your last lecture in Berlin (2013) where you presented a long list of definitions of poetics ...

RS: Yes, “poetics as ...”

JdS: ... and you mentioned Lyn Hejinian where she says:

[p]oetry comes to know things as they are. But this is not knowledge in the strictest sense; it is, rather, acknowledgement – and that constitutes a sort of unknowing. To know *that* things are is not to know *what* they are, and to know *that* without *what* is to know otherness (ie. the unknown and perhaps unknowable). Poetry undertakes acknowledgement as a preservation of otherness.¹³²

My understanding of O’Donnell’s OFC can definitely be seen as both an acknowledgement and a preservation of otherness, but perhaps more important is to look into how these make a difference to the work in a way that matters. Mattering to the work more than to the self would be a way for me to arbitrate risk.

RA: Can you say something more about the background to this because it seems to me that whether or not it leads to this kind of moment, confronting difference or “radical coherence” or whatever it is – a sense of the emergence of the unknown or the unforeseen – what do you see as being the necessary conditions or

132 Hejinian 2000.

training? There will be two things – a set of conditions which need to be set up; and on the other hand a sense of training – training yourself to be prepared when the conditions are right – so there are two separate things - I hesitate to use the “army” metaphor...

JdS: I understand the hesitation but also your choice of it.

RA: ... you know, being prepared for the worst or the best, and you have done all the training so that when it happens you are totally on top of it, or with it, or open to it.

JdS: It's spot on – I recently listened to a lecture that André Lepecki gave in Sweden in the frame of the Weaving Politics conference (Dec. 2012) where at the end of his lecture he talks about devotion and is critical of the rhetoric of improvisation, that is, a rhetoric that presents it as just “spontaneous and free”. He seems to suggest that the way forward and away from neo-liberalism is planning, but not the kind of planning involved in management or policy-making (a policy in the sense of commanding and controlling). He is thinking rather of the dancer and her devotion to the plan (which is to be read not to the choreographer).

RA: So he puts it in a religious rhetoric ...

JdS: ... in a text he wrote later on in 2013 he refutes the religious interpretation of devotion but yes, one can wonder... I was a bit surprised but also enticed [...]

JdS: Planning or committing to a plan means first of all that a plan has to be there, even if virtually – and I kind of agree that devotion acknowledges that things are indeed already there, in one way or another; there is no *tabula rasa*, things do not happen *ex nihilo* but there is another step that you take on top of that, so that committing to, being devoted to decisions already taken, or already thought, or desires already expressed or felt, is important. Going through my experience as a dancer, where the “outside” bumped

into me so to say, where I was challenged or exposed, there had to be a commitment, a rigorous and engaged negotiation of sorts on my side to the work at hand. Commitment can take place in many different ways, of course. O'Donnell's approach to OFC for example cannot "work" without such commitment or devotion, namely the commitment to the openness of form. Lepecki's example was a piece by Sarah Michelson for the Whitney Biennial – *Devotion Study # 1 – The American Dancer* (2012) based on set movement material, very physical, very abstract, with a lot of repetition so that you see the dancer as having to work very hard to keep in under control, exerting an effort - you see the effort of the dancer committing or giving in to that thing that had been pre-scribed one can say, and then something other happens which is in itself, in a way, a very romantic idea of transcendence.

RA: You separated your interest out from the notion of free improvisation – “let's all improvise and see what happens”. I was going to mention (and I have written about this in *The Connected Body*¹³³ and before) the double-status of the body where you are both a physiological presence and a representation. One of the things about improvised work or improvisation work is the ambivalence of status it has; it might be really interesting from an experiential point of view (rather like doing contact); but from a representational point of view – at a certain level of representation at least it is ...

JdS: ... rather unappealing... yes. In my project I am not looking into that. One of my case studies is in fact meticulously choreographed and the other, because informed by OFC, is intrinsically looking at how form is “read”. So what could go “wrong” in a given performance

133 Allsopp & deLahunta 1996.

is very clear, both for the work and for the choreographer. This is also unappealing for me because I have a bit of an issue with the notion of free-improvisation, or rather the promise of freedom it seems to offer (very often a negative freedom, a freedom “from”).

RA: So in the highly controlled environment that you are talking about, or rather, highly structured environment, what do you see as being at stake? Clearly that is a generalisation and it will depend on specific circumstances.

JdS: Indeed. Each piece proposes or invents its own problems and that is a part of my PhD project. Once you have identified how the helix I alluded to earlier works in a particular project then you can identify the stakes and the risk, for instance, of getting physically hurt, or if a scene takes longer than its dramaturgy demands, over- or under-exposure of the dancers, lack or excess of control etcetera ... and the fact that in my project I look into large groups is important. Given the complexity (with say more than 10 dancers) you will never fully know how all dancers are going to decide at a given moment. So it's like being torn: following the plan, knowing how the overall narrative of the piece wants to read, but at the same time not knowing the full trajectory; you don't know how the other dancers are going to do it either, so you are literally having to figure that all out in real time; you speculate. If you go berserk for instance and forget the dramaturgy for a while that can damage the piece. In Mary O'Donnell's work, in which she applies the concept

of “responsible anarchy”¹³⁴ the overall form of the work often didn’t read because, in addition to proposing a very challenging concept, she refused to assume a full authorial role and as such she refused to intervene in some instances, which was challenging and very interesting indeed.

RA: In that example, how does she set up a rigorous condition?

JdS: I would not say that she fully succeeded in setting up the conditions. She herself was experimenting, speculating. However, in *Faust* the music cues played an important role as well as the text she used (Fernando Pessoa’s *Faust*) as well as how characters were built on her reading of the time Pessoa wrote *Faust*. In the 1.5 hours of *Faust* dancers move through a well defined trajectory of macro events but the micro-moments (that which the macro events circumscribe) had to be negotiated every time anew, also because she was dancing herself inside the piece and so arguably lacking an overview. Costumes made a big difference in what you could do as a dancer. So, do I follow what I know of the choreographer’s plan, or do I follow the potential of the idea (or rather the problem) of being anarchically responsible for myself and the others (and ultimately the work)? The piece very seldom worked for the audience, I think,

134 “Responsible anarchy” was meant to further illustrate or more clearly describe O’Donnell’s paradoxical definition of “Open-Form Composition”. Responsibility, she writes, “came about through the need to create a recognizable, understandable linear structure that would allow performers to navigate through a piece in such a way that they would be able to transport the aimed-at meaning of a piece of work consistently and reliably.” Anarchy, on the other hand, “came about through the need to provide individual dancers with ‘significance’ and a field of experience that situated the work differently each time it was performed. Responsibility was likened to a river bed and Anarchy to the river, with both carving out the identity of the work simultaneously.” For more see: O’Donnell 2005.

not because of what you mentioned earlier, but because of the group's inability to get it together, to prioritise the work, not themselves.

My other case study is Lia Rodrigues' *Pororoca*¹³⁵, a work that is meticulously choreographed. In her case it is much harder because you can get seriously hurt, so the margin for modification is narrow. And the dancers don't share a movement lineage (unlike a good deal of work made by Forsythe where dancers have all had ballet training and there is a lot you can read as a dancer). With Lia it is very different. They are all differently trained so that her process is making sure you get to know the others well enough; even though her work is meticulously choreographed it looks improvised. So there are different kinds of risk which one could shed light on. I am looking at these two pieces so that I can talk about the relationship between writing (dancing) and planning, knowing and not knowing, within a particular problem. And again with Mary O'Donnell how can you be anarchic and responsible? What does that mean within the frame of *Faust*? With Lia Rodrigues, with what one could perhaps call an

135 <<http://www.liarodrigues.com/eng/page10/page11/page11.html>>. *Pororoca* means roar, explosion. This is a natural phenomenon produced when the water of a river meets the waters of the ocean, when the tumultuous collision of opposing currents creates a beautiful and violent impact, with waves as high as 4 metres. In English it means a tidal bore. In Brazil this phenomenon takes place at the mouth of the Amazon River where it meets the Atlantic Ocean. The magnificent violence of this roaring collision can uproot trees and modify the riverbed, yet it is a "fragile process, the result of a delicate balance of nature" (R. Boisseau, *Le Monde*, 11 April 2010, my translation). In the very same way, *Pororoca* provokes or forces encounters between varying opposite currents, which generate movement, like waves, long and short, that break over one another and mix together in a number of ways. Rodrigues explains: *Pororoca* is a metaphor of our work in the *Maré* conglomerate of favelas in Rio de Janeiro. At this point in time, when walls are being built all over the world, when territories are being resolutely defended, borders enforced and rigidly controlled, we propose to move in the opposite direction. We propose to discover new possibilities for sharing, interaction and creation (idem).

obsession with control – she improvised until very shortly before the premiere when she set it - which Mary O'Donnell either didn't want to or couldn't. Peter Hulton has talked about how Anna Halprin has been very keen on naming things in order to make sure that processes register properly; saying how Mary O'Donnell was not able to do that for whatever reason, and saying how important it was to pin things down so that they can be referred to, found again and critically looked at. There is a productive aspect in the work itself if you look at choreography and improvisation in relation to the writing-planning-performing node.

RA: How do you put that into a pedagogical frame? So you approach it from another position – this comes back to training in a sense – how do you set that up in ArtEZ for example – to bring it back to the Erasmus Intensive Project?

JdS: It is a great question. I think that is what we tried to do – to create a potential for what Mary O'Donnell called the anarchic – a “radical coherence” – creating the conditions so that difference can actually take place and you are forced not just to reproduce the known, but to venture into something really exciting. That's hard in Holland at the moment - we are going to have the panel tomorrow on Institutions¹³⁶. In the introduction to the book *Inventing Futures*¹³⁷ I am talking about innovation and invention – its difficult because the expectations are very high in what you think you need to do. Within the frame of the educational program of Arnhem it was to make sure students did what they think is right and insist both on

136 Panel discussion that took place within the frame of the *Live Legacy Project* (2014). <<http://www.tanzfonds.de/de/projekte/angela-guerreiro>>.

137 Da Silva 2013.

that and on the difference (from the BA programme for instance). And I understood that has been very subversive in different ways in terms of ‘poking’, irritating or begging the question. There’s an institution, a programme, a time-frame, credits, things you need to do; but how are you moving within that so that you are also satisfied and having pleasure? If you can find a kind of empowerment it is a good experience, which doesn’t necessarily mean it is successful, or immediately visible. It takes time and you don’t necessarily see that in the time-frame of an educational programme.

It would be interesting to see what the people who did the first Erasmus IP are now doing - but being clear with the rules of the game, the conditions, is part of creating the space for anarchy, for a movement away from and toward it. In order to create a tension with the rules and the conditions, conditions have to be clear and understood, there has to be a way to share that. It takes great teachers or better, a combination of differently great teachers - But that has very little to do with being “spontaneous and free” - that has rather to do with care, careful planning and thought - with a hope that something exciting might take place but with a non-naïve awareness that it might also not.

RA: A completely different question in a way. To go back to “radical coherence” - where do you see that happening now? Where is the energy?

JdS: Not in education, not in Holland, not now. - I think in sexual artistic practice - that is where I am seeing it, thinking of contexts where somatic practices and forms of improvisation have been moving into. Some of the questions of dominance and submission, some of the more extreme physical or psychophysical practices - I certainly don’t find that in the theatre, and also not in education, but I am seeing this pop up here and there and I think

it is very exciting, so I have a lot of questions [...] It's a place of confluence; some of these folks are extremely smart, daring artists and definitely rubbing against convention in different ways than those one finds in the theatre.

RA: You can immediately see why it is not in institutional education and the problems of that; but not so clearly why there is a problem in theatre. Maybe “radical coherence” is always sub-cultural in that sense.

JdS: Yes. I also think that at the same time that I am very enticed, I am also critical because once could say that subcultures in neoliberal environments are very quickly turned into commodities, in a similar way that improvisation in general can be said to have been embraced and absorbed into the mainstream culture. So, does improvisation qualify as a critical practice? I think improvisation needs to be reinvented, alongside the language we use to describe it, and considerations of planning and thinking ahead, in a non-naïve way, is part of this process of reinvention. If group improvisation is apprehended as a collective problem solving technique, then problems must be clearly stated, so that you are having to bite on something which is not about you, but about the project at hand. Improvisation seen in this light can be productive as a means of both inventing and cracking a choreographic problem and I think both Mary O'Donnell and Lia Rodrigues' case studies (1993 and 2009 respectively) are great examples for this.

What often doesn't come out in the discourse on improvisation and how it relates to and is legitimated by the rhetoric of “not knowing”, is the quest for knowledge improvisation engenders, a sort of pragmatic speculation (Cvejic)¹³⁸. In speculating pragmatically, in

138 Cvejic 2009.

improvising in tandem with others and with clear, situated problems, one bets on the future, one knows in the future perfect tense: I do not fully know it now but I might know it then (in retrospect, through experience).

RA: Do you see choreography in those terms – as being a set of problems to be solved or explored?

JdS: Yes definitely but also a set of problems to be invented [...]

RA: It's a clear offer: there is the problem. How do we find a way through this as an individual, as a group. [...]

JdS: Both Mary O'Donnell and Lia Rodrigues are posing the question of how we can be together on stage, of how we can together solve a problem. Each offers a different set of answers to this question but both do it by speculating pragmatically and by asking for commitment, to one self but also to the other and the work itself. This is not easy to achieve as it involves non-linear, dynamically entangled processes of coming to know anew what one already knew or, if lucky, of coming to know an otherness that matters. You solve problems through improvisation by affirming our always-already-limited and partial knowing of things and by a commitment to make good use of the little we actually know.

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performless: dramaturgies of performing less¹³⁹

KONSTANTINA GEORGELOU

It is 2006. I come from Greece but I am currently pursuing a Master's in Amsterdam. For the last couple of years I have been hearing about this Italian experimental theatre group called Societas Raffaello Sanzio, whose performances are radical, dark and incomparable to anything else one has seen so far; and since I am in central Europe, where they mainly perform, I shouldn't miss them. Coming from a country where classical forms of theatre are so dominant, I cannot even imagine what exactly to expect. Finally they have a performance in Antwerp, which is nearby; so I take the train to go and see them for the first time.

As I walk inside the theatre room, I can see an orchestra tuning up instruments, and musical scores lying open on stands. Ranged across the front of the stage, the musicians seem all ready to start playing as the performance *Paris*, the sixth episode of the cycle *Tragedia Endogonia*, is about to begin.¹⁴⁰ As soon as the lights go down, indicating that the performance is *now* starting, I therefore anticipate the live music of the orchestra. However, the orchestra

139 This article follows the keynote lecture that was held in the Erasmus Intensive 2012 *Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience in Helsinki*.

140 I attended this performance in Antwerp, Theatre deSingel, May 2006.

does not play. It does not play *now* and will not play at all throughout the entire performance. In other words, the orchestra, after having clearly made itself visible in front of the stage, resists performing according to the expectations it has set itself out to produce, and invites the audience to a paradoxical type of performance: that of “not-playing”.

In 2006 I write my MA thesis, a large part of which is about their work. In 2008 I start my PhD, writing about them again. In 2010 I start having second thoughts about my choices, insisting on their aesthetics and noticing how popular they have become. But it is too late for any kind of change. Today, at the end of 2012, I stand here and have decided to talk about them once more; but somewhat less. My intention is to take only this short opening scene from *Paris* as a starting point, in order to discuss the notion of *l'informe*: its theorisation, its contextualisation and its possible relationship to performance today. By letting Raffaello Sanzio's work perform less, by subtracting this part and only concentrating on this small and clear event of the orchestra's “not-playing” out of the whole range of *Tragedia Endogonidia*, I do not want to act reductively. I believe that this un-working of the orchestra is a good example of dramaturgical strategies that structurally perform less than what they are expected to.

This can be seen very often in performances today, such as, for instance, in the work of Xavier Le Roy (especially *Self-Unfinished* and *Sacre du Printemps*: in the first case the perception of the imagery and figure of the human body and in the second case the function of a music conductor translated into a theatre performance, are being taxonomically undone from within. But also Ivana Muller; Ivo Dimchev each one in their own different ways, as well as younger generation choreographer Clement Layes with his performance

Allege – in which objects and materials interconnect and in some way “perform” a mockery, in an attempt to be drawn out of and abstractedly reconstituted in semantic registers – is particularly interesting in terms of formlessness, because of radically unsettling anthropocentric views of theatre; very much aligned to the current articulations of object-oriented philosophy and theories of speculative realism and new materialism.

However, today I will not discuss these examples further. I will remain more attached to the scene from *Paris* which I just described.

With a view to examining in more detail the implications of the dramaturgical strategy manifested in this example, it seems necessary to first tackle the issue of expectation. On the basis of the above description, the expectations of the audience (and myself, as a member of it) about what the orchestra will perform, disclose a linear, deductive and essentialist type of reasoning. Namely, the premise goes like this: when we see an orchestra in a theatre room, we expect that it will play music; and even that it will play well. We do not really expect that it will play “no music”. This line of thinking thus shows that in order to assimilate something, one seeks to classify it under a recognisable form that serves a certain meaning or purpose. In this sense, what else could the group of people dressed in black, sitting in front of the stage and holding different instruments be, if not musicians who will play music in the performance? Hence, one can claim that the orchestra’s resistance to satisfying the audience’s expectations about a “good” performance is also an attack on this grid of assimilation and production of meaning, similar to minimal art. Minimal art has proven to be significant in that aspect, since its goal was to specifically attack this type of reasoning and to expose what lies at the limits of meaningfulness.

Historical references

A resistance to performing according to these types of linear conceptual and perceptual mechanisms and deductive expectations frequently appears in contemporary theatre. This sometimes happens under forms of minimalism but also through other radical, dramaturgical and aesthetic modes that perform *less* than they are expected to. Their inception needs to be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century and the avant-garde movements that revolted against representation, norms, cultural codes and dominant ideologies by experimenting with uses of body, space, time, language and the relationship with the audience.

In this sense, although it was first presented in 2003, *Paris'* strategic resistance to the semantics of form is not a new practice. For instance, it was in 1952 that John Cage composed his musical piece *4'33"*, during which no single note is to be played. In the score of this piece, the performer was in fact instructed not to play her instrument for 4 minutes and 33 seconds, for the sounds of the environment to be perceived as music from the listeners. Cage was namely fascinated by sounds, which, in his view, showed that there is no such thing as silence. And in 2007 Xavier Le Roy choreographed *Le Sacre du Printemps* in which he imitates to the very detail the outside form, the gestures, movements, facial expressions of conductor Simon Rattle (Berliner Philharmoniker) on the music of Stravinsky, but without really having a musical clue content-wise. Although the intentions of this counter-movement are quite different for each artist, the strategy they all used and the tension therein produced are very similar.

Nevertheless, such performances, confronting their audiences with the unexpected and the speculative, are arguably still consid-

ered to be “difficult” according to Lehmann,¹⁴¹ as they cannot be easily assimilated by normative and linear content-based grids of understanding. Lehmann discusses this strand of dramaturgical strategies extensively in his study *Postdramatisches Theater* (1999), contributing a historical and cultural analysis of aesthetic developments in theatre that has a central position today in theatre and performance studies in Europe. However, it does not offer sufficient conceptual tools to sustain an in-depth investigation of the implications and the impact of such operational aspects of theatre.

L’informe

With this in mind, I propose to turn to and theorise the notions of *form* and the *formless* as they were conceived by G. Bataille (1929) and developed as conceptual tools for visual arts by art historians and theorists Y. A. Bois and R. Krauss in *Formless – A User’s Guide* (1997).

To be more explicit, Bataille used the concept of form to indicate something that is ontologically described and classified. Bataille’s notion of *l’informe* (translated as “formless” in English) first appeared in the journal *Dictionnaire Critique*, a section of *Documents*¹⁴²

141 Theatre scholar H. T. Lehmann characterises postdramatic theatre as “difficult”. The quotation marks are significant because they mark a difficulty in understanding such performances, but perhaps also disclose an irony towards this overused term, indirectly criticising the negative nuance usually attributed to it: “[...] and, on the other hand, to serve the *conceptual* analysis and *verbalisation of the experience* of this often “difficult” contemporary theatre” (Lehmann 2006, 19).

142 Michael Richardson further informs that “in 1929 Bataille is appointed editorial assistant to a new review, *Documents*, for which he contributes several articles; seven issues are published during the year and Bataille’s influence in its editorial decisions increases markedly until he is the *de facto* editor; publishing many of the surrealist writers in dispute with André Breton, he is seen by the latter as a rival” (Richardson 1994, xii).

published in 1929–1930. This *Dictionary* consisted of a series of notions, in non-alphabetical order, the meanings of which would escape classification and definition (e.g. “The Eye”, “Dust”, “Metamorphosis”, “Abattoir”). That collection of “slippages” (*mots glissants*)¹⁴³ deliberately remained incomplete, since the publication was never conceived as a possible totality. Although Bataille dedicated only a few lines to it, *l'informe* holds a central place within this collection of terms. It marks their qualitative significance, their intensity and force of resistance.¹⁴⁴ So, according to Bataille:

A dictionary begins when it no longer gives the meaning of words, but their tasks. Thus formless is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only

143 John Gregg's definition is illuminative here: “A mot glissant is a word that establishes a limit that it cannot hold itself to. For example, silence: as a sound the word abolishes the concept it is supposed to represent; the phonetic dimension of the word transgresses the semantic limit that it pretends to set up” (Gregg 1994, 67).

144 Georges Didi-Huberman specifically cites P. Fédida with regard to the central role of *l'informe* and writes that “le mot *informe* n'est pas une entrée parmi les autres, [mais] le vocable *aspectuel* qualifiant le *mouvement* de tous les autres, et de toutes les expériences visées dans l'heuristique bataillienne” (Didi-Huberman 2003, 134).

formless amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or a spit.¹⁴⁵

In view of the expressions “mathematical frock-coat” and “for academic men to be happy”, one can see that Bataille sought to destabilise classical philosophical discourse.¹⁴⁶ And from his ironic tone, one can already suspect that he practiced a vehement writing – one that even resisted the act and purposes of writing itself. *Dictionnaire* actually reflects his determination “to sabotage against the academic world and the spirit of the system”¹⁴⁷ that is, to resist the desire to attribute a certain shape to the universe. More specifically *l'informe* seems to belong with Bataille’s general syllogism about what he named “scatology” or “heterology”: the science of the “wholly other”¹⁴⁸. The notions of heterology and scatology refer to processes of resisting social homogeneity (which includes all elements that can be assimilated in a productive, consumerist society) and manifest themselves as excess, potentially educing agitation, dispossession and discomfort.

145 As cited and translated by Bois and Krauss 1999, 5.

146 Richardson comments that: “Bataille did not renounce the role of a philosopher. If he rejected the *discourse* of philosophy, he did so because he rejected all discourse” and Bataille himself says in his interview with M. Chapsal, 1961 (that was probably the only time Bataille was interviewed): “I saw myself rather as a philosopher. I have always, before all else, leant towards philosophy. But I envisaged it in such a way that I cannot say I am really a philosopher. I have not quite succeeded in becoming one; certain of my books come close to it or penetrate into it. I realised that there is a distance between what I write and genuine philosophy. Philosophers worthy of the name must be able to link up their thought indefinitely, but I am incapable of following mine for very long...” (Richardson 1994, 2).

147 Bois and Krauss 1997, 16.

148 Bois and Krauss 1997, 31; 47.

In other words, what Bataille succeeded in doing with his texts was to expose how heterologies unsettle form and the homogeneous, and to eventually produce a dissemination of possibilities and connections. For instance, his text “The Big Toe”, which also appeared in *Documents*, deconstructed the idea of the human body being superior to animals. Bataille, namely, provocatively dismissed the “humanness” of the human body by denoting that which primarily differentiates it from corresponding elements of other anthropoid apes’ bodies, which is the big toe¹⁴⁹. However, as he also remarked, the big toe is a body part which man is greatly ashamed of because its visibility is connected to shame or sexual fetishism. In brief, from a historical and cultural perspective during Bataille’s time, the big toe needed to be covered because it was “seen as a spit”¹⁵⁰. The purpose of this text, thus, was not to privilege the big toe, but to shake up man’s pride in his erect position and his spirituality. This text’s *task* resides more on its being read as a movement of resistance against essentialist thinking (in this case, against the dichotomy between man and animal, spirituality and physicality), rather than a reduction of the human body or a plea for human animals to become more like nonhuman animals.

Documents was a collaborative work. It was in fact a journal initiated by certain surrealists of that time (Desnos, Leiris and oth-

149 Bataille 1970 [1929], 200–204.

150 Bataille 1970 [1929], 204.

ers).¹⁵¹ However, Bataille's contribution was more central and very often "violated the general orientation of the review"¹⁵² by bringing in inappropriate and radical material. Moreover, the journal had a very specific interest in imagery and, thus, visuality. Profane photographs and illustrations were juxtaposed with the texts, creating ambiguous feelings. The serene but raw images from a slaughterhouse that appeared next to "Abattoir", the exposed plant genitalia for "The language of the flowers" and the uncanny mannequins for "Dust" are especially characteristic in their blunt figurativeness. Probably this is also the main reason why the notion of *l'informe* has been conceptualised mostly with regard to image and within the field of visual arts, particularly through the works of Didi-Huberman and Bois and Krauss. These studies, however, also prove that even though there is a considerable time-gap between them and Bataille, this gap stops mattering once the operational force of the formless shows itself to still be productive for critical thinking.

On the one hand, historian and theorist of art Didi-Huberman specifically studied and analysed the imagery of *Documents* in his book *La ressemblance informe – ou le gai savoir visuel selon G. Bataille* (1985). In this rich examination of the formless, he relates and compares the illustrations of *Documents* to Bataille's texts as well

151 This was a surrealist group, that had distanced itself from the school of the famous surrealist André Breton. There was, hence, a strong conflict between Bataille and Breton. The latter was namely accusing Bataille of a big contradiction, that is, of embracing heterogeneity and at the same time reasoning about it. Breton polemically writes that "Bataille's misfortune is to reason: admittedly, he reasons like someone who 'has a fly on his nose', which allies him more closely with the dead than with the living, but *he does reason*", as cited by Stoeckl (Ed.) in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, xi.

152 Stoeckl 1985, xi

as to other surrealist works. He considers *l'informe* as a process within form that has the power to “deform”, that is, to alter form, transgress it and open it up again to new connections¹⁵³. More precisely, he analysed the images and texts of *Documents* by looking at their “transgressive, excessive resemblances”¹⁵⁴, at their force of deformation and alteration (as in the image of a crushed spider). However, Didi-Huberman’s understanding of the formless has been criticised by Bois and Krauss. As the latter explain, mapping it onto the pragmatic idea of deformation is dangerously simplistic because it assumes that formless *is* something, or *is like* something.¹⁵⁵ In that sense, morphology becomes central for discussing resemblances and, as they remark, “the slightest alteration to the human anatomy, in a painting for example, would be said to participate in the formless – which comes down to saying that modern figurative art, in its quasi-totality, would be swept into such a definition”¹⁵⁶. Thus, according to the two authors, Didi-Huberman at times suggests a theorisation of *l'informe* which contradicts Bataille’s project of resistance against ontological and firm categories while discussing the images and photographs of *Documents*, since everything is said to be *like* or *unlike* something else. In other words, the authors observe that his analysis is rather static, not paying enough attention to the

153 Didi-Huberman 1985, 135.

154 Didi-Huberman 1985, 135. My translation.

155 Bois, Y.A., Krauss, R., “This is the risk one runs in wanting to measure the formless against resemblance or unlikeness at any price, instead of being aware that ‘resembles nothing’ is neither to be unlike something in particular, nor to resemble something that turns out to be nothing” (Bois and Krauss 1997, 80).

156 Bois and Krauss 1997, 80.

operative nature of *l'informe* during the discussion of the artworks that appeared in *Documents*.

However, in my opinion they do not acknowledge that he nevertheless emphasised the impact of *l'informe*, showing that it is a dynamic operation of undoing that can “open up” form again into a zone of unexpected relations and meanings, thus leading the way to ethical as well as political implications. And notably, this is a point upon which Bois and Krauss did not concentrate in *Formless – A User's Guide*. Didi-Huberman interestingly calls *Documents* a “choreography of a cruel dance of resemblances that agitate”¹⁵⁷ – and I consider this movement of agitation evoked, to be particularly important for examining the impact of *l'informe*.

On the other hand, Bois and Krauss (1997) studied *l'informe* in the context of modern visual arts and their contemporary reception. The two authors actually arrived at their study because of a curatorial project. In 1996 they set up together an exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris under the title *L'informe: Mode d'emploi*, which was an attempt to demonstrate the impulse and operational force of the formless as a conceptual tool. Their aim was to further the understanding of modern arts, to pick apart again the categories of “form” and “content”¹⁵⁸ and to offer an alternative reading, which concentrated on the tasks, the particular performativity rather than classification of modern art.¹⁵⁹ Hence, their study *Formless: A User's Guide* came out as the catalogue of this

157 Didi-Huberman 1985, 134. My translation.

158 Bois and Krauss 1997, 9.

159 Bois and Krauss 1997, 21.

exhibition.¹⁶⁰ What particularly distinguishes their project is that they studiously transformed the formless into a method of analysis for art, whereas Didi-Huberman attempted to analyse it primarily within the context of *Documents*. Moreover, Bois and Krauss introduced an illuminative examination of Bataille's general thinking that allows a careful use of the formless within arts analysis. More specifically, they understood *l'informe* to be structural, meaning that it has a *function* in a structural manner: Krauss precisely remarks that this is "a way for Bataille to group a variety of strategies for knocking form off its pedestal".¹⁶¹ As a result, they rightly avoided giving any definition to the formless and yet, they managed to sustain its implications for the sake of its theorisation. Notably, they "put the formless to work, not only to map certain trajectories, or slippages, but in some small way to "perform" them"¹⁶². As they explain further, their initial aim with this book was to describe an alteration in visual arts of the modern period, which is not related to semantic registers of any particular object but rather to the grid of interpretation that determines the assimilation of these registers. In order, thus, to expose the particular performativity, the structural *function* of the formless, and to render it into a method of analysis

160 Bois and Krauss write: "a book with a coherent proposition to develop, not only about modern's art past (the onset of the formless within modernist practice: Arp, Duchamp, Picasso), but also modern art's contemporary reception (the repression of certain careers or certain famous oeuvres) and even, possibly, modern art's future" (Bois and Krauss 1997, 9–10).

161 Krauss in Bois et al. 1994, 4. Both Bois and Krauss insist on the notion of the formless being about structure, rather than subject, also in their discussion with H. Foster, B. Buchloh, D. Hollier and H. Molesworth "The Politics of the Signifier II: A Conversation on the 'Informe' and the Abject" that appeared before their book, in the journal *October*.

162 Krauss in Bois et al. 1994, 21.

for visual arts, Bois and Krauss retained four vectors – four operations of the formless: Base Materialism, Horizontality, Pulse and Entropy. These operations are related to Bataille but not all of them actually derive from his writings.

Apart from the aforementioned studies that mainly address the field of visual arts, the formless has been also examined in a more philosophical perspective by B. Manchev in his book *L'altération du monde - pour une esthétique radicale* (2009). And although this study still concentrates on the issue of the “image”, it also encompasses a greater perspective on radical aesthetics, as its title suggests. More precisely regarding *l'informe*, Manchev argues that it was a principal operation of Bataille’s notion of “base materialism” for criticising onto-theological ideas, even that of “being”¹⁶³. The operation of base materialism referred to a constant resistance against the idealisation and ontologising of matter, according to Bataille. Particularly with his texts *Matérialisme* and *Le bas matérialisme et la gnose* Bataille attacked classic materialism, which expressed an ontological approach of matter, in the sense of understanding matter as a thing-in-itself. And at the same time, he insisted on a “base matter” that is foreign to human ideals and refuses to let itself be reduced by the great ontological machines¹⁶⁴. In other words, Bataille was again seeking to attack the dichotomy between spirit

163 Manchev 2009, 130.

164 Bataille 1970 [1929], 225.

and matter, as well as the human project of transforming matter into spirit.¹⁶⁵

This understanding of base matter is crucial for Manchev, as he holds that it points to the movement of an endless resistance that precedes structures of force and authority¹⁶⁶. However, he does not regard this resistance as a negative force from within form, as Bois and Krauss (by claiming that it attributes “bad form”) or Didi-Huberman (deformation) did¹⁶⁷. Manchev rather argues that *l'informe* signifies the intensity of the limits of form, which suggests that it refers to an experience of the senses¹⁶⁸. For Manchev the formless is a dynamic concept that becomes perceived only through an experience of “touching the limits” of form; and through that *touch*, form is transformed. What’s more, this haptic experience of the limits manifests itself as an alteration. Similarly to Didi-Huberman, Manchev argues that alteration *opens up* form to a dynamic recomposition, taking place only when the limits of form are experienced¹⁶⁹. His perspective on the limits thus introduces an additional understanding

165 Bois and Krauss also explain that “[Bataille] sought to vanquish the fetishising (or ontologising) of matter, which is what he believed materialist thinkers did. ‘Most materialists’, Bataille wrote, ‘despite wanting to eliminate all spiritual entities, ended up describing an order of things whose hierarchical relations mark it out as specifically idealist. They have situated dead matter at the summit of conventional hierarchy of diverse types of facts, without realising that in this way they have submitted to an obsession with an ideal for matter, with a form which approaches closer than any other to that which matter *should be*’”(G. Bataille, *Matérialism, Documents 1*, 1929, no.3, p.170; *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1, p. 179; trans. J. Harman, *Encyclopaedia Acephalica*, p. 58), (Bois and Krauss 1997, 29).

166 Manchev 2009, 95.

167 Didi-Huberman 1985, 131.

168 Manchev 2009, 130–131.

169 Manchev 2009, 72.

of the operation of formlessness, not just as a negative movement of undoing, as Bois and Krauss suggested, but also as an experience of the limits of form. And this is how the impact of this operation can be better conceptualised.

In view of these conceptualisations, I suggest considering *l'informe* an operation that evokes an experience of the limits of form by undoing the “good” form of things from within. In other words, I propose an understanding of *l'informe* as a force that shows a negative performativity, which can also lead to an experience of the limits. As some of you may know, normally and usually Bataille’s thinking has been associated with and instrumentalised for so-called radical, provocative, extreme forms of art such as screams, scenes of danger, transgression, violence and so on which I also partly addressed in my PhD thesis. However, I believe that the idea of radicalism needs to be re-thought in the context of Western modes of life today, where being radical is displaced and quite often alludes to processes being slow, being late, being not-informed, being non-efficient, being old, being pragmatic and concrete and so on. In other words, being radical means moving counter to modes of (capitalist) production and consumption of subjectivities. Therefore, this radicalism does not so much adhere to hermetic dramaturgies – meaning the internal organisation and aesthetic codes of a piece – but mainly to the structural organization of the performance of the piece, the modes of presentation, sharing and working together that create a set-up and network of connections and entanglements. I will not discuss this point now, but I would like us to keep it in mind in relation to my selection of this example as well as to the ones I mentioned earlier.

Negative performativity

With a view to pinpointing *l'informe's* particular type of performativity, it needs to be noted that in French, the word *informe* has a double signification that is very much reflected in Bataille's use of the term: on the one hand it refers to something without a determined form and on the other hand, it indicates that something is imperfect, ugly and flawed.¹⁷⁰ Bataille's understanding of *l'informe* emphasises both of these aspects, considering it a notion that serves to declassify; as he puts it in his text on *l'informe*, "to bring things down in the world"¹⁷¹. Bois and Krauss offer a useful clarification of this point, observing that to declassify is to say that the formless is an operation with the task of undoing the "good" form; or else, of generating the "bad" form of things and, thus, suspending their logocentric meaning¹⁷². So, *l'informe* is an operation of contaminating the "good" form with the "bad" form of things from within. In a more philosophical and political context, Manchev also highlights the Bataillean notion's operational task of undoing, remarking that *l'informe* undoes regimes of power and authority¹⁷³.

Against this background, the performativity of the formless is to be understood through its operational task not of doing something to form, but of undoing the form and performing "less" than what is expected of it. It can be therefore considered an operation showing a negative performativity, since its productivity resides on the task

170 "informe *adj.* Sans forme déterminée. Imparfait, incomplet; laid", *Dictionnaire*, Larousse de poche, 1995.

171 as translated by Bois and Krauss 1997, 5.

172 Bois and Krauss 1997, 108.

173 Manchev 2009, 95.

of undoing. Unlike Derrida's and Butler's approach of performativity as the condition of reiteration and foundation of language, gender, subjectivity and other norms, *l'informe* proposes a rather different nuance, arriving at a declassification rather than production of the expected, iterative norm. And this undoing is the "task" Bataille brings to the fore. As Bois and Krauss write, *l'informe* is:

not so much a stable motif to which we can refer, a symbolisable theme, a given quality, as it is a term allowing one to operate a declassification, in the double sense of lowering and of taxonomic disorder: Nothing in and of itself, the formless has only an operational existence: it is a performative, like obscene words, the violence of which derives less from the semantics than from the very act of their delivery. The formless is an operation.¹⁷⁴

The title of this lecture is also to be understood within the aforementioned context. *Performless* is namely a word that introduces a *play*: it brings together different aspects of *l'informe* and performance by italicising the term "form" and making it functional in more ways than one (perform-less, formless, perform). In this way, the interesting relationship between the notions "perform" and "formless" is launched and becomes a subject of examination.

Back to Paris#06

So, in light of this theoretical and historical background, let us revisit the dramaturgical strategy from *Paris#06* and examine its

174 Bois and Krauss 1997, 18.

implications a little further. The presence of the orchestra resides on a certain meaning and creates certain expectations, in the sense that its image signifies for the audience that this is an orchestra that will play music. And it is suggested that this type of reasoning brings forth an understanding of the “good” form of the orchestra’s performance on the basis of its efficient performance. However, this “good” form is being undone: the orchestra does not play music and, hence, resists performing according to its semantics. This artistic choice can be considered a dramaturgical operation with a specific task, which is to undo the “good” form and to resist performing on the basis of logocentric expectations. I would, thus, propose considering it a *dramaturgy of formlessness* that is able to increase perceptual alertness and to create agitation by inviting the audience to an encounter with an unforeseeable and yet, so ordinary event. As Manchev argues, Bataille’s work is concerned with extra-ordinary cases that most of the time are the most ordinary ones; so ordinary that they remain invisible¹⁷⁵. What’s more, this encounter educes a feeling of incompleteness in the audience, as the orchestra performs *less* than what is expected of it.

Therefore, the dramaturgy of formlessness in question brings taxonomic disorder to usual patterns of understanding and perceiving and what eventually appears to stand in front of the stage is the plain image of an orchestra; more accurately, the image of what one would call an orchestra. In other words, the audience becomes aware of an alternative possibility: perceiving and understanding the orchestra as being able “to play and not to play” as a whole.

175 Manchev 2009, 33.

Potentiality

Such an awareness invites the audience to an experience of potentiality, which according to Agamben's reading of Aristotle, is the experience of being in relation to one's own incapacity and lack. In other words, being capable of one's own impotentiality, showing indistinctiveness of the potentials "to-act" and "not-to-act". To illustrate this thought he brings as example the relation between vision and darkness and remarks that even though one cannot see in darkness, one can still see darkness ("the eye does not see anything but is, as it were, affected by its own incapacity to see"¹⁷⁶).

In this frame, *l'informe* shall be considered an operation of tactical un-working; one that does not find an endpoint. This is important to note because, according to a more essentialist thinking, form-less would refer to an end; that is, to an experience or understanding of no form, of emptiness and of a complete erasure of meaning. However, the operation of *l'informe* invokes the event of the unexpected and creates an experience of potentiality, in which the process of how meaning is produced is attacked and rendered inoperative, rather than the idea of meaning per se. In fact, one could turn toward minimal art again in order to disentangle this relationship. Namely, as Krauss rightly explains, "minimal artists are simply re-evaluating the logic of a particular source of meaning rather than denying meaning to the aesthetic object altogether"¹⁷⁷. In this sense, the orchestra that plays no music in *Paris#06* is not to be understood as formless and meaningless. One could still call it an orchestra on the basis of the image it produces, in order to as-

176 Agamben, 1999, 217.

177 Krauss 1981 [1977], 262.

simulate and communicate it. However, its resistance to performing according to essentialist expectations, places its image *at the verge* of meaning. In other words, the logic of what the presence of an orchestra on stage *means* is being opened up and re-evaluated (it may mean that it will-play and it may mean that it will-not-play) – in a sense, the orchestra’s pre-fixed meaning is *evacuated* and its, let us call it, “good” form is contaminated by its “bad” form from within. Hence, this scene can be considered a dramaturgy of formlessness that unsettles the audience, as it invites them to a confrontation with the un-working of meaning and the (im)possibility of no meaning, by touching upon the extreme limits of how it is expected that the orchestra will perform.

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Operations of dis|owning (choreography)

KONSTANTINA GEORGELOU

This text is documentation of the workshop held in autumn 2012 in Helsinki, at the Theatre Academy. The workshop was planned and facilitated by Konstantina Georgelou within the context of Erasmus Intensive 2012, Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience.

Participants: Natasa Antulov (ADA-Zagreb), Celine Cartillier (HZT), Anna-Maria Häkkinen (TeaK/Choreography), Ellen Jeffrey (TeaK,/LAPS), Lauri Mattila (TeaK/Directing), Kathrin Memmer (HZT), Alessandra Montagner (Laban), Mila Pavičević (ADA-Zagreb), Allison Peacock (HZT), Laura Potrovic (ADA-Zagreb)

Description

Day 1:

We started the workshop with the task of writing down and sharing definitions of choreography. The ontological question of “what is choreography?”, rather than the most commonly used “How do we practice choreography?” became our central concern. During our attempt to define choreography with the help of words we talked about issues of making, unmaking, language, composition, and choreography as a conceptualisation for dance.

Later on students worked in groups of three and four, undoing and producing *twisted* words, thoughts and scores of each student's performances through a list of slightly altered directives deriving from choreographer Lisa Nelson's "Tuning Score".¹⁷⁸ More specifically, participants were asked to talk about the project they were currently working on in terms of dramaturgy and composition. The second person would respond using the directives of the Tuning Score while the third person made a score/mapping of what was being said. These actions were happening simultaneously.

At the end we discussed this exercise. As the students pointed out, the directives allowed more intuitive approaches to their own work and served as a process of unblocking their own ideas. At the same time it brought deeper awareness of the words we choose to communicate our own work to others.

Day 2:

How do scores perform? What is their choreography? The students exchanged the scores of the previous day and on that basis created and presented choreographies. Their modes of working together were also organised by their reading of the score. The students worked in the same groups and at the end presented the choreographies they made to the other groups. Furthermore, they explained and reflected upon the decisions that were taken regarding organisation during the process of working together.

At the end of the session many issues about ownership, authorship, possession, the commons, intellectual property, copyrights

178 (Altered) directives from the "Tuning Score".

and belonging emerged. Who owns this choreography? Who is the author? What is the difference between owner and author?

Day 3:

We examined manifestos that come from different eras of history.¹⁷⁹ We did not so much focus on their content, but rather on their form and tasks. Students were divided in two groups of five people each and investigated the writing protocols, operations and formats characterising each manifesto. What tasks do these words deliver? How can we approach them as performative objects?

Each group had to find ways of reading together and discussing these manifestos, also examining their necessity and value today. Later on the two groups prepared and presented their own manifestos. One of the groups wrote a manifesto, and the other suggested a different conceptual framing of the manifesto (complaining to a radio station in their mother tongues), which they also performed. At the end of the session we discussed problems that emerged in their collaboration, alluding to issues of com-

179 Manifestos:

“Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen”, 1798

“Declaration of Independence”, 1776

“The Anarchist Manifesto”, 1850

“The Futurist Manifesto”, 1909

“Dada Manifesto”, 1918

“The Hacker Manifesto”, 1986

“MIL Questioning”, 2008

“A six-thousand-and-forty-seven-word manifesto on liveness in three parts with three interludes”, 2004

“YES Manifesto”, 2006

“Manifesto for a National Choreographic Centre”, 2009

“A Dance that Is”, 2012

munication, visibility and slogan-ism that are excessively expected by artists working today in capitalist societies.

Some thoughts

This workshop seems to operate mainly on two levels. Firstly, it experiments with hands-on practices of writing and talking that can undo firm structures and understandings of language. This more materialised conceptualisation of language becomes significant for dealing with the dramaturgical in more practical and methodological ways. And secondly, it explores and operationalises the notion of the “collective” as a mode of working together. Through the different phases of translation that go on (with words, scores, choreographies, manifestos) one starts owning, borrowing and disowning ideas and choreographies, which allows a process of “commoning” to emerge. This process shows that sharing does not equal homogenising. On the contrary, it alludes to modes of sharpening the differences and clearing up the division of labour (methodologies) in the modes of working together.

Presentation

For the presentation the students worked in the same groups of three as in the first two days of the workshop. They took a small number of the audience on a tour, showing them the scores they had made and explaining how they worked and how they reflected upon this process. Once everyone had been guided by each group, we all gathered together and Konstantina (workshop facilitator) gave some insight on the process. The students then gave more information about how they worked with the manifestos, which led to a more general discussion on the themes of the workshop.

begin signals a shift of attention
begin chapter two announces the next proposition
replace a word
close eyes and continue your thought
open eyes and continue your thought
reverse the line of words/thoughts as far as you remember without effort, then continue in real time from the new starting point.
pause / thought is arrested by time
sustain the current sound/thought as long as you can or want to
reduce the amount of words/thoughts
repeat a unit of recent thought/word
resituate in another context of your choice
end the sentence/the thought
exit “___” name something you perceive in the space you want to erase

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Co-Dependent Creation

ARI TENHULA

This text is documentation of a workshop held in autumn 2012 in Helsinki, at the Theatre Academy within the context of Erasmus Intensive 2012 Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience. The workshop was facilitated and planned by Ari Tenhula.

Participants: Natasa Antulov (ADA-Zagreb), Celine Cartillier (HZT), Ellen Jeffrey (TeaK/LAPS), Metka Drcar (Laban), Lauri Mattila (TeaK/Directing), Kathrin Memmer (HZT), Alessandra Montagner (Laban), Annika Pannitto (ArteZ), Allison Peacock (HZT), Laura Potrovic (ADA-Zagreb).

Course Description

The course was inspired by a systemic understanding of reality and was informed by the uses of concepts like mirror cells and movement patterns in dynamic systems. The focus of this course was to study compositional tools for emergent behaviour based on co-dependency in choreography.

Co-dependent creation was studied in cumulative stages. The course began with tasks involving kineasthetic empathy, resulting in mimetic structures, and continued with score work: designing, observing and evaluating emergent actions based on various trans-

formations on perceived action/movement. In the third stage we worked on poly-modal emergent networks using movement, text or sound-based associations.

We studied these themes with bodily practice, score-work and reflection. The work was done by moving, reflecting on movement, studying texts, working on scores and performing them.

The proposed outcome of the course was an ability to develop, evaluate and share knowledge of emergent co-dependent creation. An additional outcome of the course was an embodied understanding of dynamic systems.

Principles for this work

Perception guiding our action

Our engagement with the world is based on our perception; we are embodied by and embedded in our environment. Our understanding of other people's actions is based on our perception of them and our ability to share our embodied condition.

In this course we started to observe our perception of and co-existence with others by engaging in walking together in the studio, noticing how people come into our field of vision and how they leave it. We pinned our attention on different modes of seeing; focused, targeted on a single human, or more passive – engaged in a wider field of a more passive mode of seeing. Letting our gaze guide our way, following others, we immediately formed evolving patterns crisscrossing the room. Just to remind ourselves of the importance of our vision we also walked backwards and rehearsed crossing the space with our eyes closed. This all focused our bodies and our awareness on our visual perception.

Perception of other people in action/ Mirror neurons and copying

Inspired by the findings of scientists working with mirror neurons (the participants had read Chapter 1 of Marco Iacoboni's book *Mirroring People* published in 2008, prior to attending the course) we started to engage ourselves with the action of other people. Inviting a peer to follow a person's movement field, his/her own kinaesthetic topography became a field of kinetic inquiry. By following this surprising, alien action and directing one's full attention to being "at the skin of another's movements" we researched a mode of moving where the kinetic impulse is led by the intention towards perception (of course heavily aided by the follower's keen interest and willingness to participate), and a will to join with movement in the other person's kinaesthesia. The aims of these exercises were to free participants from the mode of evaluation and artistic judgement in order for a more primal mode of kinetic engagement to emerge, that of copying. Based on the findings of phenomenology and also with those of the scientists working with mirror neurons, who claim that kinaesthetic empathy is the basis of the bond between humans, we started to ask what kind of knowledge we receive and what kinds of knowledge sharing situations we inhabit in our everyday lives and what our findings are in these situations. The work led us to new discoveries in another person's kinaesthetic topography, noticed by everyone. Bodily singularity became tangible when approached this way; the other person's movements informed us of a foreign understanding, an embodiment altogether similar and foreign at the same time.

Building Systems

Leading/following alteration

The tasks involved working in a large group situation, where a shared objective was to alternate between a leading position and a following position. The purpose of this exercise was to increase a participant's ability to shift roles in a multi-agent moving situation and to investigate the qualities of this changing agency: speed of decision making, willingness to lead/follow, associative joy, participation and a capacity to tolerate uncertainty.

Movement transformations

In order to allow us to start building emergent systems, given the time available to us – three days – we had to narrow the means of our enquiry to “abstract” qualities of movement. (The studio had a part to play in our choice – no meaningful environment or kinaesthetic field/situation was readily available for the course. However I was not strict in framing the movement. I will point out some of the possibilities for further work later.) We took movement and its basic spatial/temporal qualities as our source material. Working first in pairs we engaged with transforming the observed movement in scale, time and space. Then we played with changing the movement initiation in our own bodies and relocating observed movement in space. This led to different kinds of cognitive processes: having started with a preconscious act of copying, we now had to deal with following our perception more intentionally, as it was guided by the other person's movement choices and the need to make our own rapid decisions on how to scale the movement, or alter the movement's timing or spatial qualities. This led to complex decision-making and a heightened sense of perception: following the other/others took place in two interwoven layers, that of mirroring/

following and that of an analytical/transformational mode of action. When we added the element of time, a further element of a short-term memory was added. Surprisingly quickly, possibly because our everyday actions are similar to this situation in its complexity, we became quite free in our engagement with this task. The choices quickly multiplied and therefore different modes of response and action arose, alternating quite naturally according to the perceiver's/agent's choices.

Use of movement for building up systemic scores

My interest in using movement for this type of work is twofold: firstly I hope to situate this work in my interest in choreography as a bodily practice and secondly I appreciate the diverse, precise and layered materiality that our living bodies articulate. The wealth of kinaesthetic possibilities emerging from these simple rules that we worked with was evident in the outcomes of the exercises.

Human activity systems

In Peter Checkland's book *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice* he states: "The central concept 'system' embodies the idea of a set of elements connected together which form a whole, this showing properties which are properties of the whole, rather than properties of its component parts"¹⁸⁰, and "The concept of human activity system is crucially different from the concepts of natural and designed systems" as "...human activity systems can be manifest only as perceptions by human actors who are free to attribute meaning to what

180 Checkland 1999, 3.

they perceive.”¹⁸¹ Therefore we have chosen to enable the agents to transform movement in these exercises. The decision-making is not linear – the agents are not obeying commands. The attribution of meaning is conditioned with a frame of observing and reacting to moving bodies. We started this enquiry with focusing on movement qualities but opened the practice to other modalities of human communication by adding voice and sounds, and later spoken associations. The main objective in building interaction was to increase iteration, rich input, as this is a necessity for any dynamic system: emergent action needs entropy and a continuous process of self-production in order to function.

Behavioural movement patterns

Informed by the studies of geographic data concerning natural movement patterns, such as migrations, fighting or leadership, we investigated behavioural patterns. I proposed a study in of pursuing and evading in a group. This led to interesting, totally unpredictable, movement patterns emerging, even when only a few actors were involved. This further paved the way for investigation of non-teleological outcomes of our work; as these group dances were quite astonishing in their complexity, we quickly became even more interested in rules and guidelines that could produce the outcome from the interrelations proposed and choices made inside a given changing choreographic constellation.

181 Checkland 1999, 14.

Score work

In order to study these types of human activity systems, I proposed working with the concept and practice of choreographic scores. We divided the group into two and I gave each group the task of designing a score consisting of three scenes, following these guidelines:

Make a score consisting of three scenes using copying, transforming movement and the behavioural movement pattern pursue/evade.

Each scene can have multiple tasks, e.g.:

- 1) Pursue A, copy B's movement, avoid C
- 2) Avoid C and D, copy E's movement
- 3) Mirror C in space and transform in time D's movement

Make cues for changes/leave changes for actors to decide?

Try this and evaluate. Does your score make action emerge or does it resolve itself into stagnation? Design for emergence.

Performing scores and observing systems

Performing

The afore-mentioned score was performed first by the people who designed it. This gave them an understanding of its one possible outcome. This outcome was, it turned out, in part influenced by the act of designing it with a possible outcome in mind. This changed when the other group learned the score and acted it out with their kinaesthesia; the score remained, but its execution in time and space, its dynamic scale and its kinaesthetic field were different.

How to observe inside/outside

In order to observe the scores, I posed different questions to the people inside a score and to the outside observers. The questions describing the emergent actor's choices dealt with their percep-

tion and embodied understanding of action inside the task and their choices. I further questioned their understanding of time and change inside a score, as many of the cues informing them of changes for the scenes were left vague. We understood from these testimonies that the role of the agent is based solely on perception and immediate value-infused choices made in action. The action became the outcome and future, as something designed beforehand made little sense.

For the perspective of the outside observer we followed and modified guidelines proposed by Checkland in the afore-mentioned book¹⁸²:

How to observe:

- Identify/define a coherent scene
 - Perceive/invent principles of coherence
 - They create a boundary round the entity/action/ stage, to distinguish it from the environment/other possible action
 - Identify/envisage mechanisms of control
 - By means of which the system entity retains its identity for a period or a phase/scene
 - Identify subsystems or hierarchies/ wider systems
- (Checkland 1993)

Predetermined and emergent scenes

For a second task I supervised a more complex score. In order to elaborate on the role of a single agent, the scenes were not designed for a single set of parameters, but consisted of simultaneous tasks.

182 Checkland 1999.

Also, in order to complicate the design, I introduced the possibility of a predetermined action for a single scene. This level of action I described as an underscore. This could be a change in relation to space or the facing of agents in the space or a fixed cue for a change etc. The task was:

Create a score for 4 people in 3–5 scenes so that each agent in every scene has

A defined copy/transformation agency, a spatial relation (or not) to other(s) + A shared/ solo underscore.

		Agent 1	Agent 2	Agent 3	Agent 4
Scene 1	Emergent score				
	Underscore	Might be the same for 3			Solo
Scene 2	Emergent score				
	Underscore	Might be the same for 2		Might be a same for 2	
Scene 3	Emergent score				
	Underscore	Might be the same for 4			

Event table for the second score (4 agents, three scenes)

The score then consists of two layers:

The emergent layer and an underlying predetermined layer, for example: in this scene the space that we use becomes smaller and smaller.

Discuss, test and refine relations and evaluate predetermined design and its impact.

Perform the other group's score.

Evaluate the outcome.

These scores were then performed not with the people who designed them, but with a second group. The group who performed reflected upon the outcomes of the performed score first. This gave us all information on the coherence/lack of coherence in the instructions, but also gave us an insight into possible uses of creative misreading or reinterpretations of these types of scores.

Further areas of interest

Memes

In the course of these three days I mentioned some other concepts of interest that could guide further practice. The first of these was memes. The word meme originated with Richard Dawkins' 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*. The Wikipedia clarification of the terms reads as (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme>):

A meme is "an idea, behaviour or style that spreads from person to person within a culture." A meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols or practices, which can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals or other imitable phenomena. Supporters of the concept regard memes as cultural analogues to genes in that they self-replicate mutate and respond to selective pressures.

So – how come we suddenly have adopted the practice of carrying coffee around in paper cups? Who initiates these fashions? How does this behaviour spread?

Kinaesthetic fields

Working in the studio, we noticed that our actions were limited to the aforementioned “abstract” movement. In order to open up the discussion and to propose a further field of study, I introduced the concept of kinaesthetic fields, which has been further developed by Finnish scholar Jaana Parviainen.

In her paper “Kinesthetic fields and social choreography: Reflection on Husserl’s notion of kinesthesia and Bateson’s cybernetics as movement research methods for ubiquitous computing environments” she elaborates on an enlargement of the concept of kinaesthetic fields: “This article explores Edmund Husserl’s and Edith Stein’s account of kinesthesia and its methodological potentials in analysing moving bodies in ubiquitous computing environments.” and further: “I want to understand not merely movements in or around bodies, in a Labanian kinesphere, but social interactions of moving bodies. Defining Stein’s term ‘kinesthetic field’ in a new manner, the kinesthetic field involves the characteristic motion and rhythms embedded in a geographically, culturally, historically, politically and technologically complex environment.”

In order to develop this work on systems, kinaesthesia and scores even further I would like to investigate the possibilities of designing and performing these types of scores outside the studio because, as she writes: “...material, social, political and technological infrastructures always pre-choreograph our bodily movements.”

Outcomes and feedback

In regards to the Erasmus IP workshop outline “Choreography: The aesthetics and social choreography”, I can state that the course on co-dependent creation added valuable input, partly because the

work was practice based, led by movement exploration and reflected on embodied ways of understanding the other and therefore focused on the concepts of I and we, the basis of social. This workshop theme, working towards an understanding of how values in aesthetics are historical and how society not only passively enables but also rather heavily takes part in forming aesthetic agendas, also informed discussions in our course.

The World Wide Web, Facebook and the practise of texting might be easy examples of areas where networks and systems rule, but our ecological future also depends on our understanding of the role of a single agent in an interdependent, systemic world. Therefore knowledge of this agency is vital.

For the major part, the course was appreciated. The students noted the limited time and some suggested that the work could have continued for a week or two weeks. The students participating in the workshop commented on the physical way of working as an enriching mode of gaining knowledge. Also, the students already felt that the course added something to their understanding of artistic agency: one participant noted the singular/plural subjectivity inherent in the work and claimed an interest in possible future dramaturgical outcomes of this kind of thinking/practice.

The scope of the workshop (three days) and the time for sharing limited possibilities for discussing the work with non-participants in great detail, but our students did have an opportunity to suggest an emergent score for their peers. This quick encounter with the course material opened up, and beautifully delivered, the main concern of the workshop: the agency inside a score in emergent action is totally different from the outcome for the observer, who is situated outside. Therefore the outcome – embodied knowledge

of emergent behaviour, dynamic systems and the role of a decision-making agent – was more evident for a participant than for an observer.

READING

Stähle, Pirjo. 2004. "Itseuudistumisen dynamiikka – systeemiajattelu kehitysprosessien ymmärtämisen perustana." [The dynamics of self renewal – systemic thinking as basis for understanding the developmental processes]. In *Näkymätön näkyväksi. Avauksia kehitysprosessien näkymättömän dynamiikan tutkimukseen*. Markku Sotara, Kati-Jasmin Koponen (Eds). 2004. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

In the above essay Pirjo Stähle describes different paradigms of systemic thought.

Stähle: *Main principles of self organising*

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0By8dSAGKpR1BZWxkUkNnVm1aUVk/edit>

Stähle: Systematic paradigms:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0By8dSAGKpR1BR196aERCdSlcGM/edit>

Patterns of movement:

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0By8dSAGKpR1BZm5xbGw1cEdHQWs/edit>

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Things I Put in My Pocket¹⁸³

ELLEN JEFFREY

Within both workshops, the most valuable experiences came from working with others in the group – encountering their ideas and putting those ideas into practice, letting go of my own apprehensions and trying to work from a new perspective; particularly during Workshop C [“Operations of Dis|owning (Choreography)” with Konstantina Georgelou] which focused on approaching various manifestos and aiming towards writing our own. The significance of initially approaching the manifestos together by reading them aloud as a group resonated throughout our process, so that we continued working together closely at the point of writing our own. To do so, we adopted the principle of producing questions rather than statements, a simple process through which I learnt a considerable amount – this manifesto seemed almost a comment, our comment, on the current structure of this art form ‘contemporary dance’, and our uncertainty in itself spoke of the unwillingness to be absolute, to prefer a state of flux over fixture... and how long can flux last before it is eventually fixed/named?

183 This text is part of a workshop report written after the Erasmus Intensive 2012, *Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience*.

In addition to this process with the manifestos - whose method of switching between 'statements to questions to statements' I have experimented with in my own research process as a way of re-working and re-defining certain ideas and concepts - I also continue to work with the practices introduced to us in Ari Tenhula's workshop "Co-dependent Creation". As I work with these concepts - particularly "copying" and "time delay" - new questions arise, and the similarity of the work in relation to choreology is of particular interest to me; they share some overlapping ideas of patterns in the body in relation to an 'other' in space, but also differ on many principles, meaning their compatibility has a rough edge. Overall, both of these experiences have given me much to reflect upon, and continue to influence my ideas and research practice, contributing to a sort of ongoing confusion, a state of constant questioning that is preferable to a stable certainty. During Workshop C, a coursemate composed the following statement; 'searching in order not to find' - which I think, for me, perfectly summarises the experience of those two weeks, including the repercussions which followed, continuing to affect my work and practice.



Photo: Marion Borriss



Photo: Marion Borriss



Photo: Marion Borriss



Photo: Marion Borriss

3. Framing Reality

Framing Reality and Self as Other – choreographing the daily¹⁸⁴

SOPHIA NEW & SAARA HANNULA

Sophia New: During the time I spent on your workshop you began a situation of positioning oneself in relation to terms, and interests and through this process groups were built. So in a way it spread from individual desire to group and shared interest. Naturally then a lot of time needed to be committed to negotiating desires and interests within the groups. So I wondered how you might have tackled composition, poetics and solo practice? Might there have been something from your workshop that could have fed into a notion of poetics and individual practice?

184 This text is a dialogue that takes place across two different Erasmus Intensives, Saara Hannula's workshop "Utopian Choreography" during *Choreography: The aesthetics and social experience* in Helsinki autumn 2012 and Sophia New's workshop (with Martin Hargreaves) "Self as Other" during the IP *Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance* in Berlin in autumn 2013. It is worth noting that Sophia was able to attend part of the IP in 2012 but Saara did not attend the following year in Berlin, so this conversation is also an explanation of the thematics, theories, observations and occurrences that they had as workshop leaders. It is an attempt to see how the ideas that they were busy with during the workshops might have correlations across the two different IPs, with the general theme throughout of *Practicing Composition: Making Practice*.

In terms of what Martin and I set up as a working frame we also began with individual practices that became shared either within small groups or as a whole group. The work that we were trying to explore practically was informed by Judith Butler's ideas of how we perform ourselves especially in relation to notions of subject and object and how we can both perceive a sense of ourselves as other.

In a way the students' comments on the cultural and linguistic issues, which came up as nobody in our workshop (Martin and myself included) was German, as was also the case in your workshop, already set up a way of understanding yourself as "other".

On a personal note during our workshop in Berlin I found myself pushing myself to perform small, and perhaps imperceptible, "self drags" such as exaggerated femininity. This questioning of how I decide to perform my gender is for me of course from a privileged position of still blending in in a hetero-normative cultural frame, but it reminds me that it is also a framing of a certain reality – that of a social, political and sexual nature which is constantly changing within different contexts.

Saara Hannula: The concept of framing reality is quite broad and can encompass or point towards very different things. In a way, all art can be seen as a way of framing reality: to frame is to offer a limited view or a specific perspective on something in order to see it anew or in a different light, and this is what art attempts to do. However, I think the concept is especially useful in the field of performing arts, where the act of framing is very tangible and concrete. We create temporal, spatial and experiential frames, which allow others to experience specific, often heightened or intensified, versions of reality.

This concept is at the base of all the work that I do, both in my own practice and at the Reality Research Center. One could even say that the Reality Research Center has been built around it: our task is to “observe, question and renew the surrounding reality through performative means”. We also use framing actively as a method in the performances that we create.

The workshop that I gave as a part of Erasmus IP was also built around this idea. Our aim was to “take the surrounding society as our site and develop methods for both analysing and choreographing the social and political structures that the society consists of, as well as the habits and conventions that govern our private lives.” This formulation suggests that the act of framing reality is not only about creating frameworks that allow us to perceive or experience reality differently, but that it’s also about pushing its boundaries and actively suggesting new structures and choreographies that could then be integrated into the way in which reality is constructed and lived through.

The site that we attempted to occupy and choreograph was social and relational: we thought of choreography mainly as a way of suggesting new types of relations and social structures. Here, the task of the choreographer would be to recognise and analyse the way the existing relations and structures are formed, and develop ways of playing with them or reconstructing them. What is interesting about this kind of an approach is that the choreographer is also necessarily embedded in the field of relations and can never separate him- or herself from it. So it’s impossible to begin from a position of control, or to see reality from above: rather, one has to immerse oneself in it and reconstruct it from within. One is choreographing oneself as much as the others: however, here the self is always already relational and social and cannot be seen as a

separate or independent entity. (This could be a point of connection between our respective approaches.)

You asked how we tackled composition, poetics and solo practice. These concepts were not at the heart of our practice, but they can still be useful in this context. I would say that the students were composing relational and experiential fields, not only around but also among themselves. The working process was almost entirely collaborative, so they had to constantly negotiate and perhaps also renounce their individual desires, practices and territories; this can also be seen as a compositional task.

SN: It's true that your last sentence resonated with me. I guess one of the things that Martin and I were trying to look at is how we construct or as you suggest choreograph our gender and of course the first thing to recognise it that this is not an end product or "finished" but constantly being questioned, re-worked, re-framed and re-contextualised. Part of this process is in relation to others, we discussed the arguments in Butler and Athanasiou's book *Dispossession* of how one is "undone by the other";

Our bodies are beyond themselves. Through our bodies we are implicated in thick and intense social processes of relatedness and interdependence; we are exposed, dismembered, given over to others, and undone by the norms that regulate desire, sexual alliance, kinship relations, and conditions of humanness. We are dispossessed by others, moved toward others and by others, affected by others and able to affect others. We are dispossessed by norms,

prohibitions, self-policing guilt, and shame, but also by love and desire.¹⁸⁵

In the final workshop presentation Martin and I read a text, whilst a series of actions by the students was taking place, which was an accumulation of writing exercises around the idea of being undone. I am wondering how you might see this being “undone” by the other in relation to how a choreographer is “also necessarily embedded in the field of relations and can never separate him- or herself from it”?

You touch on the utopian aspect of your workshop did you manage to find “new structures and choreographies that could then be integrated into the way in which reality is constructed and lived through”? I guess in our workshop it was quite an internal and intimate process that we were inviting the students to go through and the next step might be to test these ideas through a lived experience (for some of the students this was already the case). Certainly for me having Vaginal Davis there made me realise how being a “terrorist drag artist” is not only a performative decision but a lived one – she chooses to rearrange the room as Salon, she chooses to disrupt the academic field by insisting on talking about personal sexual desires, she writes letters, she rides a bike, all of these “life” decisions have a moral ethical code about how we live and frame a reality for ourselves. At times she recalls utopian and disruptive decisions, and I admire her for insisting on them and in many ways insisting on telling her life story as a sensational, gossipy, poverty stricken, trashy, glamorous series of relations.

185 Butler and Athanasiou 2013, 55.

Now I am reminded of the “what if” exercise that several of the students in your workshop commented on as a strong experience – we can quickly change a reality by simply considering it another way, and there was a “what if” element in the self as other – “what if I was not performing my gender like this but like this...”.

I thought you might also find this quote interesting;

Rather, the point is that the human has no “proper” place to take outside social situatedness and allocation, including the exposure to the possibility of being undone. The human is always the event of its multiple exposures – both within its relatedness to others and within its exposure to the normative forces that arrange the social, political, and cultural matrices of humanness.¹⁸⁶

So “what if” we were able to consider our world and reality as nonhuman entities – I have tried a couple of times, alone and in workshops I have given, to consider on a walk that everything in my field of vision as totally new and unexplained without a notion of what a tree or sky is. It is a totally impossible task of course but suddenly as you start to consider the components of things they become less whole and cohesive and ignored but a kind of fascinating enigma – so complex and intricate that too many words are needed to define them which is why we generally agree to just say “tree”.

I have gone quite far away now from the starting point but it is interesting to imagine a third hybrid format which might marry relations within oneself to the social, political and physical reality

186 Butler and Athanasiou 2013, 32.

that one finds in everyday life, a kind of looking in and outside at the same time.

SH: I'm interested in the idea of a hybrid that you began to talk about at the end of your email and would like to hear more about it. I think this might be an essential point of connection between the workshops that we gave, and the conversations they propose.

As I already stated, I think of the self, or one's "inner reality", as something that is inherently relational and not really separable from the "outer reality" in any way. Actually, I wouldn't even draw a boundary or make a difference between the two realms. We talk about the inside and the outside, or self and other, to structure and give shape to our experience of the world. The fact that we can even think of a self that is separate from its surroundings is a matter of language. We construct our identities by naming things and either pulling them to us and identifying with them ("this is me") or pushing them away from us and differentiating ourselves from them ("that is not me").

The idea of being undone by the other, or by the world, speaks of the disruption of this process of assembling a self. To be undone suggests that there is something that has been done and can thus be undone. I am undone in my encounter with the world (the other, the not-me), but only if I'm willing to let go of my understanding of myself, if I expose and open myself up to a negotiation and to a possibility of no longer knowing myself as I did before. I allow myself to be disassembled in the face of another.

Our talk about exposure makes me wonder what exposure really means: what is exposed, and who is exposing? Is there something or someone behind the constructed self that is more "real" or inherent, more genuine? Or are we just exposing the fact that

there is nothing else, that we are in fact just an assemblage? “The human is always the event of its multiple exposures – both within its relatedness to others and within its exposure to the normative forces that arrange the social, political, and cultural matrices of humanness.” This quote makes me think of the body, or the self, as something that is constantly coming to being (becoming), and that this movement of exposing or becoming is all we are. We are events, and as such not separable from what goes on around us, because an event is always open-ended and in movement. It has porous boundaries both in space and time.

This idea of self as an event might be something that we could elaborate on, because it opens up the question of choreography in a different way.

Your description of the practice of trying to perceive the world from a nonhuman perspective is very easy to relate to, both experientially and as a way of thinking. The process of changing one’s mode of perception and encountering one’s surrounding in a different way is essential from the point of view of performance and choreography. It also brings us back to the question of framing reality. In a way, one could say that reality is composed out of these experiences, events and encounters, and that they are malleable and mouldable. To work with experiences and events is to open up to the fact that time and space can be stretched and squashed, sometimes even dissolved. They are not fixed, nor are we.

These topics are kind of endless, and there’s much more we need to say and think. Here are a few quotes from Erin Manning that I think are related to what we’re talking about:

“In my account of what a body can do, I therefore begin with an attention to the question of the ‘in act’ of the doing.

This emphasizes the microgestures of becoming that are in the bodying. These microgestures are a thinking-in-the-act, I argue, not in the sense that they resolve into this or that conscious thought, but in the sense that they are replete with intensity and directionality. Bodying does resolve into this or that form, eventually, and repeatedly, but it does not begin there, nor does it remain there. A body is the meta-stability of those microgestures more than it is a form as such. If we begin there, with the microgesture, it becomes clear that a body is more associated milieu (Simondon) than form. What a body does is ecological: it becomes in relation to a changing environment, and what it does in that relation is what it is. A body is a tending, an inflection, an incipient directionality. And this incipency includes a thinking in its own right.

Of course what a body does always has a place and a time. People often ask how such an account of the body has agency (this question is often allied to the thinking of gender and race). I prefer the notion of “agencement” to agency – the sense of directionality occasioned by movement rather than a subject-based intentionality – but however you define this moment of “making a difference,” there is no question that how it individuates in this time and place, in co-composition – or how it matters, here and now – belongs to what a body can do. A body makes a difference in terms of how this or that vector, this or that inflection, alters the conditions of this or that event. So, that a body is black or white or female or transgender does make a difference. Of course it does! But these are less “states”

of an existing body than vectors of a becoming-body that themselves change over time. Identity, like individuation, is emergent. What a body can do is change.”

“A body is a field of relation out of which and through which worldings occur and evolve. We know neither where a world begins nor where a body ends. What is real, what we know, are relations. This is speculative pragmatism: relations are real, here and now, but what they can do is unknowable in advance, must continuously be invented... What is at stake in the field of relation is how the relation evolves, how it expresses itself, what it becomes, what it can do. The relation can never be properly called human. It may pass through the human or connect to certain human tendencies, but in and of itself, it is always more-than human.”

“To experience the world in its shape-shifting alerts us to the realness of relation and connects to a more-than-human horizon, I think. It allows us to think ecologically, to begin in the middle. And from there, there is an opening to the felt expression of thought-in-the-moving, to language’s prelinguistic expressions – what I have elsewhere called prearticulation – to the complex rhythms of what lies between the conscious and the nonconscious at the interstices of the human and the nonhuman, to the more-than human.”¹⁸⁷

187 Manning 2014.

I think it's interesting to think about what it means to choreograph while being aware of one's own embodiment. When one moves away from choreographing objects or moving bodies that are outside of oneself and begins to think about choreographing relations or relational fields, one can no longer locate oneself outside of what one is choreographing. So the act of choreographing becomes just as much an act of guiding or moving oneself, and of allowing oneself to be choreographed moved, changed and undone by everything else that is going on. A lot of it has to do with letting go of control – the idea of choreography as a way of controlling or directing the others, the situation or the process. This doesn't mean that one can no longer act or state things, but it does require a different attitude.

Here, I come to think of the process that Kiran and Niels went through while working at the kindergarten. They realised already at the very beginning that the only way to work with the situation is to throw oneself into it and to become a part of it, so instead of directing the children, they placed themselves on the same level with them and spent their time learning how to play with them. They were co-choreographing the situation with the children, and allowing themselves to be choreographed, changed and undone.

“You touch on the utopian aspect of your workshop. Did you manage to find ‘new structures and choreographies that could then be integrated into the way in which reality is constructed and lived through?’”

This aspect of the workshop didn't really come through. The approaches that I proposed and the processes the students threw themselves into were both new and challenging for most of them, so most of the time went into figuring out how to be and work in this way. All in all, the workshop was extremely process-oriented

– it was just as much about choreographing the process of collaborating and being together as a group than anything else. Many of the students ended up working with perception and experience rather than structures: they developed ways of seeing and experiencing the surrounding reality in a different way, and of relating to it differently. But there were also some proposals, which were becoming structural, such as Orly and Lukas’ ways of working at the market hall, Kiran and Niels’ work with the children, the parent and the staff.

SN: I just want to respond to some of the pertinent things you brought up in your last email.

The notion of being “undone” as if there is a stable “done” sense of self to begin with is of course problematic – I wouldn’t argue for an essentialist or “whole” sense of self but the encounter with others is a means of letting the notion of oneself be challenged again. I think it is close to what you say about the necessary letting go needed when choreographing and that inside/outside dichotomy. The moving and being moved.

Incidentally I can totally relate to the idea of a self being constructed through relations of “this is me” and “that is not me” as it is very much the predicament of an ex-pat and the international community that exists at HZT. It is learning through relations and testing them out.

Returning to what “undone” might mean I realise that there are a lot of negative connotations with it but I think Butler is talking about it on a sensory, sexual and emotional level which gives it this flavour of seduction, abandonment and surrendering to the other, which is of course an act of letting go and in that way a kind of “disassembling”. I get the sense though that this state could teach us a lot – which leads me to the element to the element of exposure that you raise. I agree

we are in a state of becoming a series of events and a multitude of exposures – as your quote from Erin Manning suggests. One thing I wanted to add is the vulnerability that comes with exposure which relates also to control. The micro-gestures are an interesting example from Manning because there is so much that we do which exposes ourselves and that is possibly “unconscious and habitual” – one only has to watch a video of oneself talking to see the painful nuances of twitches, expressions and gazes that one is not so aware of.

Your quote from Manning about vectors is interesting to me as that is something my GPS artistic practice deals with, I have been recording everywhere I go since 2007 (alongside my partner, Daniel Belasco Rogers) who began in 2003, we consider this practise to be both a drawing of our lives and an act of sousveillance. GPS data is a seemingly immaterial thing that is of course material, but to think of it as “vectors of a becoming-body that themselves change over time” gives it the potential to be in and of itself ‘change’ which is intriguing to me. It reminds me that vectors are a move towards something, whereas I am often dealing with vectors as traces to be materialised through drawing, printing, or engraving. I deal with vectors as moving from the past into the present and here a vector becomes a pointing towards a future.

Through this practice I have also come to experience myself as other through the fact that the GPS device is both a memory prosthesis, it reminds me of where I was at any given moment, but also at times I have no memory of why I was at certain places and what I am doing and in that way I become unknown territory again. I am also reminded that in this way my practice is a framing of a reality that is both known and unknown to me and a practice that considers my daily movements around cities as a document, an archive, an artwork and ultimately a portrait of a life.

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Utopian Choreography: Developing Tools and Techniques for Choreographing Reality

SAARA HANNULA

This text is documentation of the workshop held in autumn 2012 at the Theatre Academy Helsinki. The workshop was planned and facilitated by Saara Hannula within the context of the Erasmus Intensive 2012 Choreography: The aesthetics and social experience.

Participants: Orly Almi (ArtEZ), Lucie Bailly (Laban), Maria Baroncea (HZT), Niels Bovri (HZT), Lukáš Brychta (TeaK/LAPS), Metka Dracar (Laban), Emmalena Fredriksson (Falmouth), Jennifer Irons (Laban), Kiran Kumar (HZT), Flavio Ribeiro (HZT)

Workshop Description

In this workshop, we will look at everyday life from a utopian point of view and approach choreography as a tool for applying these perspectives to the reality we live in. We will take the surrounding society as our site and develop methods for both analysing and choreographing the social and political structures that that society consists of, as well as the habits and conventions that govern our private lives. We will work in small teams, each of which will focus on a specific site and come up with utopian suggestions for it. The proposals will result in a series of choreographic tools, which will

be tested and developed further in practice. Each team will introduce their final proposal to the rest of the group, after which the choreographies will be performed by everyone involved.

Day 1

Arriving

The students enter the studio one by one. Each one finds a place in the room; by the time the workshop is supposed to begin, they have formed a circle without anyone asking them to do so. When everyone has arrived, I ask the students to observe the spot, position and posture that they have picked in relation to the space and the people in it. This instant analysis forms a framework for the round of introductions: I ask everyone to say who they are and what their position reveals about them. The idea is to share information or insights that seem relevant in relation to the topic of the workshop.

Duration: 30 minutes

Mapping

I have printed out a collection of key concepts on separate pieces of paper. I spread the papers on the floor and ask the students to fill the possible gaps by identifying concepts or key words which are important to them or which they would like the workshop to address. Their task is to make a map out of the concepts by grouping them and by placing the groups in a meaningful relationship to each other. *Duration: 40 minutes*

Personal interests

I ask the students to place themselves on the map by identifying the concept or the cluster of concepts that interests them the most. After this, they discuss and argue their choice with the people who

have located themselves in the same area. I also ask them to articulate the wishes and expectations that they have concerning the workshop. After the small group discussions, we share the things that have come up together with the whole group. *Duration: 40 minutes*

Sites

I ask the students to identify sites (physical locations, behaviours, structures or relations) that seem interesting or relevant to them. They write the names of the sites on small pieces of paper and situate them on the floor in relation to the key concepts. Gradually, a map of concepts and sites emerges. *Duration: 30 minutes*

Frames

I ask the students to specify a question or aspect of society that they want to research for the rest of the day. These too are placed on the map. Once everyone is ready, I ask them to pick one question or approach they want to focus on. They take one of the notes with them as we move down to the lobby. I tell them to move around in the school environment for 20 minutes; the approach they have chosen will work as a frame of perception for the whole time.

Once they have returned from their journey, I ask them to reformulate and specify the frame based on the experience they had. Once they have done that, their task is to find a person to exchange frames with. Then they go off alone for another 20 minutes; this time, I encourage them to leave the school and go outside, which most of them do.

When they come back, I ask them to work with the last frame they had and turn it into an instruction or task for the next person. Again, they find a new person to give the instruction to. After they

have completed the third round, I ask them to describe their experience by writing it down. The last task is to find the person the task originally belonged to and give both the rewritten instructions and the description of the experience to them. *Duration: 100 minutes*

Connections

Each student spends 20 minutes writing about what they are interested in working on during the workshop. Their task is to articulate their focus, write it on a post-it note and place it in the room. Then they try to find connections between the different foci and resituate them in relation to each other. Finally, they find the people the adjacent notes belong to and discuss the points of connection together. This is the point where working groups begin to form. *Duration: 60 minutes*

Day 2

Grouping

We spend more time talking about the sites and specifying them. Each student commits to a research topic and finds one or two people who are interested in similar thematics. They form working groups and start developing a plan for the next two days. The groups are: Jennifer Irons and Maria Baroncea, Niels Bovri and Kiran Kumar, Orly Almi, Lukas Brychta and Flavio Ribeiro, Em-malena Fredriksson and Lucie Bailly. *Duration: 60 minutes*

Fieldwork

I give the students the task of making a choreographic analysis of the site they have chosen. They can choose the focus and the method of analysis themselves. The groups head out to the city to find a physical location for their research. *Duration: 120 minutes*

Sharing

At the end of the day, we meet back at the school. Once we've all gathered, we go to Hakaniemen halli, where Orly and Lukas have been working. They give us an observation and movement task that we do in pairs. The session ends with a discussion and sharing experiences. *Duration: 60 minutes*

Day 3

Sharing

We continue sharing the results of the fieldwork session. We visit three more sites and experience and analyse them in different ways. Each visit ends with a discussion. The sites include the northernmost metro station in the world (Flavio, Emma and Lucie), a nearby kindergarten (Kiran and Niels) and a non-place (Jen and Maria). *Duration: 200 minutes*

Development

Once we return to the school, I give each group some time to map out what they have so far and develop their ideas further. *Duration: 40 minutes*

What if..

We gather in a circle. Our task is to discuss the utopian dimensions and possibilities of the work we are doing. The format of the discussion is forming sentences that begin with the phrase "What if...". Nothing else is allowed. *Duration: 10 minutes*

Three questions

I give each group a form that they have to fill in. The form consists or the following questions:

- What is the core or the nexus of the material that you've chosen to work with?
- What kind of utopian potentials does the material suggest or contain?
- How do you activate these potentials?

Duration: 20 minutes

Weekend

Showing

All the students are asked to do one and a half hours of mapping and documenting in the morning. During this session, my group comes up with the idea of sharing our working process with the other groups through a participatory session. There are differences of opinion as to how this will be done; the solution is an open mapping of concepts, which everyone is invited to take part in. *Duration: 10 minutes + 10 minutes discussion*

Clarifying

On Sunday, I send my students an e-mail in an attempt to clarify a few aspects of the work we are doing. The e-mail includes the following list of tasks that summarise the structure and the goals of the workshop:

- Observing and analysing the surrounding society from a choreographic point of view
- Noticing what kind of movement patterns, structures, relations and behaviours our public and private lives consist of
- Picking a site in order to zero in on a specific aspect of the society

- Analysing the site to see where and how you can intervene and plug in as an artist/choreographer
- Developing tools and ways of working that allow you to modify or alter the way the site works (or the way we are in relation to it)
- Turning the alterations into a choreography that can be shared with others

Day 4 –

Discussion

We begin the day's work with a freeform discussion combined with a collective foot massage. I invite the students to bring up questions or topics that they have been thinking about during the weekend. Several of them mention the issue of having to balance between process- and product-oriented thinking. We talk about the general goals of the IP program as well as our own relation to the work we are doing. Also the question of choreographic analysis seems to puzzle some of them; I promise them that we will address the question more in depth during the second week. The general feeling is that many of the students are dealing with questions concerning their own artistic practice and their capacities to address the topics we have launched ourselves into. *Duration: 40 minutes*

Development

The students divide into the groups they have been working in for the past few days. I ask them to identify the approach they are applying in their work as well as the specific tools they will be using during the days ahead. Also, I ask them to come up with a working plan for themselves. I visit each group in order to support them in

their process as well as to comment and propose tools if needed.

Duration: 60 minutes

Fieldwork

The groups continue working on site. *Duration: 120 minutes*

Sharing

Jen and Maria propose a task that we do together. After that, we share our experiences and thoughts with them. Flavio, Emma and Lucie also share their process with us. We propose possible approaches and perspectives to them. *Duration: 50 minutes*

Day 5

Warm-up

We begin the day's work with two warm-up exercises. The students pick a partner to work with, after which I ask them to give each other 5–6 minutes of bodywork. The task is to identify what the other needs and try to provide them with it. For the second exercise, I ask the students to close their eyes and think back to the work they've done during the previous days. I ask them to identify one thing that is central or essential to their working process and give it a name. Then, they tell the name to their partner, whose job is to create an experience for them by using the word as a starting point. *Duration: 40 minutes*

Fieldwork

The groups work independently on their respective sites and topics.

Duration: 90 minutes

Sharing

We end the day with a two-hour sharing session, where each group can have 30 minutes for sharing their process with the other groups. The timing of the session works better for some and not so well for others: there is a clear wish to have more time to develop things without having to show them to others all the time. I try to take this into account in the planning of the days we have left. *Duration: 120 minutes*

Day 6

Discussion

We discuss the things that were shared and experienced at the end of the previous day. *Duration: 30 minutes*

Fieldwork

The groups work independently. Their task is to create an event or form that can be shared with others as well as think of a way to document their process. *Duration: 180 minutes*

Harvesting and planning

We come together to share our experiences and to plan our way of sharing the workshop with the other participants. *Duration: 60 minutes*

Letter to Parents

NIELS BOVRI & KIRAN KUMAR

Over the two weeks of work at an Erasmus Intensive, Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience, at the Theatre Academy Finland in Helsinki in November 2012, Niels Bovri and I worked with a local Kindergarten, and arranged for some of the children to visit the Theatre Academy to share our process with our colleagues. Unfortunately however the kindergarten later cancelled this visit. We decided to absorb and address this aspect in our process, and as a result the presentation took the form of reading a letter addressed from us to the parents of the children followed by a live performance of drawing and sound mapping.

Dear Parents,

We are the two men who were at your child's kindergarten around a month ago, sharing their afternoon playtime. We are writing this letter to you since we have not had an opportunity to communicate with you so far.

We, Niels and Kiran, are artists working with performance and media art, based in Berlin. We are students in the postgraduate program in Solo Dance Authorship at the University of the Arts Berlin. Currently we are on an Erasmus exchange programme at the Theatre Academy Helsinki, doing a 2 week-long intensive based

on the idea of social choreography. Social choreography is a term used to describe the way we people in society or communities organise movement.

In this context we began collaborating through a workshop led by Helsinki-based artist Saara Hanula last week. For her part, Saara is interested in the implication of utopian ideas in everyday life through her work at the Reality Research Center. On the first day of the workshop, there was a task of walking the streets around the Theatre Academy and making a musical composition with the sounds that we heard. We tried hard to listen beyond the hum of the traffic on Haapaniemenkatu, and heard the sound of children laughing. This is how we encountered the kindergarten, and proposed starting to explore ideas around social choreography in the playground.

The warm welcome that we received from the teachers in the kindergarten, and the even more enthusiastic response of the children kept us coming back over the next few days. We freed ourselves from backpacks to join their games. The playing was a mixture of running, catching, ball play and rough-housing games but also “imaginative” games like cooking and being in a restaurant. They played their very own version of football in which they were allowed to score several goals one after the other without giving the ball back. The pitch also had no boundaries. Our presence seemed to excite them and we had to take care that no accidents happened. We slowed down movements and suppressed impulsive reactions. We fell over kids but shifted our weight so that nobody got hurt. Yet we also wanted to lose ourselves in order to fully experience the way movement works among many children in a small place. We had a great time. It gave us a lot of energy.

Our primary task was to make a choreographic analysis of the site of the playground, but frankly, we didn't manage this during the playtime. That time for us was one of fun and abandon. When we came back to make the analysis, we soon realised that our own level of excitement after playtime was the most palpable remnant of the experience. And so in order to materialise the experience for analysis, the idea of energy seemed most apt. Further, bringing the choreographic lens into the analysis, the idea we arrived at was that of organising energy.

In his 1935 book, *Art as Experience*, American philosopher John Dewey calls an art work as the object of art (a painting, or sculpture for example) as well as the experience of this object by a spectator or audience. He goes on to say that rhythm is an important characteristic element of this experience of the object. And the rhythm in the experience of an art object he terms as esthetic rhythm. Dewey's words allowed us to see rhythm as characterising our experience of playing with children. Playtime offers a certain peculiar rhythm, what Niels called "an alternative time experience". Rhythm can also be seen as operating in our (and your own) experience of the urban environment. A city with its objects of architecture, infrastructure, governance etc offers certain peculiar rhythms too.

And it is these rhythms that we are trying to capture through our project. Not so far from the kindergarden we experienced the view of what seems like a coal power plant by the waterside. There are a few boats on the side where the apartments are and on the other side is the site where electricity gets collected in enormous pillars and then disappears over more poles in the city. In between there is a huge pile of coal that probably never gets smaller.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/54793138>

Video Still:



We tried to extract all the movement in this still life. The birds, the water and all that manufacturing that probably takes place in that big red building. We even tried to see and hear how the electricity pushes itself through the copper wires into the city and people's houses. These observations we have made through sound and drawing maps. The time we have spent with the children has been very important in allowing us to see things that are mostly not there.

At this stage, having resonated well with the children, we wished to propose a return, an offering, an inverse resonance. We thought: why not present to the children the sound and drawing maps of their city that they enabled us to make. Will the maps we make resonate with the playtime rhythms? Will the city, in our perception, resonate with its children?

Enclosed below you will find a sketch of the material we are currently working on. Since we have returned to Berlin already, please share it with the children on our behalf.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/54710372>

Video Still:



We thank you and the kindergarten teachers for your support, and the children for their company and energy.

Best wishes

Niels and Kiran

Self and Other

MARTIN HARGREAVES & SOPHIA NEW

This text is documentation of the workshop held in October 2013 at the HZT Uferstudios in Berlin. The workshop was planned and facilitated by Martin Hargreaves and Sophia New within the context of the Erasmus Intensive 2013, Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance.

Day 1: Monday 28th

The workshop began with an introduction from both Sophia and me to our readings of the core texts Judith Butler's *Undoing Gender*¹⁸⁸ and Butler and Athanasiou's *Dispossession: The performative in the political*¹⁸⁹

As a resulting practical exercise we asked the students to write a letter to their gender, in English, which addressed their relationship (as either object, subject, process, interpellation etc.) The letters were then read out, and in form they varied between billets-doux, complaint forms, records of estrangements, promissory notes and diary entries. After discussions in the afternoon,

188 Butler 2004.

189 Butler and Athanasiou 2013.

the students worked in pairs, and one group of 3, to make a hybrid text with both letters, using the idea from Butler that performing gender is always “acting in concert”. The methodology for this hybridisation was not prescribed but part of the interrogation and the discussion. The day closed with a sharing of these texts, with some removing the written letters and instead translating the ideas into performance – for example in one response two students both tried to inhabit the same costume. We documented each response as a possible resource for further translation and hybridisation.

Day 2: Tuesday 29th

The day began with a discussion of the keynote from Vaginal Davis as her discussion of life/work seemed to address directly some of our concerns and also bring in many other questions regarding the frames around queerness and authorship/authority. We also considered the performative effects and affects of the lecture. For example when we laugh during such a discussion what are we laughing at? Are we laughing with Ms Davis or out of awkwardness because how we are unsure where the official language has gone? Is it because we recognise the subversions of content and form and have a sense of vertigo in her salon? We also took up Ms Davis’s suggestion that discourse in the media and academia has been emptied of a variety of voices and been flattened into specific homogeneous forms and names that are discussed. Her position or disposition within a canon of performance therefore became another frame for us to consider how the self is performed within regimes of recognition.

Using the texts from the day before we asked the students to consider how and where they might present them and include the idea of a “selfie”, a form of self-portrait that one prepares and shares of oneself. We encouraged the students to also use media; photos,

videos and audio recording. In the presentation what they made was also augmented either by the video having another sound added or live performances happening over the image (live drawing) or a rearrangement of the audience arena to transform the scene to somewhere else like the catwalk or runway.

Day 3: Wednesday 30th

The day began through a practice of looking at each other whilst sitting opposite one another in couples and switching couples every 3 minutes. After four iterations of this the students wrote a letter to themselves “in the face of the Other” – to reflect upon how we have an understanding of ourselves through the gaze of the Other.

The second practical exercise was to initially spread out the edges of the room and play with averting and holding the gaze and therefore also consider the dynamics of presentation and recognition. Music was played on a loop and the whole group were invited to improvise together, including the workshop leaders. We then repeated the task of writing a letter to themselves in the face of the Other.

In the afternoon we discussed Jose Munoz’s writing on Vaginal Davis as a terrorist drag artist, engaged in acts of strategic disidentification rather than an assimilatory practice of reproducing identity. We discussed the idea that she is, as Munoz argues, an “organic intellectual” and how this might help us thinking about the tensions of the academy and artistic production. We also looked at other video examples of drag; David Hoyle, Oreet Ashery, Heather Cassils, Diane Torr, and Jackie Curtis.

Day 4: Thursday 31st

We gave most of the day over to the students to process all of the readings and discussions from the previous days and also to continue working on their hybrid texts. We also met to consider how we might like to share the work with the larger group and chose to think through a group, “in concert” proposition, which drew upon various results from the workshops, both performed and textual.

READING:

Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.

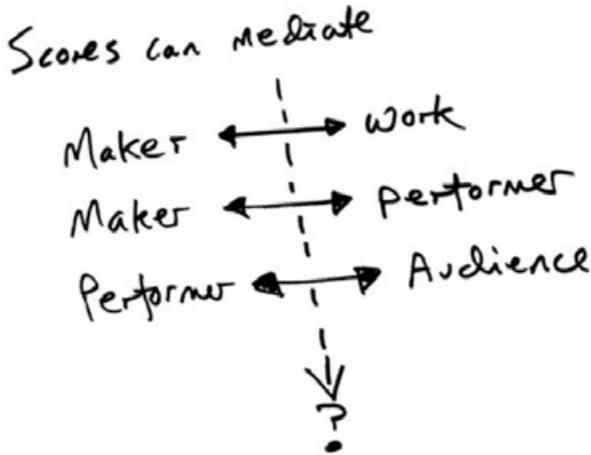
Butler, Judith & Athena Athanasiou. 2013. *Dispossession: The performative in the political*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

10 Questions about Documentation during Creation

SCOTT DELAHUNTA

1. When do you take notes or make drawings during your process?
2. What things do you find yourself drawing/notating? How do you record elements of time, space, object? How do your notes account for, measure, list, describe things?
3. When do you return to these notes and how do you review, how do you annotate or add new information?
4. Do you erase or cross out information you no longer need?
5. How do you name, order and index the information? Can you find things quickly?
6. Do you develop a different system for each piece? What elements carry over?
7. Do you think there are limits to your tools and how do you compensate? Do you forget what things mean over time?
8. Do you use video in the making process?
9. What is the connection between your sketch/notebook and the use of video?

10. Do you actively develop things you think of as notations and/ or scores as a part of this process?



Drawing inspired by chapter on Scores/ Studios/ Improvisation in A Choreographer's Handbook by Jonathan Burrows¹⁹⁰. Scores can mediate between the maker and the work, between maker and performer, between performer and audience. What else can scores do? How do scores capture a way of thinking?

190 Burrows, Jonathan. 2010. *A Choreographer's Handbook*, 141–151. London: Routledge.

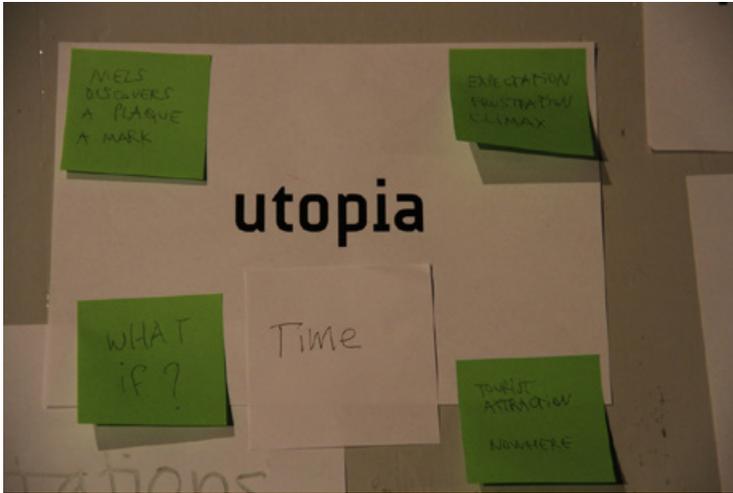


Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Marion Borriss

4. Interruption, Action

The Silent Discourse of the Incomplete Work¹⁹¹

GORAN SERGEJ PRISTAŠ

I look back, and I am suddenly and irresistibly assailed by the question: are not these few pages, in their maladroit and groping way, simply that unfamiliar play *El Nost Milan*, performed on a June evening, pursuing in me its incomplete meaning, searching in me, despite myself, now that all the actors and sets have been cleared away, for the advent of its silent discourse?¹⁹²

Let's focus for a while on the act of looking back, the same act that Althusser appoints to finish writing his afterthoughts on Giorgio Strehler's performance of 1962, whose conclusions in a way announce his radical conception of aleatory materialism.

Althusser looks back in time. The silent discourse of the incomplete work, as opposed to the open work, appears in time and not in space, appears in a form of recapitulation. Because, to quote Althusser, if the object of theatre is "to set in motion the immo-

191 This article is connected to the presentations that were held within Erasmus Intensive 2011 *Practicing Composition: Making Practice* in Berlin and to the keynote lecture and workshop that was held within Erasmus Intensive 2012 *Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience* in Helsinki.

192 Althusser 2005, 151.

bile, the eternal sphere of the illusory consciousness",¹⁹³ a mythical world, then a play is really the development, the production of a new consciousness in the spectator,

incomplete, like any other consciousness, but moved by this incompletion itself, this distance achieved, this inexhaustible work of criticism in action; the play is really the production of a new spectator, an actor who starts where the performance ends, who only starts so as to complete it, but in life.¹⁹⁴

The completion of the performance starts *post hoc*, as an afterthought, *Nachdenken*.

As a principle, I would emphasise here the permanent condition of incompletion, incompletion as a general principle of creation through interruption. That principle does not begin from that of necessity, the principle that the segments of a theatrical process stem from necessity; rather, they become necessary. Every encounter and thus also every set of relations in a process "might not have taken place, although it did take place".¹⁹⁵ All encounters are aleatory and their effects random; therefore, their determinations "may not be assigned except by *working backwards*".¹⁹⁶ Our domain of work is to detect "affinities" that did/would enable a conjuncture to take hold, affinities made it necessary. And that is what theatre

193 *Ibid.*

194 *Ibid.*

195 Althusser, Matheron and Corpet 2006, 193.

196 *Ibid.*

examines in its process: what kind of conditions and affinities of its actants enable a particular conjuncture to take hold on various levels of existence – among its actants, in the world of objects, in relation to fictions, before the spectators, in repertoire, in history?

The principle of incompleteness implicates not an endless processuality, nor a lack but an interruption and in that regard I would invoke two metaphors that are crucial for BADco.¹⁹⁷ when approaching the problem of conjuncture and operability. One of them is the exploded view and the other the interstice.

The exploded view is a technical term for a way of showing relations whereby the components of a conjuncture are put together, be it an object, mechanism, or machine. Such a display creates the illusion of a small, controlled explosion at the centre of the object, with its components frozen in mid-flight in their scattering in space, at an equal distance from one another. This is precisely the diagrammatic, refractive view that I am suggesting here: a view that synchronically shows the “exploded view of diachronic processes”.¹⁹⁸ Such a view simultaneously suggests encounters and conjunctures, but also points to the interstice, the space of interruption between elements. That space of interruption between elements is what Goddard (and then also Deleuze) calls the “interstice” in editing.

197 **BADco.** is a collaborative performance collective based in Zagreb, Croatia. The artistic core of the collective are Ivana Ivković, Ana Kreitmeyer, Tomislav Medak, Goran Sergej Pristaš, Nikolina Pristaš, Lovro Rumiha and Zrinka Užbinec. As a combination of three choreographers / dancers, two dramaturgs and one philosopher, plus the company production manager, since its beginning (2000), BADco. systematically focuses on the research of protocols of performing, presenting and observing by structuring its projects around diverse formal and perceptual relations and contexts.

198 See Medak 2013.

Sometimes, as in modern cinema, the cut has become the interstice, it is irrational and does not form part of either set, one of which has no more an end than the other has a beginning: false continuity is such an irrational cut. [. . . and this cut is] disjunctive.¹⁹⁹

That gap separates, but is also factual. By separating, it brings together and leaves room for thematising (and showing) what is otherwise invisible, abstract, and enters meaning vertically. Every set (conjuncture, assemblage) of a process, its every operating segment, results from an interruption, not from a culmination. Sets are a sort of gesture, which may be separated and stand on their own. Nor is the première the moment when the process is at its maximum, after which it is all but repetition; rather, it is a moment of interruption, a point where another conjuncture of actants, abstractions, and real effects, more accurately another series, enters into a relationship with the performance, through a non-relationship with it. Unlike functional analyses that normatively begin by assuming that there are rules for organising conjunctures, our premise is that once a conjuncture is established, its elements play by the rules, stick to the laws, but laws are haunted by a “radical instability”.²⁰⁰ The perspective of our analysis comprises not the laws but the radical instability of the conjuncture. Art always produces consequences, but they are impossible to predict. However, we can always work on the affinities, which is a key epistemological issue in theatre.

199 Deleuze 2000, 181.

200 Althusser, Matheron and Corpet 2006, 195.

Perhaps the most precise phrase for naming that type of work was given by Tomislav Medak in his proposal for a workshop that was meant to develop an analytical system for addressing the reflection of presentation poetics and circulation of the performing arts: **post-hoc dramaturgy**²⁰¹. Medak thus *ad-hoc* also named the poetic approaches that have, all these years, shaped the work of BADco.

Let me use the example of BADco. to present two projects whose processes were either organised through individual operative derivations or retroactively established that perspective in relation to all of our work. I must say that both examples feature exploded macro-views of their respective processes; on the micro-level, I will address both sets further below.

The first example is Whatever Dance Toolbox (WDT)²⁰², a software tool we developed over a number of years with our regular collaborator Daniel Turing. WDT was developed through several stages, which I will call here sets, because they were characterised by different relations of collaboration as well as different modes of relating to the context and external actors. We had our first encounter with software in *Deleted Messages*, where we used Daniel's already existing motion-tracking software: "Warsaw Pact". Then we invited Daniel to work on developing new software for manipulating images in time, as part of "Dijeljeni prostor" (Shared Space), a ten-day public programme, but instead, Daniel there developed a presentation entitled "What Does a Machine See?". The idea that using software, one could learn "what a machine sees" intrigued us as something unknown, and, following Daniel's suggestion, we

201 BADco 2012.

202 Whatever Dance Toolbox was presented in Berlin at IP 2011.

continued our collaboration by way of mutual education – we got together on neutral terrain – at the PAF in France. We had some unusual crossovers there – Daniel watched our rehearsals and suggested applications that might help us analyse and transform movements in performances (by manipulating the pace of image reproduction, jumps and pauses in time, image feedback, etc.); at the same time, Nikolina, Daniel, and I worked on trying other applications that were primarily educational for us – Daniel proposed graphic applications in the form of games – simple tasks that taught us about visual representations of what a machine “sees”. However, through such collaborations and communicating with other artists at the PAF, we realised that in fact, we had three important foci in that process.

The first of them was and still is related to applications we used for image processing in *Memories Are Made of This* (2006) and that development continued in some later performances as well, mostly along the director–software designer axis.

The other concerned the fact that in working with software there began to emerge a visible manifestation of what we called “alien logics” in choreography – the expression of decision-making procedures and movement images characteristic of working with external influences, those of non-human logics (algorithms, manipulated images, etc.). Namely, a key issue in our choreographic work was how to make visible the process of compositional, improvisational, and dynamic decision-making in choreographic performance, that is, how to make visible in performance the procedurality of thought, instead of self-expression and the choreographic object. With time, specific poetic premises of our work in choreography crystallised with procedures that were becoming evident in performance, but not always or immediately comprehensible, that is,

self-evident, whereas the complexity of performers' assumptions often made it seem as though an alien, external logic were driving the performance. Our interest focused exactly on those external, "artificial" logics, which are less than popular in dance, due to its idealisation of "naturalness" and division between the internal and external work of expression, precisely because to us, they seem to be the key mode of correspondence between the performance, performer, and theatre with their environment, whether objective, contextual, conditional, or social.

In such a process of performance thinking, it was impossible to avoid a key aspect of the objectification of thought and procedural-ity in our environment – algorithmically based forms of mediation and reflexion. Therefore, our third focus was to develop software into a tool that might enable us to work in a studio, because it became evident that some applications could significantly help going over material in real time and reproducing it later, while others suggested the possibility of generating movement and working on improvisation.

Following that, we came up with a dozen or so applications, which we all then tried out in a series of workshops with other potential users – dancers, teachers, therapists, non-dancers, etc.

Upon gathering feedback, we assigned ourselves three aims:

- to develop a tool that we might find interesting to use in our choreographic work;
- to develop a tool that anyone might use, without imposing on them the specificities of our choreographic work;
- to develop a tool that might help us exemplify and relay our method of working with movement, improvisation, and issues regarding attention.

The result of that was our collaboration with other organisations working to develop technologies and methodologies, as part of a larger partnership project, within which the tool project was realised. The project development time span was around six years, which witnessed significant changes in the collaboration dynamic among all of us who worked on it. Our interest in new technologies changed significantly and crucially affected our thinking regarding a whole series of other problems occurring in the context of new technologies, such as the issue of open code, copyright, collaboration platforms, etc. In a way, in encounters between technological sets and different aspects of our process (rehearsals, performances, workshops, etc.), WDT produced different kinds of knowledge that were then reinvested into processes, which resulted in a tool that we could reinvest in our own work in various ways but that is neutral enough so that others may use it in their works, too. Not all of these encounters were successful; some applications failed to develop, there was never enough time to develop therapeutic usage, etc. But on the whole, WDT links a whole array of different registers of our work and the conditions in which it was developed, although itself, it does not express that totality.

In the second example, *Post-hoc Dramaturgy*,²⁰³ we asked ourselves the following question: “How does a work – work?”. To begin, we made a chronological sketch of roughly three operating stages of the traditional mode of working on a theatre play. The first stage

203 The reader *Whatever #3, Post-Hoc Dramaturgy* resulted from *10 Days 1 Unity*, a ten-day laboratory that brought together primarily two groups of artists: artists gathered around the collective 6mll collective and members of the performing collective BADco., who were joined by a smaller number of the Zagreb-based performers, choreographers, dramaturges, and theatre directors. (BADco 2012)

would be the so-called poetic or production dramaturgy stage, encompassing various operations of generating and accumulating so-called performance material. The second stage, which we called the dramaturgy of the final cut, is predicated on decision-making procedures regarding presentability, in which the functions of dramaturgy relate mostly to editing, so-called external-eye reflection, verifying the feasibility of the premises of the performance, etc. The third stage is when the artwork is presented for interpretative analysis, from its authorial intentions to the meanings it produces. Still, our interest lies neither in authorial intentions nor the production of meaning, but in the operative aspect of performance, in which key parameters are the identification of actors involved in the operation (performers, spectators, presenters, the public, inhuman actors, etc.), mobilisation procedures (the atmosphere, intensities of performance, subjectivation of the spectators, exhaustion, boredom, media mediation, reading), performance format (a play, interventions, durational performance, series of performances) and trans-lative units (situations, interventions into reality, micro-events).

Departing from those parameters, we specified several “objects” or, as I’ve dubbed them here, sets that in different performances imply different procedures with their specific spatio-temporal operations. For example, one of those sets comprises technologies of seeing that in our work cropped up in different procedural modes: reflecting on the relations between traces produced by the performance, the spectator’s ability to remember and necessity to forget; affective “leakage” of humour or principles translated from popular culture (SF, horror, slapstick, *Schlager*...) into complex problems; friction in the perception of time and duration; divided experiences of watching (intimisation, divided attention, different perspectives...); the economy of attention; mobilising different capacities in

the spectator (cognitive, physical / kinaesthetic, affective, desires); the asymmetry of insight; immersion, detachment, or laterality regarding the performance, etc. Another such set or rather conjuncture comprises operations in whose context the work is performed: contextual translations (cultural, worldview, professional...); inscriptions and interventions in different artistic contexts; memory, the remains of the performance in its cultural context; its echoes in different contexts (the public, the art field, political context, media, society...); its position *vis-à-vis* its *Zeitgeist*, etc. Such examples might include still other operations as well: feedback on various levels, changes of apparatus, the status and value of the work... Although it looks like an attempt at systematisation, *post-hoc* intends no systemic analysis. Rather, it is an attempt to use an exploded view of the work and its operation to generate new pragmata that would be above all geared toward poetics of knowledge as well as, by extension, toward responsible artistic practices that would be open, thus disassembled, to the vicissitudes of their conditions of production, which is an important political issue, if not also a fundamental political premise of all theatre. Still, it is evident that above all, such an approach would have to reject the traditional logic of the chronological division of the process, in favour of approaching it in terms of diagrams and recapitulations, opening the possibility that the process last for as long as it takes to establish a new image of time, whereas presentation situations should be only interruptions in their duration, markers of time.

So, for an artistic act to take charge, to enter the sphere of politics and ethics as an object, as a fact, it must, *qua res*, become *res gesta*, as Agamben describes how a simple fact becomes an event.²⁰⁴

204 Agamben 1993, 140.

The final-cut undertaking has to be understood literally as a cut, as an interruption in the way Benjamin understands the functionality of gesture. An interruption initiates a different sort of movement: that of the *afterthought*, the disjunctive movement of *Nachdenken*.²⁰⁵

In performance studies, a number of researchers have found at the core of performance its ephemerality, exclusive existence in the present, and becoming through vanishing.²⁰⁶

However, that view of vanishing performance still rests on the idea of theatre as a reflection, something that we may survey only reflectively, always in a present that is no longer there, therefore in the past. Instead, I would advocate a theatre of interruption, a theatre that would always begin by emptying itself, by creating a void, without asking about origins but pursuing encounters and surveying the symptoms, insisting on the trace, on a remnant that has taken hold whereas it could have disappeared just as well, a remainder that always preserves the possibility of theatre turning into another kind of machine. Such theatre is one of refraction, a materially factual theatre, where one watches the world not only from or as the theatre, but also through theatre. That is the theatre of radical deceleration, one where the calendar, clock, working

205 Weber 2002, 35.

206 Some of the most important are Herbert Blau's *Take Up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (1982); Henry M. Sayre's *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-garde since 1970* (1989); Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993); José Esteban Muñoz's "Flaming Latinas: Ela Troyano's Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst Is Your Waffen" (1996); Diana Taylor's *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's 'Dirty War'* (1997); Rebecca Schneider's "Archives: Performance Remains" (2001); RoseLee Goldberg's *Performance: Live Art Since the 60s* (2004); Adrian Heathfield and Hugo Glendinning's *Live: Art and Performance* (2004); Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye and Michael Shanks's (eds.) *Archaeologies of Presence: Art, Performance and the Persistence of Being* (2012).

hours, lifetime, duration, “spatiotemporal compression”,²⁰⁷ “timeless time”²⁰⁸, “operating time”, “the time that remains”,²⁰⁹ etc. are articulations of operating states and expressions of interruptions in the dominant images of time.

207 Harvey 1990.

208 Castells 2009.

209 Agamben 2005.

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Post-hoc Dramaturgy

GORAN SERGEJ PRISTAŠ

This text is documentation of the workshop held in autumn 2012 at the Theatre Academy Helsinki. The workshop was planned and facilitated by Goran Sergej Pristaš within the context of the Erasmus Intensive 2012, Choreography: The aesthetics and social experience.

Participants: Laura Lehtinen (TeaK/Choreography), Sergiu Matis (HZT), Annika Pannitto (ArtEZ), Mila Pavičević (ADA), Artémise Ploegaerts (ArtEZ), Kati Raatikainen (TeaK/Choreography), Ursina Tossi (ArtEZ)

Day 1

The workshop started with an introduction from me to the concepts of social choreography by Andrew Hewitt, political unconscious by Frederic Jameson and the new concept of choreographic unconscious, as developed in the writing of Marko Kostanić and practical work by BADco.

In the second part of the session we analysed the correlation of (moving) camera and (moving) body in cinema and the ways in which social organisation of bodies conditions their placement in space and gesturality. The examples we have seen were films by Brothers Lumiere, Harun Farocki's "Workers Leaving the Factory" and Vlado Kristl's "Arme Leute."

Day 2

The second session started with the analysis of Harun Farocki's film "Builders of Shopping Worlds". We placed an emphasis on the logistics of attention in shopping centres, architectural rhetorics and organisation of movement.

I asked the students to identify "found footage" on the internet which would exemplify the mutual conditioning of movement and social interaction, mass movements, collective choreographies, etc. Students presented their findings and extracted specific choreographic patterns and formalisations from their examples.

Day 3

On the third day we moved to a studio where students reconstructed their last performances in the format of a guided tour. Guiding other students through their own works, they focused on the operative aspects of the performance: economy of attention, networks of attraction, engagement of different performers' capacities.

Through the session the guided tours were recomposed, recombined, modulated and mutated by changing parameters of spatial and temporal organisation of the tour narrative.

Day 4

Students introduced the extracted patterns and formalisations into their guided tours and developed the scores of their performative acts in the format of diagrams. New scores were analysed in terms of visual representation, data input and possibilities of interpretation. The accumulated knowledge was taken as material for proposing a format of knowledge exchange.

Day 5

Students were developing their proposals in the format of a 5-day workshop. Each proposition was discussed from the perspective of methodology, social format of exchange, relation of theoretical and practical input, distribution of expertise, etc.

Day 6

The first part of the session was dedicated to the discussion of formats of written presentation of students' proposals and descriptions of their workshops.

The second part was an exercise for the presentation of workshop outcomes through the format of a guided tour through the workshop itself.

Performing Lectures²¹⁰

KONSTANTINA GEORGELOU AND JASNA ŽMAK

Lecture performances are usually seen as stemming from the concept of *art practice as research* famously established in Giulio Carlo Argan's text of the same name (1982), and are as such connected to various other formats such as laboratories, workshops, work-in-progresses and so on.

Elaborating the thesis of Ana Vujanović that the concept of artistic practice as research was “introduced in order to provide a more relevant status of art in the society”²¹¹, Aldo Milohnić further argues that thus “art places itself in an ungrateful position of being ‘absurdly compared with natural sciences’, for which there are no real, solid grounds”²¹².

We needn't go further into listing all more or less tangible differences between the artistic and scientific field and the methodologies (and purposes) of the production of knowledge enforced in each of them respectively, since most of them are graspable at an already

210 This collective article is connected to the workshop Performing Lectures that was held October 2013 in Berlin within Erasmus Intensive 2013 *Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance*.

211 Vujanović 2009, 47.

212 Milohnić 2009, 39.

almost intuitive level, and since the current tendencies in Western educational systems take good care of reminding us of them on a daily basis.

Art is especially in a difficult position since it is even further distanced from the concepts and ways of natural sciences than the human sciences are, since “science” here is at least one half of the phrase. (Of course, terminology here stands only as a sign of all the differences lying in between art and any form of “official” science.) Keeping in mind the difficulties human sciences are having these days in obtaining and proving reasons for their own existence, in terms of productibility and other key-words of neo-liberalism, artistic practice is in an even more ungrateful position when it comes to comparison with any kind of “serious” knowledge producing research. It is also important to stress that, in this sense, those academic fields concerned with the study of art, aesthetics, artistic production, be it performance studies or art history, are especially in “danger”, since the topic of their study is also highly susceptible, from the viewpoint of neoliberal ideology, as something *worth* studying (and more often than not, pursuing) at all.

So, perhaps we should take a few steps back and check whether lecture performances ever fitted the goals of artistic practice as research in the way that Vujanović suggests it was initiated as a concept. Even if some of the formats mentioned (e.g. workshops and laboratories) undoubtedly had the goal of showing to themselves and to the world of natural sciences that art too has its own dark horse when it comes to producing knowledge (let’s just think of Laban or Grotowski), I heavily doubt that we can easily insert lecture performances into them.

Indeed, it is fairly easy to assert that what most of the history of the genre has to *show* does not bring a scientific approach to art,

in the sense of natural sciences, one measurable in numbers and verifiable. But if we, on the other hand, take in comparison lecture performances as research and human sciences as research, we are getting closer to art seeking to position itself as a relevant instance in the production of knowledge.

But, are we close enough?

Of course, it is highly speculative to talk about fixed tendencies, and examples could surely be found to “prove” different statements, but lecture performances have, in my opinion, always, or at least for a very long time, sided more with the *performing* than the *lecturing* part of the term and so, when talking about them, we are, in most cases, still quite far away from “bringing two different types of discourse – academic and artistic – into direct connection”²¹³.

Some of the canonical historical examples surely prove this point, from Martha Rosler’s *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) to Dan Graham’s *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1975) and Robert Morris’ *21.3* (1964), the way these two segments are interwoven proves that lecturing is not usually “used” for producing academic discourse, but is itself the site of deconstruction, criticism or analysis, all of which are undertaken through employing different performing procedures. In this way, this type (if we can call it that) of lecture performances, paradoxically enough, serves to a completely contrary goal in regard to the one stated above – by making bare and obvious the performative aspects of lecturing, it doesn’t work on making art more “scientific”, but is engaged in making science more “artistic”. Dedicated to one of the few *visible* parts of scientific research, this kind of lecture performance contains nothing of the “backstage”

213 Milohnić 2009, 40.

preoccupations artistic practice as research supposedly contains – it doesn't research, it doesn't present research, it just performs the presentation of research, without any real research behind it, and does so in a subversive way.

On the other hand, of course, as Bleeker points out, in more recent years “a self-reflexive attitude with respect to one's own doing and the conditions of production and reception is a prominent characteristic of many lecture performances”²¹⁴ and if we decide to go down this alley and take in consideration lecture performances that involve *clear cut* lecturing of this kind, e.g. Xavier Le Roy's *Product of Circumstances* (1999) or Jérôme Bel's *Véronique Doisneau* (2004), we are faced with a more “balanced” relation between the two sides of the pair: performing serves to demonstrate what is being lectured, to show its thesis, to prove its points. And lecturing is not being “mocked”, as in some of the examples above, but it is being seriously engaged to produce knowledge. But, interestingly enough, the lecturing we find here is basically lecturing on performing and the knowledge that is being produced is knowledge on performing. It is self-referential and self-(de)constructive. Again, something that is, from the perspectives of natural sciences, highly suspect and of questionable value.

Here an entirely different process is at stake, when it comes to the relationship between arts and sciences, vindicated by Bleeker's claim that “adopting the lecture as format for a performance, their performances also invite a reconsideration of the performativity of philosophical and scientific practice through the lens of perfor-

214 Bleeker 2012, 235.

mance”²¹⁵. Although she is speaking about specific authors (Deufert and Plischke), the same can be said to be valid for a whole number of authors who have in the past, through the *production* of this kind of lecture performances, created what Milohnić calls “hybrid discursive situations”.

In order to unpack this claim further, seeking perhaps to generate an exploration of the poetics of what Milohnić calls “hybrid discursive situations”, we would probably need to question what is understood as the *performing* and the *lecturing* parts distinctly.

But let’s not do it like that.

Let’s rather discuss performance lectures *as they are*, as we see and understand them today.

What do they do?

How do they do it?

How can we discuss their poetics?

Three lecture performances come in my mind, which I saw recently in Amsterdam: *The Pixelated Revolution* (2012) by Rabih Mroué, *I Lived My Myth in Greece* (2013) by Manolis Tsipos and *The Benefactor* (2011) by Julian Hetzel. Thinking of these examples, I realize how different they are from the earlier ones that I know and consider paradigmatic of this genre, such as Xavier Le Roy’s *Product of Circumstances* or Jérôme Bel’s *Véronique Doisneau*. More precisely, I come to think that performance lectures have become much less self-referential and self-(de)constructive, much less about performance as the event in the *here and now* and much more about something *else*. Recent cases of lecture performances engage with a meta-perspective that may still lecture on (the makings of) a perfor-

215 Bleeker 2012, 241.

mance or on the production of knowledge (academic or artistic), but this is merely a technique or a by-product. Rather, today they can be perceived more clearly as political and social acts of thought that happen in public by means of art and in the (de)form of a lecture.

Why borrow argumentative, interpretative or analytical techniques of lectures to do that?

Probably because the schizophrenic time we are living in needs to be reported, studied and unpacked by ways of theatre, in order for the inherent paradoxes, madness and monstrosity – which are by now rendered normative and domesticated – to become “staged” and thus operative again.²¹⁶ Maybe also because the audience can relate to them more easily (their language can be thought as more accessible); or because these are usually solo works, therefore cheaper and easier to tour. There are certainly several reasons that one can think of in order to examine why and how the lecture performance genre is developing and manifesting itself.

But I consider it worthwhile to take a look at their themes and poetics. For instance, the afore-mentioned lecture performances engage with actuality: the current economic crisis, money, desire, success, digital technology and revolution. All three were communicated as “lecture performances”, although one could perhaps claim that Mroué’s and Hetzel’s are more *lecturing* because of the clear accordance with the protocols of this format (talking, showing

216 Here I’m also thinking of Bojana Kunst’s article “Restaging the monstrous” (2008), in which she considers this gesture urgent. She writes that, “here, there are no cognitive and aesthetical relationships between stage and audience at work, there is no (public) place offered for the observer, no possibility to return the gaze, and no possibility of being heard in many directions [...] There is a strong need at this moment for a place to show the monstrous, for a place to open up the material qualities of the monstrous and disclose it in public.” (Kunst 2008, 220–221.)

images and videos, laptop, glass of water etc.) whereas Tsipos' is more *performative* because of the plethora of aesthetic and performance-related elements (singing, stage design, costumes, lights etc.). However, despite the different degrees and approaches of the genre, I think that they all interrogate a sociopolitical situation rather than a format (performance or lecture) and I wonder whether we could examine them from this perspective.

So, can we perhaps discuss performance lectures as actions and not as methods?

What is becoming clearer to me is that performance lectures do not solely try to talk about something like in a more traditional lecture, but they enact it while "talking about" it: bringing it in the *here and now*, taking up the impossible task of unpacking it while being (in) it. In this way their position is enacted, which does not quite align with journalistic, academic, scientific or political ones but nevertheless transpires those, and evokes an *other* type of conceptualisation and discourse that is about something other than performance itself; it is perhaps about a mode of thinking, a point of view taken differently.

I will try to think about the above by revisiting one of these examples.

In *The Pixelated Revolution*, Lebanese artist Rabih Mroué is reading a lecture and showing a powerpoint presentation with several pieces of footage. There is a table, a text, a screen and a laptop. In this lecture performance, Mroué does a reading of the revolution in Syria in 2011 through visuality, and specifically through the use of imagery and footage coming from the mobile phone cameras of the protesters that were uploaded on the internet during that time. Starting with a historiography of the eye as camera (as it was imagined and thought of before the appearance of mobile phones) he

arrives to the event of the revolution in Syria, which was extensively captured and disseminated through the cameras of mobile phones to the rest of the world. Through his analysis, Mroué is sharing his observations and concerns upon several aspects of this phenomenon, such as violence representation, experience, materiality and temporality of death, revolution and picture resolution.

The most striking of all is probably what he calls the “double shooting”, which he explains through dramatic footage that shows the camera of a protester’s phone shooting the armed soldier who is shooting his gun back at the camera and thus, to the protester who is holding the phone. In this case, the ones watching the video can hear the cries of the civilian getting shot while seeing blurry images of his phone falling down. However, we do not know whether the person is dead or not. The complexity of the “civilian journalist’s” situation is exposed by Mroué: the one holding the phone is a protester who does not want his face to be seen in order to avoid recognition and possible arrest, but at the same time wants to shoot and disseminate the events while experiencing an illusion of safety behind the phone, as if he were not “there”.

This lecture performance brings into light current presentations and representations of a revolution through an examination of footage material that can be downloaded from the internet. Mroué specifies the context (Syria) and unfolds his thinking through a series of observations that do not quite stem from one another in a linear argumentation, although they may give the impression that they do so because of the setting (adhering to a lecture). In my opinion, Mroué engages with different styles and manners (scientific, journalistic, aesthetic, humoristic etc.) producing an alternating experience of distance and proximity to the event of political demonstration in Syria that is in fact too close chronologically, geographically and

socially, and yet unfamiliar to many. In other words, the genre of lecture performance does not generate here a meta-reflection on what the artist is doing, but it is what enables a type of language and thinking to be expressed that, instead of seeking to inform, to convince, to impress or to shock, seeks to produce points from which one can perceive and think.

Let's take another example, which I saw recently in Zagreb: *The Debt of Rakef Saška / The Debt of RS* (2012) by the Slovenian author Saška Rakef. Although its topic is seemingly far narrower in scope and much more personal in tone than Mroué's *The Pixelated Revolution* and although it is not officially announced as a lecture performance, I believe it fits the scheme outlined above perfectly. To take terminology and classification worries aside first, let me point out that, first of all, *The Debt of Rakef Saška / The Debt of RS* contains all of the elements of lecture performances – there is a table, a text, a few microphones (it is the only technology used, in addition to lights... there are no screens or laptops, which by no means suggests a conflict with the dominant style of the genre, maybe just a somewhat old-fashioned approach to it). And, second of all, it is announced by the author herself as a “research performance”. I believe these two factors combined will surely suffice to call it a lecture performance, and examine it as such.

In this lecture performance, Rakef does a reading of the “growing financial debt and blocked personal account and the influence that the debt has on the dynamics of her everyday life”²¹⁷, as stated in the description of the piece, and she does this through a combination of words and numbers: through elaborating (sometimes

217 Rakef 2012.

fictionalised) accounts of her own indebted existence and citing non-fictionalised (in other words: real) cost sheets and calculations of that same existence. At moments, the performance seems a *circulus vitiosus* of endless expenses and the authors' attempts at downsizing them. The neoliberal project of quantifying human lives, transforming them into numbers which can be (and which *are*) constantly being calculated, manipulated, added, divided, subtracted and multiplied, is carried out with extreme attention to detail and quite literally to the point, as the author seeks to find that one spot where she can save a bit more, always a bit more. Life thus becomes a project in which mastering the secrets of Excel formulas is its ultimate goal and purpose of existence.

As I have already stressed, the tone, the context and the field of interest here are extremely personal, although rarely intimate, and there is but one reference to a more broader reality, that of the state of the state affairs. But despite that, *The Debt of Rakef Saška / The Debt of RS* easily transcends the narrow format of yet another biographical lecture performance, a journey that is initiated already in its title which alludes to the fact that the acronym of the author *RS* can also stand for *Republic of Slovenia* and thus come to depict more than just a personal history of bankruptcy. Indeed, in the small scale, everyday calculations of *RS, the person*, one can easily find echoes of the big scale calculations of *RS, the state*.

The differences between Mroué's and Rakef's approaches and materials are significant, which is quite obvious from the lines above, but they have one thing in common: neither of them uses lecturing at the expense of performing, or vice versa, both *parts of the deal* are equally engaged in such a way that one cannot say that any part of their performance lectures exclusively serves to the *performing* part of the genre, and the other to the *lecturing*. Although the same can be said of the already mentioned examples from the

seventies, here lecturing is not deconstructed, but is instead used, together with performing, for the deconstruction of the material being looked into. Although the same can be said of the already mentioned examples from the nineties, the authors' intention here is not to produce a meta-reflection on their own doing, but to provide a specific *point of entrance* into the theme being reflected, one that allows to get closer to it and to get further from it, and to do this at the same time.

When thought of that way, perhaps the biggest difference between them and the examples from previous decades is that, through blending various types of discourses, both Rakef and Mroué seem to primarily be concerned not with the format they are using but with the theme they are dealing with, offering thus a new definition of the format itself. Because, it is only when lecture performances stop being obsessed with themselves, or with either parts of the term, that they start working on truly new approaches, not necessarily to producing new knowledge but to transforming that already existing.

As it is suggested by the title, lectures are in this sense being performed and they are performing. This performative force of lectures, in which a viewpoint or a standpoint needs to be articulated and presented, allows actions, fictions and perspectives to be dissected, transformed and expressed by means of theatre; in other words, by means of reflection and invention. And perhaps precisely this should be the point of advantage art practice as research should have when being compared with sciences – showing new, showing *other* ways of presenting knowledge and not only of producing it. Research, as an intense and close *search* for something, can thus be practiced not only with a view to producing innovative knowledge, as it is nowadays proclaimed, but to enable space and time for unexpected turns and directions to be taken.

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Performing Lectures: a workshop

KONSTANTINA GEORGELOU & JASNA ŽMAK

This text is documentation of the workshop held in October 2013 at the HZT Uferstudios in Berlin. The workshop was planned and facilitated by Konstantina Georgelou and Jasna Žmak within the context of the Erasmus Intensive 2013, Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance.

Participants: Nina Gojić (ADA), Helene Botto (HZT), Kyla Kegler (HZT), Yusuke Kimura (HZT), Mila Pavićević (ADA), David Pollmann (HZT)

Performance lectures, notably present in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in the visual and performing arts, introduce an artistic genre that experiments with processes of producing and suspending language, thinking and performance. Through their intersection, on the one hand artistic protocols and audience's expectations are challenged and on the other hand, our understanding of how knowledge and information are produced and disseminated is unsettled. In relationship to dance, Maaïke Bleeker characteristically writes "lecture performances emerge as a genre that gives expression to an understanding of dance as a form of knowledge production. Knowledge not (or not only) about dance, but also dance as a specific form of knowledge that raises questions about the

nature of knowledge and about practices of doing research”²¹⁸. In this sense, performance lectures additionally enable reflective and embodied knowledge to be shared and explored through poetics.

In this workshop we explored constitutive aspects of *lectures* in terms of performance. Experimentation with language and talking, and attention to the movement of our thinking were fostered. During the four days we read texts, watched and critically discussed examples of performance lectures and engaged in exercises in which artists were invited to work with diverse protocols of lectures, as ways to reflect upon but also to probe and expand their artistic practices. Although one could expect (performance) lectures to be created and delivered by one person/signature, the idea of self-authorship was also explored and challenged from within its poetic and compositional protocols.

DAY ONE: Who is Who?

Who is Who in our native languages?

Bypassing the usual format of introductory rounds we used our first meet-up as the first step in the examination of lecture performances. The task was to present oneself (as a student in the field of art) in the form of an *oral CV* that transcends the usual “dry” sequencing of one’s accomplishments, creating a micro lecture-performance about the history of one’s education.

Hijacking Mladen Stilinović’s strategy of speaking about his work in his native language in front of an international audience²¹⁹,

218 Bleeker 2012.

219 In 1979 Croatian artist Mladen Stilinović gave a lecture in Amsterdam, against the English language. The lecture was held in Croatian.

and thus blocking the understanding of one of the layers that build up performance lectures, the one that relies on language, we examined how this reflects on the overall understanding of the performance lecture. Participants were asked to prepare presentations in advance and this initial presentation was used as core material, which was subsequently transformed and worked on in the following workshop days.

Who is Who in English?

The same presentations were delivered in front of the same audience, only this time adapted, that is, translated into English. A feedback round and conversation about this “experiment” followed, opening up space for discussion about the role not only language and rational thought, but also the expressive and other accompanying elements of talking, play in our process of *witnessing* a lecture performance.

DAY TWO: Who is Lecture-Performance?

Examining different examples of lecture performances available, we tried to draw a general demarcation line between performance lectures and other forms of lectures and performances, thus not aiming to reach a definitive conclusion about the definition, but rather to draw out some of the strategies this format uses. Collaboratively we wrote down a list of all of them, based on the examples seen, trying to highlight the contradictions and posing questions about (the meaning of) setting boundaries between lectures and performances and lecture performances. Roughly dividing the case studies offered into two groups, the monologue and the dialogue form, the accent was on conversational works that reflect artists’ poetics and working procedures. The question of the relation between knowledge production and performance also arose.

DAY THREE: Talking...

Talking with Myself

Based on protocols derived from works explored the day before, participants worked independently to create their own lecture performances reinterpreting Dalibor Martinis's concept,²²⁰ creating a script for a conversation with a future self by posing a set of questions to be asked in thirty years' time. The focus was on individual poetics and work. This exercise was recorded and students were encouraged to actively think beyond and above the strategies outlined the day before, especially to try to challenge the rigid separation between the lecturing and the performing part of the format.

Talking about Others

Using the recordings made in the morning, participants were put into pairs so that every set of questions gets an answer – from somebody else. Breaking the solipsistic and possibly intimate tone of the self-interviews proposed, we started challenging the idea of solo authorship.

DAY FOUR: Performing with Myself (about others)

Drawing on Jerome Bel's pieces with and about other dancers (Cédric Andrieux, Veronique Doisneau, Isabel Torres...), participants worked on creating small lecture performances that combined materials they had created during the previous days of the workshop, opening the floor to examining their own practices from

220 Croatian artist Dalibor Martinis is the author of two video works: *D. Martinis Talks to D. Martinis 1978* and *Dalibor Martinis/1978 Talks to Dalibor Martinis 2010*. In the first one he poses a series of questions to a future self, in the latter he answers them, 32 years later.

the perspective of collaborations with others, thus dissolving further the idea of artistic practices that arise from self-creation.

DAY FIVE: Presentation

After a round of critical comments and remarks about the performance lectures shown the previous day, every student had some time to rethink his/her own work and “enhance” it for the final presentation. The lecture performances were shown in the same space, with the audience shifting from one location to the other, in a one hour time slot. After the showing, the participants, the audience and the workshop leaders were engaged in a short feedback session not only about the lecture performances shown but also about the nature and the *future* of the format as well.

List of performances:

Xavier Le Roy: *Product of Circumstances*, 1999.

Bojana Kunst & Ivana Müller: *Finally Together on Time*, 2011.

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Speculating About the Past, Looking into the Future²²¹

SERGIU MATIS & MILA PAVIČEVIĆ

The following is a dialogue between our theses, Sergiu Matis' thesis for the Master's Programme in Solo/Dance/Authorship in Berlin and Mila Pavičević's thesis for the Master Programme Performance Dramaturgy, Department of Dramaturgy in Academy of Dramatic Arts, Zagreb. The approach to the dialogue is a series of interruptions.

Sergiu Matis: Having the past present in mind I started a writing practice in order to speculate about the future. This allowed me to rethink the concepts and practices we worked with during the making of *Keep It Real*, my final presentation performance as part of my thesis for the Master's Programme in Solo/Dance/Authorship in Berlin; not only reflect, but apply them reloaded into a different practice: writing. Feminists and queer theorists have used science fiction to explore their ideas and concepts in practice. As Haraway

221 The authors of this collective article met during the Erasmus Intensive 2012 *Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience* in Helsinki.

writes: “The boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion”²²².

The SF mode became a field of experimentation and future speculation as a related continuation of the practice and theories I dealt with. “This SF practice is a model of worlding”²²³. SF stands for: science fiction, speculative fabulation, science fact, science fantasy, as Donna Haraway puts it in her booklet ‘SF: Speculative Fabulation and String Figures’ for dOCUMENTA (13). I suggest it could also stand for: simply future, sensual fascination, sexual fantasy, something fake, or: “so far, opening up what is yet-to-come in protean time’s pasts, presents, and futures”²²⁴.

Mila Pavičević: Yes, and one can consider theory, or theoretical dramaturgy as a practice that looks into the past in order to speculate about the future. The notions of theory and theatre have the same origin in the verb *θεαόμαι* (*theaomai*) that includes the other form of acting, namely, affective acting – looking and seeing. The other meaning of the verb is reflected in the noun *θαύμα* (*thauma*) that attributes characteristics such as miraculous and prophetic to the object of looking. The dichotomy of theory and practice is frequently present in artistic circles. Mainly it is superficially considered that practitioners are the ones producing something while theoreticians reflect on the finished product.

In contemporary performative practice both theory and dramaturgy are the heads and tails of the same procedure or procedures that could be named as the procedures of active-affective spectat-

222 Haraway 1991, 149.

223 Haraway 2011.

224 Ibid.

ing. The space of theatron (θεάτρον) from its very beginning unites its spectators around a single viewpoint. Not only that the process of looking is embedded in the very nature of the theatre, but also in that the process and the object of looking are the constitutive elements of the theatrical event.

SM: Yes and visible thinking body is a practice that I developed during the working process in order to explore predictability in movement. Using mostly quotidian actions, culturally easy-to-access points of reference (Benjamin terms it the citability of the gesture, referring to Brecht's theatre), the search was around how to make the next move visible and predictable, not only in relation to the viewer's expectation but also for the performer during thinking and moving. The body is suspended between actions in action and suggests the obvious next step. The flow is interrupted.

The future becomes visible in the realm of physical possibilities, as the body in motion is read in its possibilities and limitations. For instance, in the action of sitting – from standing to sitting, the body passes through a trajectory that has an obvious end goal, in form, position and relation to the floor. If on the way down the dynamic changes, delaying the finalisation of the movement, what's left is the expectation of its realisation. Also, during this interruption, the predictability and then speculation in the frame of possibilities begin. The unfinished movements of recognisable gestures trigger predictions of the future. “This strict, frame-like closure of every element in a posture, which at the same time is entirely inserted in a living flux, comprises one of the fundamental dialectical components of gesture”²²⁵.

225 Benjamin, Volume 2, 521.

Yes, and the concept of break in the works of Brecht manifests itself not only in the field of the rational decision-making process; instead it also becomes visible on the level of the body. For Brecht the word *Haltung* has a double meaning – the attitude and the posture. That dichotomy reveals important dimensions of identity. Namely, taking into account the logics of Brechtian dramaturgy, an individual is constantly in some kind of *Haltung* to the world. Changing her attitude in the world deprived of the universalist's worldview an individual must always establish herself anew in relation to that world.

That attitude also includes a kind of physicality, the performer's presence on the scene of one-shot performance. Political unconscious is being achieved as an effect of the aesthetic experience on the spectator. First of all, what happens during the performance is the sensory shift in the sphere of the aesthetic and, in the case of the intended change of perspective, we can talk about an ideological shift as well. Samuel Weber derives one of the techniques of "shifting" from the poetics of Walter Benjamin.

Benjamin recognised that historical change was itself embedded in a process of repetition and reproduction: the novelty of the new was not absolute but rather profoundly related to the conflicting dynamics of the old. The *decisive break* did not intervene simply between tradition and its transformation; rather, it was already at work within the tradition itself.²²⁶

226 Weber 2002, 27–28; my emphasis.

Yes, and the interruptions suspend the production of meaning and offer the possibility to rethink the normative way of doing things. Suspending the next obvious step allows the possibility of not doing it to occur. This negation of the prescribed order of things²²⁷ challenges habits, convictions and conventions. “This notion of practice entails obligations because obligations can be betrayed when the situation has not given the power to have one thinking, feeling or wondering. A normative practice is not sensitive to situations in which the potential of operative reason is questioned, for there are habits, convictions, conventions that perpetuate and petrify it”²²⁸. Enjoyment results when, after the suspended moment, comes an unexpected deviation from the obvious. This is possible through shifting attention during the process. Pleasure produces ideological destabilisation. Realised predictions that fulfil known patterns in movement only release the tension.

Yes and “Acting is fun”, says Arendt. The verb *acting* has a double meaning. On one hand it implies the action in the sense of political intervention, whereas on the other hand it evokes a certain stage in the sense of theatrical acting. For Arendt “joy or fun in politics, springs from the public display of virtuosity, in *the performance whose end lies in itself*.”²²⁹ Not only does Arendt not consider the notion of unpurposefulness of the aesthetic to be insufficient for political activism, but the “performance whose end lies in itself” also becomes the precondition of political acting. Communal pleasure, based on the fact that we are together with no purpose outside of

227 see Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (1970).

228 Cvejić 2009, 338.

229 Marchart 2013, 45; my emphasis.

that situation just as we are in the theatre – opens up the possibility of political change. What appears is “the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to the others as others appear to me.”²³⁰ (For Arendt “joy or fun in politics, springs from the public display of virtuosity, in *the performance whose end lies in itself*.”²³¹)

Yes and the translation of perverted dynamics into the corporeal requires a work of precision. Looking for exactitude to create the illusion of impossible bodies in order to expose the image as an image, and dealing with precision in a body practice, is rooted in dance education. Ballet training, and other dance techniques that enter bodies, require repetition and the ability to control the body, pushing it to become a dancing machine. The dancer-cyborg brings the texture of the machine into the field of the visible, making it explicit through virtuosity. In *A Grammar of the Multitude* Paolo Virno writes: “Every utterance is a virtuosic performance. And this is so, also because, obviously, utterance is connected (directly or indirectly) to the presence of others”²³². A tabula rasa is neither possible nor wanted. The dancer-cyborg will insist on virtuosity in order to challenge known patterns. “Every political action, in fact, shares with virtuosity a sense of contingency, the absence of a ‘finished product’, the immediate and unavoidable presence of others. On the one hand, all virtuosity is intrinsically political.”

Yes and what is being staged is theoretical virtuosity as a manifestation of certain knowledge. Apart from the fact that the spec-

230 Arendt 1998 [1958], 198–199.

231 Marchart 2013, 45; my emphasis.

232 Virno 2004, 55.

tator has to think through the relation between the dispositives, what also becomes certain is that the result of that staged virtuosity is – missing. Therefore, that virtuosity of the theoretical thinking is the uttermost activity without purpose that constantly regenerates itself and does not aim towards any kind of finitude. In the contemporary field of production, the procedures we are surrounded with are dominantly reductive; the proposition of “performance-essays” is opposed to that paradigm by its radical abundance of time arrangements, the display of the performer’s pleasure and virtuosity. What appears as a result of that abundance is the problem-oriented thinking of the spectator, which is a political procedure. Predicting the future of the looking is exciting as there lies the potentiality for change, for the unexpected, for the new. The interruption practice is thinking in action outside the action. “Interruption is one of the fundamental constituents of all form. [...] It lies at the root – to take only one example – of citation. To cite a text means to interrupt its context”²³³. The action is thought till the end, thus, already appearing, but not finalised, it deviates and exits the system of known patterns.

233 Benjamin, 536.

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Photo: Jarkko Partanen



Photo: Jarkko Partanen

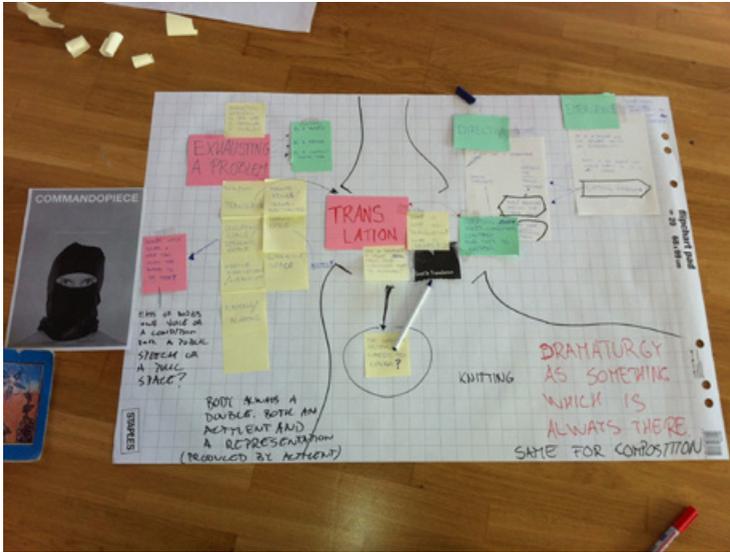


Photo: Kirsi Monni



Photo: Marion Borriss

5. Appendices

Appendix A: Erasmus IP overview

KIRSI MONNI

Erasmus Intensive Project (2011-2013) - 'Practicing Composition: Making Practice'

The Erasmus Intensive was an EU project, part of the EU's lifelong learning strategy which granted, through quite laborious application, documentation and reporting processes, the main funding for a three year series of educational meetings. The idea for applying for the EU funding arose from the educational work of the MA programme in Solo/ Dance/ Authorship (MA SODA) within the HZT, Berlin and from two prior postgraduate gatherings with its partner institutions (2009 & 2010) that in turn built on a network of European partnerships first formed by the MA in Contemporary Arts Practice and Dissemination (2004–2009) established by Dartington College of Arts, UK.²³⁴

²³⁴ This MA programme was initiated with EU Socrates/ Erasmus Curriculum Development funding in 2004 as a part of the MA programme at Dartington College of Arts, UK with a partner network consisting of five European HEIs and NGOs involved in practice-based education, training and research in the field of contemporary visual and performance arts practice: Piet Zwart Institute, Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam, NL; Universitat de Girona/ Centre Creacio L'Animal a l'esquena, Catalonia, ES; Vilniaus Dailes Akademija, Vilnius, LI; Maska Ljubljana/ Nova Gorica University, SI.

The approach to teaching and learning in graduate work at MA level at the HZT was to facilitate a structured and collaborative environment for practical, theoretical and critical interaction and discussion between peers in relation to the development of contemporary arts practice. The IP was to broaden this approach by inviting MA programmes from five or more European countries, to provide a sustained opportunity to engage with and learn from multidisciplinary and multifaceted approaches to practicing composition that are limited within individual partner institutions. The initiators of the IP project were Ric Allsopp and Rhys Martin from MA SODA together with HZT directors Eva-Maria Hoerster and Nik Haffner.

The overall objectives of the IP were defined by European Priorities on Erasmus Intensive Programmes, among which are: to improve the quality and to increase the volume of student and teaching staff mobility throughout Europe; to improve the quality and to increase the volume of multilateral cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe; to facilitate the development of innovative practices in education and training at tertiary level, and their transfer, including from one participating country to others; to support the development of innovative pedagogies and practices for lifelong learning and to present a strong multidisciplinary approach.

The idea was that our IP would contribute to these objectives by presenting a strong multidisciplinary approach through its choice of partners, through affirming the cross-disciplinary, research based, practice-led educational approach that underlies the MA SODA programme and the work of the five European HEI MA programmes at Trinity/Laban (UK), ArtEZ (NL), Theatre Academy (FI), ADU, Zagreb (HR) and Castilla-La Mancha (SP) and through the wider

professional and intellectual networks that the HZT and other universities are linked to.

The partner programmes had each their distinctive approaches to current physically-based performance practices and the aim was that by sharing these differing educational and artistic approaches the quality of co-operation broadens in two ways: from a staff point of view, partner institutions using diverse and different educational approaches and assumptions enhance teaching and research quality and range of content and reference; from a student point of view diversity of practice in performance arts is enhanced in the context of international meetings and exchange and the possibility of direct and sustainable interaction through supportive peer networks.

The potentialities were seen to develop further a European (and international) network of graduate students and institutions concerned with movement and performance at the level of artistic research into current and innovative compositional strategies, and to promote the identification and dissemination of resources for composition and to support students in the creation of their own peer networks, in becoming part of wider professional networks.

IP 2011 Berlin

The first IP was established and organized by HZT and held at Uferstudios in Berlin in October-November 2011. The participants were the students and staff members of the five partner MA programmes. The aim was to place composition and score-making within a firm pedagogical framework through identifying and sharing tools and strategies that are investigated and introduced in each programme, and to start developing the basis for a common, partner-wide, practice-led artistic research project.

The main pedagogical approaches included modes of teaching and learning that placed emphasis on both individual, small group and peer-to-peer learning through modes of group critique and feedback, task-based study, practice-led workshops, presentations and lectures. During the first week each of the five partner groups were asked to present a detailed and specific profile of a particular compositional approach that the framework of their programme assumes and supports in relation to specific compositional and score-making tools and strategies. The presentation contextualised the compositional approach of the programme and positioned it in relation to current aesthetic, cultural and pedagogical practices. In addition each partner was asked to give a practice-led, participatory or observational workshop that implemented the approaches – for example on the use of “performance directives” – and that would engage students in questions of an approach to compositional practice focused by the partner programme. In the evenings, invited cross-disciplinary keynote lectures provided examples of theoretical and exemplary models and strategies for compositional practice. At the end of the week the first documentation and evaluation session was held. Five work groups and their tasks and strategies for a 48-hour project were established, based on the approaches and ideas of the first week.

The second week continued with multidisciplinary group work and the presentations of each group’s projects with a focus on how and what strategies are used in their project. Throughout the IP there were some possibilities for students and staff to share and present their own work and/or artistic research in the studio as well as meet and engage in discussion at lunches and dinners at the Uferstudio kitchen. The participants were also able to attend some public performances in Berlin.

Documentation and evaluation were integral parts of the IP. The pressure of providing documents and reports for the EU was very present but those were also important aspects of the pedagogies in MA level education. The evaluation took the form of plenary discussions and written reports, and considered all aspects of the IP as a basis for a project proposal for the second IP in 2012.

In spite of mainly positive and inspired feedback from both students and staff, some critical thoughts were presented and suggestions for future IPs were made. Due to the presentations of each programme and the lack of specific time for student presentations, some students felt more as though they were representatives of each programme than themselves. Also the 48h project and its presentation was considered to be a conventional and result-oriented model of artist collaboration although the presentations were anything but. The question of the subject matter was also raised, how could the structure and scheduling of this kind of an event provide the best possible conditions for in-depth investigation of the central-theme of the IP, instead of brief introductions to several partner themes? These thoughts informed the collaborative planning of the second IP.

Contributors in a nutshell:

Introductions, partner profiles and workshops: Lito Walkey, Rhys Martin (HZT), Martin Hargreaves (Trinity/ Laban), Goran Sergej Pristaš (ADA), Kirsi Monni (Theatre Academy), João de Silva & Konstantina Georgelou (ArtEz) in collaboration with respective students.

Keynote lectures: “Production of Scores. A reflection on composition” by Scott de Lahunta; “It can all begin again/Kill the King”, a performance by Christina Ciupke with Myriam Gourfink and Kasper

Toeplitz & artist talk (with L. Cash, C. Ciupke, K. Follenius, M. Gourfink, N. Haffner, M. Kangro, K. Toeplitz); “Composing the Political” by Lina Saneh; “The Art of Knitting and Weaving: Arachnic Practises” by Artistwin deufert & plischke.

Performances: DV8: “Can We Talk About This?”; Rabih Mroué: “Who’s Afraid of Representation”?

The list of the participating students can be found below in Appendix B

Initiators and Producers of the IP at HZT: Rhys Martin, Ric Allsopp, Eva-Maria Hoerster, Sabine Trautwein.

Web page: <http://practicing-composition.hzt-berlin.de/>

IP 2012 Helsinki

The second IP was framed under a subtitle *Choreography: The Aesthetics and Social Experience* and it was held in October–November 2012 in Helsinki. The theme as well as the decision to stage the IP in Helsinki was a result of staff discussions and collaborative planning. The Theatre Academy in Helsinki could provide facilities for a differently structured programme, introduce the participants to its Artistic Research Centre and offer performances of the two performing arts/dance festivals in Helsinki during that time. In the planning and scheduling of the programme the feedback received from the previous IP was taken into account. The emphasis was now on providing the students with more time to present themselves, their work and for peer exchange, focusing on more in-depth work around a special theme and to provide individual choices on workshops as well as variation in their lengths. The workshop presentations were focused on process and knowledge sharing instead of the common performance-outcome, and the evaluation and documentation of the first week were carried out differently by facilitated

encountering and peer exchange. There was also one person (Jarkko Partanen) in charge of collecting and providing documentation material and distributing it on-line via the IP blog.

The keynote and workshop titles of the second IP describe the investigative approach to the relationship between compositional and dramaturgical strategies, and aesthetic and social experiences. The current notion of social choreography was approached through strategies of emergent choreography as well as through questions concerning the role of composition and score-making in framing, constructing and deconstructing realities. A central theme throughout the whole IP was the consideration of the role of an author. It was scrutinized by introducing various methods for both artistic collaboration and for drawing new compositional scores by deconstructive approach to the existing ones.

The evaluation of the IP and the student feedback was mainly very positive and inspired, as it was for the first IP in Berlin. However among the staff the need to problematize the ontological position and understanding of *a tool* (methodologies, procedures, strategies) in art practices, in the era of heterogeneous aesthetic aims and increasing awareness of commodification of art and artists paved the way for the planning of the third and last IP in 2013.

Contributors in a nutshell:

Keynote lectures: “Choreographic Unconscious” by Sergej Pristaš; “Performless: Dramaturgies of Performing Less” by Konstantina Georgelou; “Choreographing Reality” by Saara Hannula, “On Latency and Composition” by Ric Allsopp; “Artistic Research at Theatre Academy” by Esa Kirkkopelto & Leena Rouhiainen; “Hybrids, Interventions & Living Artefacts” by Terike Haapoja.

Workshops: “Choreographic Unconscious” by Sergej Pristaš; “Utopian Choreography” by Saara Hannula; “Operations of Dis|owning (Choreography)” by Konstantina Georgelou; “Co-dependent Creation” by Ari Tenhula.

Sharing the knowledge – facilitated student discussions by Saara Hannula.

Student presentations & student interaction at Agora.

The list of the participating students can be found below in Appendix B

Participating staff: Rhys Martin, Kirsi Monni, João da Silva.

Performances in Moving in November and Baltic Circle festivals.

Producer of the IP at the Theatre Academy: Kirsi Monni, Nina Numminen, Rita Heino and at HZT Eva-Maria Hoerster, Sabine Trautwein.

Documentation: Jarkko Partanen

Blog: <http://erasmusip2012.weebly.com/>

IP 2013 Berlin

Building on the two previous IPs in which aesthetic, dramaturgic, collaborative and social aspects of composition were investigated, the focus of IP 2013 was defined as *Composition: Poetics and Procedure in Individual Performance*. The aim was to concentrate on notions of structure (poetics) and making (composition) in individual and solo work, signature and authorship. The IP was to investigate how a notion of poetics as a way of structuring performance beyond conventional disciplinary modalities may be understood and applied in contemporary dance and performance practice.

The IP programme planning and scheduling was once again created anew according the specific theme and previous feedback. Special attention was given to students’ possibilities to digest, discourse and experiment on the themes presented in the keynote

lectures with the presenters and peers. Time and space were given for student presentations and knowledge sharing and the possibility to choose the workshops and the proper length of them was considered important. With these arrangements the IP aimed at facilitating the sharing of different perspectives on subjectivities of the artist in relation to specific contexts, methodologies of presentation and compositional and procedural strategies and tactics in solo work.

The first week of the IP concentrated solely on discursive practices. Keynote lectures followed after a student driven morning class. The new structural innovation was that after each keynote lecture there was a small group colloquia where the themes of the keynotes were discussed, and creative responses were possible as well as more intimate discussions with the keynote speaker. Another new aspect in the scheduling was the introduction of a critical review seminar held in small groups on the morning after the evening performances. Student presentations were held at the end of the week, when the students had already gained some knowledge of each other. Also time for documentation and independent reflection was scheduled for each day. At the end of the week students were able to choose which of the three four-day workshops they would attend for the second week. All the keynotes and workshops focused in various ways on the theme of poetics, either from an art philosophical and ontological point of view or reflecting the individual poetics of certain artists, genres or artistic collaborations. As in Helsinki, there was one person (Jarkko Partanen) in charge of collecting and providing documentation material and distributing it on-line via the IP blog.

Contributors in a nutshell:

Keynote lectures: “Notes on Poetics and Choreography” by Ric Allsopp; “The Art of making a Performance – Xavier Le Roy’s Product of Other Circumstances” by Sandra Umatham.; “Work, Practice, Event: On the “Poietic” by Miika Luoto; “Rider in Arena - A History of Contingency” by Elena Giannotti; “Beware the Holy Retarded Whore – The Temporary, Contemporary Contemporaneous Free Style” by Vaginal Davis.

Workshops: “Subjectivation in Solo-work: Focusing on Interaction and Interpassivity in Solo Work” by Victoria Pérez Royo and Kirsi Monni; “Performing Lectures” by Konstantina Georgelou and Jasna Žmak; “Self as Other: Gender Performance and Dispossession” by Sophia New and Martin Hargreaves.

Participating staff (if not mentioned above): Rhys Martin, Eva-Maria Hoerster, Sergej Pristaš, João da Silva.

Performances at HZT: Sheena McGrandles, Eva Meyer-Keller, MA Choreography presentations from Hilleband and Angelidou. Various performances in Berlin in HAU, Sophiensaele, Ballhaus Ost Berlin, Volksbühne and an exhibition in Hamburger Bahnhof.

Producers of the IP at HZT: Eva-Maria Hoerster, Rhys Martin, Ric Allsopp

Documentation: Jarkko Partanen

Blog: <http://erasmusip2013.weebly.com/>

Appendix B: List of Participants

2011 ERASMUS IP PRACTICING COMPOSITION: MAKING PRACTICE
- HZT/ UDK, BERLIN

MA SOLO/DANCE/AUTHORSHIP (SODA), HZT BERLIN, INTER-
UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR DANCE BERLIN (DE)

Rhys Martin (staff)
Ric Allsopp (staff)
Lito Walkey (staff)
Márcio Carvalho
Lisa Kathryn Densem
Hana Erdman
Igor Koruga
Jee-Ae Lim
Willyslaw Praeger
Sonja Pregrad
Joana van Mayer Trindade,
Andrew Wass

MA DANCE THEATRE: THE BODY IN PERFORMANCE, TRINITY
LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE, LONDON (UK)

Martin Hargreaves (staff)
Alenka Herman
Andrew Hardwidge
Ania Paula Paez Pelaez
Maria Elena Molinaro
Konstantina Alexopoulou

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, THEATRE ACADEMY, UNIVERSITY OF THE
ARTS, HELSINKI (FI)

Kirsi Monni (staff)
Satu Herrala
Laura Lehtinen
Katri Liikola
Jarkko Partanen
Kati Raatikainen

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, ARTEZ INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS , ARNHEM
(NL)

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Konstantina Georgelou (staff)
Julian Barnett
Emilie Galiier
Tomaz Simatovic

MA PERFORMANCE DRAMATURGY, ACADEMY OF DRAMA ARTS
(ADA), UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB (HR)

Sergej Goran Pristaš (staff)
Nataša Antulov
Dijana Meheik
Ivan Turkovic-Krnjak

2012 ERASMUS IP CHOREOGRAPHY: THE AESTHETICS AND SOCIAL
EXPERIENCE - THEATRE ACADEMY, HELSINKI

MA DANCE THEATRE: THE BODY IN PERFORMANCE, TRINITY
LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE, LONDON (UK)

Martin Hargreaves (staff)
Lucie Bailly
Metka Dracar
Jennifer Irons
Alessandra Montagner

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, ARTEZ INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS , ARNHEM
(NL)

João da Silva (staff)
Konstantina Georgelou (staff)
Orly Almi
Annika Pannitto
Artemise Plogaerts
Ursina Tossi

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, DANCE PROGRAMME, AMATA, FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY (UK)

Ric Allsopp (staff)
Emmalena Fredriksson

MA PERFORMANCE DRAMATURGY, ACADEMY OF DRAMA ARTS
(ADU) UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB (HR)

Goran Sergej Pristaš (staff)
Andreja Jelcic (staff)
Nataša Antulov
Mila Pavičević
Laura Potrovic

MA SOLO/ DANCE/ AUTHORSHIP, HZT BERLIN, INTER-
UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR DANCE BERLIN (DE)

Rhys Martin (staff)
Sophia New (staff)
Maria Baroncea
Niels Bovri
Céline Cartillier
Flavio Ribeiro
Kiran Kumar
Sergiu Matis
Katrin Memmer
Allison Peacock

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, THEATRE ACADEMY, UNIVERSITY OF THE
ARTS, HELSINKI (FI)

Kirsi Monni (staff)
Ari Tenhula (staff)
Anna Maria Häkkinen
Laura Lehtinen
Kati Raatikainen
Ellen Jeffrey (Live Art and Performance Studies)
Lukas Brychta (Live Art and Performance Studies)
Lauri Mattila (Directing)

2013 ERASMUS IP COMPOSITION: POETICS AND PROCEDURE IN
INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE - HZT/ UDK, BERLIN

MA PERFORMANCE DRAMATURGY, ACADEMY OF DRAMA ARTS
(ADA) UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB (HR)

Sergej Pristaš (Staff)
Jasna Žmak (Staff)
Mila Pavićević
Laura Potrović
Nina Gojic

MA DANCE THEATRE: THE BODY IN PERFORMANCE, TRINITY
LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE, LONDON (UK)

Martin Hargreaves (Staff)
Tamsyn Butt
Gareth Chambers
Catherine Elsen

MA IN PERFORMING ARTS PRACTICE AND VISUAL CULTURE,
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Victoria Pérez Royo (Staff)

Ibon Salvador

Luciana Chieregati

Elisa Arteta

Claudia Fuentes

MA SOLO/DANCE/AUTHORSHIP, HZT BERLIN, INTER-UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR DANCE BERLIN (DE)

Rhys Martin (Staff)

Sophia New (Staff)

David Pollmann

Kyla Kegler

André Uerba

Rodriguez Garcia

Helena Botto

Yasuke Kimura

Ixchel Mendoza

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, THEATRE ACADEMY, UNIVERSITY OF THE
ARTS, HELSINKI (FI)

Kirsi Monni (Staff)

Miika Luoto (Staff)

Soili Huhtakallio

Heli Keskikallio

Veronika Lindberg

Linda Martikainen

Leila Kourkia

MA CHOREOGRAPHY, ARTEZ INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS , ARNHEM
(NL)

João da Silva (staff)

Konstantina Georgilous (Staff)

DANCE PROGRAMME, AMATA, FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY (UK)

Ric Allsopp (staff)

6. Contributor's Biographies

Ric Allsopp is Head of Dance & Choreography and Professor of Contemporary Performance at Falmouth University, UK. He was a Guest Professor at the Inter-University Centre for Dance (HZT), University of the Arts, Berlin from 2006–011. He is the co-founder and joint editor of *Performance Research*, a bi-monthly international journal of contemporary performance (www.performance-research.org) His work has been published in a variety of books and journals including *Frakcija*, *PAJ*, *Tanz-Journal*, and *Theater der Zeit*.

Niels Bovri started his working career as a sound and stage technician for the Flemish Opera, concert stages and fashion events. In 2003 he began a master course in scenography at the Frank Mohr Institute in the Netherlands. His interests in the performativity of stage elements and technic led him to collaborate with the Berlin theatre company Nico and the Navigators in 2004. In 2008 he started creating his own stage concepts and performances. In February 2014 he graduated from the masters programme Solo/Dance/Authorship at HZT Berlin (Hochschulübergreifendes Zentrum Tanz).

Scott deLahunta has worked as writer, researcher and organiser on a range of international projects bringing performing arts with a focus on choreography into conjunction with other disciplines and practices. He is currently a Senior Research Fellow supported by a partnership between Coventry University, Centre for Dance Research (UK) and Deakin University, Motion Lab (AUS), R-Research Director (on sabbatical), Wayne McGregor | Random Dance, and Director of Motion Bank/The Forsythe Company. <http://www.sdela.dds.nl>

Emilie Gallier is choreographer, researcher, director of the PØST Cie. Her work (presented in Norway, France, Luxembourg, and Netherlands) probes ways to expand boundaries by using scores, senses, audience participation, and collaboration. With her artistic collaborators Matthieu Chevallier, Clémence Coconnier, Juliette Bogers, and Héloïse, she re-thinks and transcends limits. She confirmed her use of notation merged with imaginary when she attended the program "Transforme" in the PRCC (Program for Research and Creation in Choreography, Royaumont) directed by Myriam Gourfink, and as she studied Labanotation at the Conservatoire de Paris. In the frame of the Master program in Choreography in ArtEZ (Arnhem, NL), she studied with Eva Karczag, Bruno Listopad, Alison Isadora, Jonathan Burrows, Peter Pleyer, João da Silva, Ric Allsopp. Her research investigates how to transform the matter of performance through the "dorsality" (David Wills); it questions ways to expand performance and to look at it from unforeseen angles.

Konstantina Georgelou works as a performing arts theorist, dramaturge and researcher. She is currently a lecturer and research advisor at Utrecht University and at the ArtEZ Master of Theatre Practices, and collaborates with artistic and educational programmes such as the SNDO, DasArts, Dansateliers and Het Veem Theater. In 2011 she co-curated the

PSi Regional Research Cluster in Athens. She publishes articles internationally including *Performance Research*, *Performance Paradigm*, *Maska*, *On Air*, *ArtEZ Press*. Her research interests concern modes of working together, choreography, dramaturgy and the intersection between performing arts and science.

Saara Hannula is a Helsinki-based performing artist, researcher and educator. She works both as an independent artist and in collaboration with various working groups, collectives and networks, such as the Reality Research Center (FIN) and the SenseLab (CAN). During the past ten years, she has been involved in the creation of nearly twenty performances, performance installations and urban projects, many of which have given rise to new forms of audience participation and co-creation. She is a doctoral student at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture and a regular teacher at the University of the Arts Helsinki.

Dr Martin Hargreaves is the Programme Leader for MA The Body in Performance at Trinity Laban. He was editor of *Dance Theatre Journal* for ten years and has published writings on the choreographic potentials of queer bodies and practices. Dr Martin Hargreaves is the Programme Leader for MA The Body in Performance at Trinity Laban. He was editor of *Dance Theatre Journal* for ten years and has published writings on the choreographic potentials of queer bodies and practices.

Ellen Jeffrey: Having graduated with a BA (Hons.) in Dance Theatre from Trinity Laban Conservatoire, London, Ellen went on to live and work in Finland whilst studying at the University of the Arts Helsinki, graduating with an MA in Live Art and Performance Studies. Working alongside dance artists Misa Brzezicki, Ben McEwen and Gesa Piper, Ellen has performed her own works in Lapland, Finland and the United Kingdom. She currently works as a dance artist for Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Alison Curtis-Jones (Summit Dance Theatre), performing in Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Alongside her performance work, Ellen is a student of choreology at Trinity Laban and is looking forward to commencing her PhD studies at Lancaster University in October 2015.

Kiran Kumar's work is concerned with the relationships that the body, of performer and spectator, makes with dance, image and word. He makes live performances in theatre settings as well as video works and installations with a focus on technology that allows for an investigation of the body. Kiran's dance training began in Singapore, under the mentorship of Bharatanatyam choreographer Santha Bhaskar, and at Chowk Centre for Odissi under the tutelage of Raka Maitra. He has collaborated with the Singapore Dance Theatre and participated in choreography residencies in Toronto, Bangalore and Amsterdam. Kiran holds an MFA in new media from the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong, and has graduated from MA SODA (Solo/Dance/Authorship) at the Inter-University Centre for Dance, Universität der Künste Berlin.

Miika Luoto is a philosopher whose work has focused on phenomenological and post-phenomenological thought as well as a translator of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty among others. He is currently Lecturer in Philosophy and Performance Theory at the Theatre Academy, University of Arts, Helsinki. In addition to numerous articles on Continental philosophy and aesthetics, he has published a monograph (in Finnish) on Heidegger and the

question of art and co-edited a collection of articles on Heidegger's thought. His most recent publication, co-edited with Mika Elo, is *Senses of Embodiment. Art, Technics, Media* (Peter Lang, 2014).

Sergiu Matis studied dance at Liceul de Coregrafie Cluj, Romania, and at the Academy of Dance, Mannheim, with a scholarship from the Tanzstiftung Birgit Keil. In 2001 he joined Tanztheater Nürnberg where he worked with Daniela Kurz, Stijn Celis, Jo Strömgren, Rui Horta, and Jorma Elo. He has lived in Berlin since 2008 working with Colette Sadler, Yossi Berg, Daniel Kok, Jee-ae Lim, and Sasha Waltz. He has presented his own work at Uferstudios, Tanznacht, Tanzfabrik and HAU in Berlin; eXplore Dance Festival and CNDB Bucharest; DanceHouse Dublin; and TanzFabrik Potsdam. He graduated from the MA SODA programme at HZT/UDK Berlin in 2014, where he was a scholarship holder of the German National Academic Foundation.

Kirsi Monni, Doctor of Art (Dance), has worked extensively in the field of dance and pedagogy as a choreographer, dancer, researcher, lecturer and curator since the 1980s. Her research interest is in dance ontology and the theory of performance. She was one of the founders, developers and co-directors of the Zodiak – Centre for New Dance for two decades before becoming Professor of Choreography at the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki in 2009. She has received numerous grants and national awards for her choreographic work.

Sophia New studied Philosophy and Literature with German at Sussex University (1993–1997) and has an MA in Feminist Performance from Bristol University (1998). She is a co-founder of plan b with Daniel Belasco Rogers. Since 2002 they have created over 25 projects for different cities, festivals, and galleries. Their work is often site specific and includes performance, GPS, sound and video. She also has worked as a solo performer and video maker with grants from ArtsAdmin, the Anglo German foundation in London and Isis Arts in Newcastle. She has worked as an independent performer with Antonia Baehr, Penelope Wehrli, Petra Sabish, Gob Squad, and Forced Entertainment. Since 2012 she has also taught on the MA SODA programme at HZT in Berlin. She also regularly teaches Live Art and Performance with Siegmär Zacharias at Folkwang University for the Arts and in Bochum.

Mila Pavićević holds an MA in Performance Dramaturgy from the Academy of Drama Art in Zagreb. As a dramaturge she worked both in the institutional theatres in Zagreb and on the freelance scene. She is a member of Centre of Drama Art and on the editorial board for the performing arts magazine, *Frakcija*. Her primary field of interest is dance dramaturgy and materialist philosophy. She collaborates with choreographers in Croatia and in Berlin including Irma Omerzo (HR), Zrinka Užbinec (HR), Bruno Isaković (HR), Sergiu Matis (RO/DE), Helenu Botto (DE), Selma Banich (HR), and Iva Nerina Sibila (HR).

Goran Sergej Pristaš is a dramaturge, co-founder and member of BADco. performing arts collective. Currently Associate Professor at the Academy of Dramatic Arts, University of Zagreb, he was Program Coordinator at the Centre for Drama Art (CDU) from 1995–2007 and founding editor-in-chief (1996–2007) of *Frakcija*, a magazine for the performing arts. Together with Bojana Cvejić he co-edited *Parallel Slalom. A Lexicon Of Non-aligned Poetics*, (2013); and with Tomislav Medak co-edited *Time and (In)Completion: Images And Performances*

Of Time In Late Capitalism, (2014). He initiated the project Zagreb – Cultural Kapital of Europe 3000, and with BADco. and *Frakcija* participated in the Venice Biennale (2011), Documenta 12, ARCO and numerous festivals and conferences. www.badco.hr

Victoria Pérez Royo is a performing arts researcher (Berlin, Madrid) and Co-Director of the MA in Performing Arts Practice and Visual Culture at Universidad de Alcalá de Henares (Madrid) and Assistant Professor in Aesthetics and Theory of the Arts in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zaragoza. She is a member of the ARTEA (<http://arte-a.org/en>) framework in which she has coordinated and co-organized different projects including *Artistic Migrations, Autonomy and Complexity*, the independent study programme *Expanded Theatricalities*, the series of talks *Rethinking Spectatorship*, and the seminars *Escenas Discursivas* and *There is No Other Poetry than Action*.

João da Silva studied choreography at the EDDC in Arnhem and Theatre Science at the University of Utrecht. He has worked extensively with Mary O'Donnell (Fulkerson) and choreographed a number of small-scale works. Since 1995 he has been a Lecturer at the ArtEZ School of Dance, Arnhem, where, from 2002 to 2014, he was also the head of the ArtEZ Master of Choreography Programme. He is now an Associate Professor at ArtEZ and also a PhD candidate at the University of Utrecht.

Ari Tenhula has been active in the Finnish and international dance scene as a dancer and choreographer and has toured with his dance pieces in Europe, Asia and Latin America. He was the artistic director of Helsinki City Theatre Dance Company 2000–2002. He has created choreographies for dance companies, and for theatre and opera productions. His dance/technology installations have been shown at various venues both in Finland and abroad. He was awarded the Finland Prize in 2003 for his achievements in choreography. Since 2006 he has curated the Moving in November Festival in Helsinki. Since 2008 he has been Professor of Contemporary Dance at the Theatre Academy, University of the Arts, Helsinki.

Jasna Žmak is a dramaturg and writer. She graduated from the Department of Dramaturgy at the Academy of Drama Art, University of Zagreb where she is now an assistant researcher. She has published two performance texts, *Solitaires*, (2011) and *The Other at the Same Time* (2013). Since 2010 she has been a board member of the Center for Drama Art in Zagreb and on the editorial board of the performing arts journal *Frakcija*.

Previous publications in the Kinesis series:

Jeroen Peeters (2015): *Through the Back. Situating Vision between Moving Bodies.*

Kai Lehtikoinen (2014). *Tanssi sanoiksi. Tanssianalyysin perusteita.*

André Lepecki (2012). *Tanssitaide ja liikkeen politiikka.*

Susan Rethorst (2012). *A Choreographic Mind. Autobodygraphical Writings.*

Kirsi Monni (2012). *Alexander-tekniikka ja Autenttinen liike-työskentely. Kaksi kehontietoisuuden harjoittamisen metodia.*

This collection of texts reflects some of the different discourses, practices and approaches explored by the participants of the Erasmus Intensive Project (IP) Practicing Composition: Making Practice initiated and coordinated by the MA SODA (Solo/ Dance/ Authorship) programme at the Inter-University Centre for Dance (HZT), University of the Arts, Berlin (2011–2013). The IP provided a framework for the live, interactive sharing, discussion and analysis of dramaturgical, compositional and choreographic approaches to physically based performance used in a number of practice-led graduate dance and choreographic Master's programmes in Europe.

The book includes keynote lectures, descriptions and documentation of the workshops, with new dialogues inspired by encounters between IP partner programmes. Among the discussed topics are poiesis, poetics, latency, assemblage, formless, interruption, emergent choreography, collective learning environments, framed reality and post-identity politics.

Contributions from: Ric Allsopp, Niels Bovri, Joao DaSilva, Scott deLahunta, Ellen Jeffrey, Emilie Gallier, Konstantina Georgelou, Saara Hannula, Martin Hargreaves, Kiran Kumar, Miika Luoto, Sergiu Matis, Kirsi Monni, Sophia New, Mila Pavičević, Victoria Perez Royo, Goran Sergej Pristaš, Ari Tenhula, Jasna Žmak.



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