

Lost in intervals: falling in between spaces and tenses

Gloomy corridors, the whiteness of the walls, metal bars, isolation rooms, anxiety, gratitude, names of medicines hover around and enter my corporeality as I read memories from mental hospitals during the dim days of November. The handwritten and typed fragments are being slowly yet firmly engraved in the flesh, both their curved lines and content impress themselves on corporeality. In the gathering darkness, I fall in between tenses, locations. The curves of my ribs, the back of my breastbone and the bowl of my hip are filled to the brim with the 500 pages of the text: movement and time freeze, I experience a falling into an unknown reality. Has even the stillness fled, become absent? Walking outdoors brings my corporeality back into the moment, and the fragments of memories are set in motion and settling in their chosen dwelling spaces in the spatiality of corporeality. Breathing finds its easy routes again, and with each step the pavement and the trees around connect with particular memories; the resonance is a loud and clear. Here and now, then and there, I am at the corner of a street and somewhere in another's past events, scattered in between them. Selected fragments hang suspended, move in this corporeality, continuously remolding its contours and spatiality. Those excerpts from others' memories continue haunting me and insisting on artistic actions and writing. How to breathe the multitude of temporalities and spatialities in and around me? What will come out of this?

This essay discusses the nature of temporality and experimentation in moving and writing in an artistic process that forms part of a multidisciplinary research project focusing on Finnish people's memories and experiences of mental hospitals¹. The above description unfolds the sense of altered spatial-temporality and strangeness that occurred at the beginning of the process. In this research journey, corporeality is understood as processual and relational: it becomes a spatial-temporal milieu, an atmosphere or a passage through which events are channelled.

For an artist-researcher whose background is in dance, choreography and somatic movement practices, using written memories to perform artistic

1 *Engraved in the Body. Finnish People's Memories from Mental Hospitals* is a multidisciplinary research project funded by Kone Foundation (2017–2020). The memories were collected in 2014–2015 and stored in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society (SKS).

research was something new, though the topic itself was not². Here, I will try to reveal something about this artistic research process based on written material by referring to the making of a short film, *Here, Somehow* (planned to be shown in 2021), and about writing via an artistic process in which the Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT), a somatic movement method, plays a crucial role. With its stress on the nature of the process, SRT as a practice is not only a medium in the making of art but has also become a medium of artistic research through which transmission between the known and the unknown takes place (Kirkkopelto 2015). This medium continuously challenges and alters one's view on oneself and one's ways of perceiving, sensing, thinking and breathing, and it disorientates the notion of spatiality interlinked with temporality.

The beginning of this artistic research project was a strange one, as I became invaded by a feeling of being lost during my reading of these memories. The sensations and affects I experienced shook my corporeality, rendering it unstable, and the knowing and willing I started to disappear. Hence, the notions of subject and temporality were both blurred, and a fixed, self-contained subject was replaced by a becoming subject intertwined with materialities such as others' writings and the physical buildings of mental hospitals and the grounds in which they were set. The phenomenological approach taken in this essay, in which lived experience is valued, discusses mostly with writers like Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Blanchot and Jean-Luc Nancy, whose ideas by resonating in the reader may make the phenomenon more accessible. However, the artistic process and its temporal and experimental nature remains the focal point.

What exactly are these memories mentioned above? They comprise over 90 pieces of writing by Finnish patients, relatives, staff and their children, and they range from the painful to the grateful, cover the different phases of psychiatric care from the 1930s to the 2010s that this multidisciplinary research project seeks to shed light on via different

2 I worked as a dance artist in a social and health organization for 12 years, where I encountered, among others, people with mental problems and members of staff who questioned the possibility of art to affect, influence or make a difference to the lives of them and that of the institution outside the therapy context.

discursive dimensions and methods³. As described above, I felt drawn to the lived experiences of patients in these places. The way in which the patient is intertwined with the human and non-human environment of psychiatric care and the kind of corporeality institutions produce through the time spent in them, became my main foci. Thus, I exposed myself to their writings, which in turn have pushed me to the boundary of not-knowing, an obscure threshold of temporal multiplicity, in which the read fragments of reminiscences from different decades and institutions guided the artistic process. This research path involving memories, artistic actions and writing through corporeality has been an exploration that has entailed both drifting and following clues, all part of the erratic nature of creative discovery (Borgdorff 2011, 57).

The above description shows something of the ways in which, as proposed by Sara Ahmed, one orientates toward others' memories and is surrounded by them. According to her, "towardness" is a mode of directionality in which one is oriented toward something, toward objects which are "other" than oneself, "not me", and which allows one to extend the reach of one's corporeality. The idea of orientating around something refers a circling movement, it is like being at the center of one's action, where one not only faces, but is faced by things (Ahmed 2006, 115–116). These two modes of orientation are incorporated in my approach, a corporeal attunement starting from reading memories and then fleshing them out in the acts of making the short film and writing. Throughout this research project, others' memories are taken as an "other" that cannot be possessed or controlled, a position in line with Levinasian ethics, in which the otherness of the other, the appreciation and responsibility for the other, exists (Levinas 1996; 2006).

The way in which I attuned to the research material – written memories of mental hospitals – is informed by the practice of SRT. Long-term engagement, 16 years, with SRT has intensified the vulnerability of my corporeality and allowed memories to haunt me and enabled me to slide into spaces and temporalities in which it is possible to perceive things

3 Five researchers with backgrounds in history and art and in visual, cultural and literary studies, who focus on the bodily, spatial, affective, and multisensory aspects of memories are involved in the project. See Jäntti *et al.* (2020).

that are beyond conventional research methods. In SRT, the notion of letting go, which entails giving up one's habits and conventions, ranging from having tensed muscles to ways of thinking, brings an alertness that leads one not only to question one's actions but also into a darkness where the known I starts to disappear. The process of letting go serves experimentation and discovery, since it encourages us to let "it" move us (Skinner 2005), and instead of perceiving things to become the perception (Skinner et al. 1979), that is, to go beyond the expected and known.

Furthermore, the embedded multi-directionality of the corporeal – in which each direction has equal value, no ups and downs exist – and the spatialities of corporeality, like the valleys formed by the hip or the window-like space in the spine, along with immersing oneself in and becoming the images offered by SRT (Dempster 1996; Skura 1990; Skinner *et al.* 1979) erase the boundaries and contours of corporeality and the surrounding environment. During SRT classes, while lying on the floor and experiencing only imperceptible movements, and immersed in poetic images akin to those in haiku poems, one's corporeal materiality is transformed into, e.g., a shadow, moss or mist. Surrendering to the images offered, their lived experience can be felt as timeless, even if only a few minutes has passed. For example, the image of floating in a crystal clear pool and merging with it so that one's outer edges become the outer edges of the pool (Skinner 2005) creates powerful moments with its own lived temporality that overshadows clock time and in which the known I has momentarily disappeared.

The instant readiness, porousness, and availability of corporeality to live through such images leads to other realities and their temporalities and makes it possible to approach the spatial-temporal dimension of, as in the present instance, memories of mental hospitals. Barbara Bolt states that "theory emerges from a reflexive practice at the same time that practice is informed by theory," (Bolt 2007, 29), and it is from that connectedness, along with SRT and the theory underpinning it, that this research also stems. Practicing SRT has cleared a space for these written memories in my corporeality, and my orientation to memories has emerged slowly during the months, and even years, that I have spent in listening and pausing. Moreover, in this process of exposing oneself to memories and sites, the ruptures, gaps and discontinuities that belong to corporeal sensing have blurred, and hence also the borders between the inner and outer, past and present, and the other and oneself.

INTERVAL: RELEASING INTO TIMELESS DARKNESS

I use the term interval to refer to a state where the spatiality of corporeality has become intertwined with the notion of temporality, and the customary orientation between spaces and tenses is lost. Hovering or meandering in an interval, such as a pause or break in activity or as a space between two things, are gaps that relate my lived experiences with SRT to others' memories of mental hospitals in this artistic research project. In reading memories or fleshing them out in movement, I have slipped into a timeless reality, encountering surroundings that are both human and non-human, and at the same time breathing the realities of others in mental hospitals across different decades. These realities are transparent and layered, yet remain perplexing.

The term interval also refers to corporeality as a passage containing various spatialities through which events and the passage itself have passed. Corporeal immersion in memories has produced a kind of thereness and hereness, a disorientation in which one becomes a stranger to oneself. It has meant meandering in the descending darkness, where the strangeness inherent in corporeality encounters patients' memories of mental hospitals. Thus, instead of producing (non)implicit knowledge by conducting a corporeal experiment, this essay concerns the not-known, allowing thought to emerge in praxis and as praxis (Borgdorff 2012, 173; Mersch 2015, 11). In this process, a slippage into obscure prolonged temporal-spatial moments of (dis)orientation occurs.

Etymologically, the term interval derives from Late Latin, where it refers to the space between palisades or ramparts. It also refers to a temporal or spatial space (Online Etymological Dictionary). Here, the term interval acts as not only as a metaphor but also as a lived notion with which to approach the gap in time and space that hangs in between tenses and spaces inside and outside of the corporeal. The idea of the interval may help the reader to relate to the experience of being momentarily lost; a fall has occurred and being appears as non-being (Heimonen 2020). It also refers to the notion of non-knowledge that emerges in artistic acts outside of words and experienced in the bones. The word interval does not tell us about its duration, about how long each occasion lasted; instead, the depth and the length of the lived gap is unknown. In this artistic research project, it marks an obscure area and time of a lived experience and its significance. When one is lost, momentarily or permanently

(Cf. Blanchot 1995, 64), time as duration disappears: instead, there is only a pause in space with no end in sight.

However, to slip into an interval entails anxiety and darkness and the invasion of corporeality, where the meanings of lived spatiality have faded and time has disappeared, as present, past, future and unknown presents and pasts have fused and melted away. The process of surrendering to written memories through corporeality and the unfolding of the ways in which corporeality aligned with selected memories and sites during the making of the short film form the focus of this essay.

SOMEW(HERE)

The making of the short film *Here, Somehow*, involved writing the script, planning and making several visits at different seasons of the year to the former mental hospital of Lapinlahti⁴ in Helsinki, Finland. These visits created a tension between attraction and abhorrence, something that both appealed and was repellent. However, the sites for each scene were chosen according to the quality and intensity of the memory fragment chosen; something about a memory drew me instantly towards it either inside or outside the mental hospital. This added another layer to the situation, in which my corporeality was attuned both to the inner and outer spatialities and materialities when sensing and perceiving forms, shadows, textures, light and color as well as inhaling the past and the present that is always already absent. Absence in presence is also related to forgetting oneself as the known I and becoming a vehicle, a passage through which something of these patients' lived memories may resonate with the spectator.

What, then, were the haunting fragments of memories that insisted on being heard? Some excerpts on the topic of temporality included in the script and as part of the spoken soundscape of the short film are given below.

My first contact with the mental hospital was very frightening, because back then I guessed I would end up in here for the rest of my life. (SKS 353)

⁴ Lapinlahti is the oldest mental hospital in Finland. It was founded in 1841 and it was used until 2009 for treating psychiatric patients.

The thought of an eternal stay creates a powerful impact on corporeality in the form of dark distress in which no room exists for one's personal matters or thoughts, a feeling which retained its hold throughout the artistic process. The resonance of white walls, gloomy corridors and memories in which temporality is taken as an eternal, frightening condition triggered an expectation of experiencing something untoward. Such lived experiences resemble art as described by Levinas (1989, 131–132.): “It is the very event of obscuring, a descent of the night, an invasion of shadow.” A shadow entered into the spatiality of corporeality, the usual way in which time passes was delayed or paused. Through seemingly endless sensuous moments I fell into a sense of the eternal duration of the interval Levinas describes as “the meanwhile, never finished, still enduring – something inhuman and monstrous” (Levinas 1989, 141).

For the first few evenings a sense of emptiness ate away at me. Here I am. Again. The rooms, corridors, hospital slippers, the locked cupboard, everything seemed to taunt me, “here you are, you’ve failed again”. (SKS 484)



Images 1-2. Raimo Uunila, *Here, Somehow*, short film.

In these fragments, the material objects and historicity embedded in them remind the writer of a previous visit(s) and generate acts, sensations and affects. Materiality is firmly rooted in this writer's corporeality as an agent of control and judgment. And in the interplay between the artist and her materials, the smooth stony stairs, tiny windows, and the corridor weave themselves into instant choreography. The materials have agency that

tacitly and explicitly informs the artistic acts with the artist's sensibility and experiences to such an extent that it is difficult to discern the producer – who or what – of the work (Heimonen & Kuuva 2020; Rouhiainen 2017, 148). In this scene, the materiality of the memory as writing is enhanced through its interplay with the slowly decaying materiality of the site. In attuning to and fleshing out this thought, I was only able to move on a low level.

In line with materiality, by moving around the grounds of the mental hospital, my sensibility was intertwined with the destinies of patients who had dwelt and walked in the same sites, as, sensing the ground – gravity passing through my feet to the ground or the floor – I avoided the possibility of being completely lost while moving. Levinas trusts the sensuousness of corporeality in describing how the standing position is “different from ‘thinking’”, further explaining how “the bit of earth that supports me is not only my object; it supports my experience of objects.” The earth thus formed a groundless ground in which sensibility blossomed “beneath reason” (Levinas 2005a, 138).

I felt like a pineapple preserved in a tin (...) Life in the hospital was mind-numbing, just waiting for mealtimes and lying in bed. A complete waste of time. (SKS 487)



Image 3. Raimo Uunila, *Here, Somehow*, short film.

In the scene, the tiny site invited merely stillness and changes of position. No need to do much here. Routines and the notion of waiting are familiar as they belong to practicing and art making, although the excess of time, with mealtimes as milestones, is overwhelming in the extract.

The notion of waiting as the absence of presence, in which there is both an excess and shortage of time, and where according to Blanchot (1999, 51) there is also an absence of time, allowing one to wait, resonates not only with the above fragment and related movement but also to this research process as a whole. Furthermore, SRT, in which the underlying notion, even in the midst of movement, is ultimately about releasing by allowing oneself to be still, even in darkness, in the ground of not-knowing, continues to influence and challenge me. The different temporalities – memories from different decades, the history of the site and my own layered historical corporeality informed by SRT and other movement techniques – overlap in moments of prolonged, frozen absence-presence. The thickness of these temporalities unfold in the space in and around me, and my sensibility reaches towards the unperceivable. Corporeality becomes paler and more transparent than ever, as the experiencing subject becomes constituted outside of itself.

The excerpt cited above also raises the question of the economy of time in mental hospitals. Another writer remarks on how time passed more slowly the healthier one became (SKS 502). During shooting, as an organizer, I felt pressure to stay on schedule and remain within the film's limited budget. However, immersing myself in each fragment of memory and inhaling the materialities and immaterialities around me, experiencing the feeling of being lost between steps and positions intensified with the overlapping dimensions of time. Moreover, my corporeal knowledge of the time needed for each shot taken from a different angle was precise, even though the movement material was not, since it emerged in and with the ambient conditions of the situation, such as the changing light and sounds. Perhaps my notion of the duration of each scene was oddly known (without knowing) through the sense of time embedded in a trained corporeality.

Below, the first temporal fragment of the research material was reported by a patient who had been in an isolation cell, and the second one concerns medication.

*I was forgotten about, all alone in a timeless space.
Worse still, it felt as though I'd moved into the next life,
this was distressing too because it felt like there
was no end in sight. (SKS 390)*

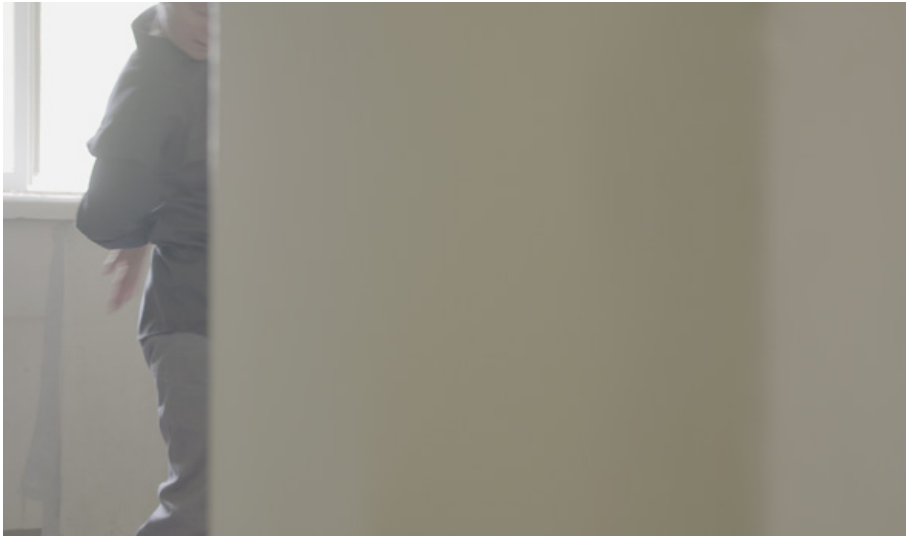


Image 4. Raimo Uunila, *Here, Somehow*, short film.

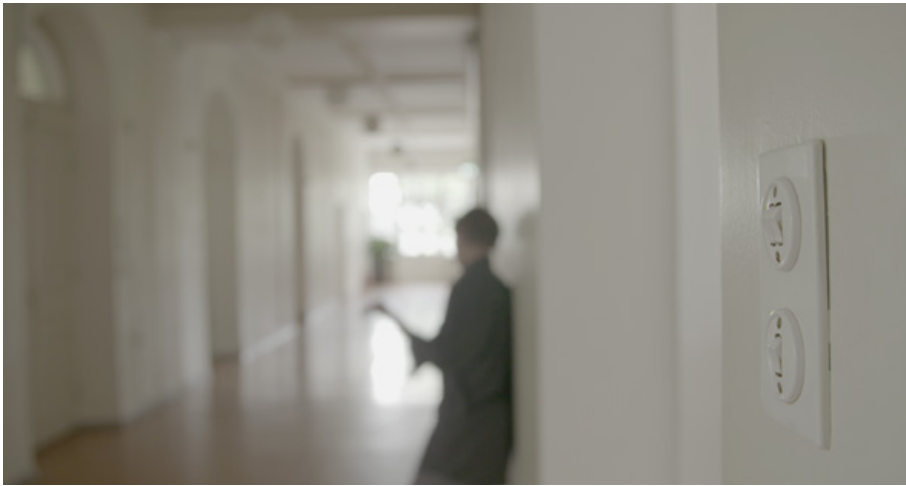
*My heart raced, my mind was filled with comfortless thoughts,
my entire life seemed to be hurtling towards eternal
perdition. Life felt completely pointless. It felt like I'd finally
fallen. (SKS 256)*

The feeling of being lost in a timeless reality resonates with lived experiences, such as during the practice of SRT when a fall into darkness has happened (Heimonen 2020). Although uncertainty about our lived moments connects us, the suffering caused these writers by the feeling of being lost is on another incomparable level. The horror of unending existence imbues the memory fragments cited above; it is almost as if the possibility of dying has been obliterated and replaced by a monstrous otherness. However, these two excerpts can be read as having a connection to death, a situation where the subject no longer has mastery and has ceased to be a subject (Levinas 2005b 70, 76).

The encounter with strangeness was corporeally evoked by reading others' memories and by wandering outdoors in the grounds as well as corridors of Lapinlahti. All these lines of memories, sites and shabby corners invited me



Images 5-6. Raimo Uunila, *Here, Somehow*, short film.



first to pause and to take notice, from which later this movement emerged. Pausing was a necessity. The anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis writes about stillness as “still-acts” in the encounter with the forgotten, buried or discarded, and how historical dust is wiped off in the awakening of the forgotten corporeality that questions the flow of time (Seremetakis 1994, 12, 23-43). Dust shifted when the sedimented layers of memories awoke, resonated in my and the memory writers’ corporeality. The notion of dust is familiar in SRT, since through kinaesthetic cultivation, in which movement is more skeletal than muscular, there seems to be a space between the joints and limbs, and “a suspended relationship to gravity which can be likened to the suspension of a dust particle in a shaft of sunlight” (Skinner *et al.* 1979). In this artistic process, to pause and to be still, even in the midst of movements when encountering the strangeness and unperceivable, enable dust as the forgotten and unknown to linger in one’s corporeality and suspend the temporal flow of movement.

The moments of falling in between intervals, in which the density of the sensible intensifies and the known 'I', now attuned to the situation, movement, and each memory at hand disappears, have been breathed as timeless. One's uniqueness or singularity is formed in listening through corporeality, as being "at the same time outside and inside, to be open from without and from within," as Nancy (2007, 14) describes it. According to Levinas, the singularity of the subject emerges when one is faced by the other and backed up against oneself, although this singularity is far from being identifiable but rather it is about the passivity of the exposure (Lingis 2006, xxxvi-xxxvii). In the making of the short film, I experienced a temporal disorientation, in which the written memories, the reference literature of the history of psychiatric care, and corporeal sensations in the grounds of a former mental hospital were interlaced, entangled, hovering in and around my corporeality. As if time paused, and I was left and trapped in between temporalities; meanwhile, I was lost between here and there. And I was not lost. I was floating in the net of tenses and (non)senses.

Hovering in between intervals, tenses and sites underlined the impossibility of grasping the passing of time in all its intensity. Nancy speaks of a landscape in painting, poetry or on the screen, describing how it opens into the unknown, and how it is "the presentation of a given absence of presence". The land depicted is occupied with opening, since there is no presence, and there is "no access to an 'elsewhere' that is not itself 'here.'" (Nancy 2005, 59). In attuning and moving in the empty rooms, corridors and park of Lapinlahti, I was enveloped by strangeness, in which the materiality of the former mental hospital's main building, the weather conditions, and the surrounding trees momentarily revealed elements of a multi-layered history with its lost presences. It was as if I were on a threshold, somehow somewhere just there, where the spatiality of corporeality met the surrounding sites and realities. The landscape as an opening of space in which absence happens, or the suspension of a passage that happens as a separation, has access to something that remains inaccessible (Nancy 2005, 60-62). Nevertheless, the strangeness prevails as the tension is introduced in the form of an interval (remaining obscure, revealing little).

This whole artistic process is about entering a dark room or a field, bare and vulnerable, where one just acts. Art is understood as an event where one's being darkens, and as a way of bringing things back in their

fundamental strangeness (Bruns 2002, 220). Facing strangeness is at the core of this experimental process, in which SRT insists on one questioning one's habits, thoughts and modes of perception while at the same time intertwined with and embedded in the surrounding materialities and immaterialities.

Lived moments in planning and shooting the short film as well as the time spent reading others' memories can be linked to the tradition in performance projects of the artist's perspective altering time. Since the Happenings in the 1950s, various deployments of altered time have shifted the spectator's experience of temporality to de-naturalize the sense of official, clock time (Goldberg 1988, 128; Heathfield 2000, 107). One example of such a durational work is Annette Arlander's series of twelve one-year projects called *Animal Years*, based on the Chinese calendar. She visited an island once a week for a year and documented it with a video camera, and even revisited one of the series of events, the action of walking on the shore, 14 years later. The videos show the landscape as a process, yet the transformations in time can only be detected by attending to repeated actions of relatively short duration (Arlander 2014; 2018). Her focus was on performing the landscape through cyclical time in the course of different seasons, not on her experience as a performer; my attention is embedded in transpersonal corporeality, through which some dimensions of the spatial temporalities encountering the human and non-human pass, leaving traces to follow – or leading to a gap, an interval.

WRITING: THE IMPOSSIBLE ATTEMPT TO DIVE INTO THE LAYERS OF TEMPORALITY

The impossibility of writing through corporeality in artistic research – and yet still to write – forms one (unresolved) problem, in which naming and un-naming, rewriting and erasure produce on each occasion a certain kind of temporality through which something from the lived, sensuous experiences of moving may continue to resonate, as in this essay. Doubt remains: has this writing been sincere with respect in transposing or inscribing this fleeting phenomenon – can it ever be?

As the singular individual is firmly tied to time and space, the danger exists of abstraction through thoughts. The affective and sensuous states,

the incompleteness, the unsaid and unheard that are valued form an airy spacious support in corporeality, as the research object is not taken into possession. However, the tension in encountering otherness in the written material, the sites with their particular atmospheres in the process of making the short film and writing grows. How do I let the unnamable and vague yet lived resonance with its temporal intensity in corporeality blossom, and much do I argue for and justify something that is grounded in darkness, ruptures and gaps? Time flees, appears, disappears, the effects of its absent presence while writing is felt in the bones.

To circle around the phenomenon, to write with and through it, to repeat, re-enter and retreat, to add and erase, is a way of approaching temporality that avoids determinations yet trusts the layers of movement, space and silence that words carry. Writing acts as a passage to the unknown, and yet demands the writer be attuned and exposed to the rhythm of the writing while not being wholly aware of what the written corporeality writes, forming an exploration with others' memories, and eventually slipping into an interval.

Furthermore, the spiral process in the practice of SRT that has spread into writing does not cohere with this linear way of putting words on a line that would need more space around it or drawings such as those introduced by other choreographers (e.g., Fahlin 2018; Bauer 2018) that invite another temporality in reading, as the eyes follow the curves or empty spaces. However, can something of the nature of temporality be brought to light in this essay despite of the demands imposed by its structure?

Inscribing the processes of reading memories and moving has led to a reality of its own that entails an attunement and waiting for words to arrive that might carry a connection, even if a vague one, between the corporeal experience and the experience of writing. In the act of writing, the resonance of words and movement is crucial, since although moving and writing differ in their realities, something leaches from one to the other (Heimonen 2009, 296). Valuing the immediate sensuous contact of memories and sites before conscious thought is crucial. Thus, the connection between the lived experience and language is important here, since language is not present merely to inform or define a phenomenon but is about meandering, and thus its resonance may offer something beyond individual experience (Pylkkö 1998).

A non-personal intensity in experience, moving and art making is part of this artistic research, since artistic processes have led me into obscure and

contingent realms, where the boundaries of corporeality are constantly shifting and disappearing. These realms entail temporality that is about forgetting, releasing, and entering a reality where clock time is absent, where one falls into the sediment of the lived histories of others and of one's own. Writing may capture movement, yet only by ungrounding the author, choreographer, or dancer, as a self-conscious author, while, similarly, the choreography exceeds the intentions of choreographers, dancers and audiences (Allsop and Lepecki 2008, 7-8).

Writing is about falling as failing to provide answers to the question of temporality in this project, since corporeality produces a multitude of questions with inaccessible answers, and the now is always already gone. However, it is important to approach the inaccessible. In *Body Weather* performance training, Joa Hug has taken the call for articulation and unfinished thinking by Borgdorff (2011, 60) seriously in his artistic research, and has embedded linguistic reflection in a touch-based body practice called the Manipulations, in which the practice itself avoids the division between conceptual and non-conceptual language (Hug 2020). Such commitment to movement practices takes time, often decades, and it is only through practice that each technique, with its background thinking and theories, becomes engraved in corporality, while practice needs to be continuous to keep the unfolding, shifting, surprising process alive. Ben Spatz (2015) and Borgdorff (2011, 46) both stress artistic and bodily practices, from which understanding, insights, knowledge, and products emerge, in the artistic process. However, different bodily techniques also have different vocabularies and ways of using language. In SRT, drawing or/and writing are done at the end of each class with the aim of integrating the lived into one's life-world. Thus, moving and writing/drawing are not seen as separate or hierarchical and the uniqueness of each mover's temporal process is valued. Strokes or (in)comprehensible words drawn on paper may open up something of the lived experience, escaping words yet relating to, obscuring, enlarging or questioning the reality one lives.

What about those who wrote their memories of mental hospitals? Did they relive the events they described such that traces or wounds induced by these awoke in them and spread to their writing? Was their writing about a tearing, cutting movement, as Blanchot (1993, 28) proposes, reminding us that etymologically the tool for writing, the stylet, was also a tool for making incisions?

The following fragment shows the weight and the unpredicted power of mental illness on the self and the whole life span.

The life of the lunatic asylum did not really belong to my plans. (...) Insanity cuts off years, studies, fingers, and the spine. (SKS 467)

The damage wrought by the illness pierces and spreads into the writer's past and future, eroding corporeality; the violent cutting and the spatiality of the various scales on which it occurs in this excerpt impact strongly on my corporeality. For some, writing about their memories was too painful, while others appreciated the interest shown in them by the research project, and writing seemed, through the cutting process, to clear an opening for possibilities to deal with past events. For my part, writing with these writers' memory fragments and my immersion in them through corporeality acknowledges the alterity in them and in myself, and leads me to question the ethicality of my (artistic) deeds throughout the research process.

And yet, writing hovers between the saying and the said, notions used by Levinas that belong to answering and taking responsibility for the other and that aim at being sincere to the phenomenon in writing about it. When something is said, something else retreats. There is something radical in the act of saying; it is directed first of all to someone as a corporeal exposure and goes beyond being thematized to reveal something which belongs to the sensible and corporeal before openness and intentionality. In contrast, the said belongs to the domain where everything can be known and determined. However, the saying must be said in order to make it understandable, while at the same time it is betrayed. The act of saying emerges from this constant movement (Levinas 2006, 5-6, 49; 1996, 22-23). The tension between the saying and the said keeps movement and the sediment of the past, present and future alive. And the more incomprehensible the writing, the more loyal it is to sensuous corporeality, although the act of saying challenges the demands of communicability.

As, etymologically, temporal refers to such notions as the earthly, secular, proper time or season and the stretch of time (Online Etymological Dictionary), I attune through the sediment of corporeality to write with and in the earth, in this season, while inviting the events lived in the process of making the short film and innumerable re-readings of the research material to dwell corporeally on one morning in September.

The radiating gloominess of the walls of the mental hospital, echoes of whispers, of touch and of cries along and in the corridors crawl along my skin. They are palpable in the silent grey of the morning that enshrouds this room, my shoulders and my brow. Raindrops sparkle on the window, the bigger ones flow heavily downwards. In a moment their trails have disappeared. The distance from and intimacy with the warm days in August two years ago during shooting coexist without conflict. The firm and gentle touch of memories of snowfall and the light of February intermingle with the ever-shifting raindrops striking the window, becoming transparent and eventually, perhaps, sliding into oblivion. Or perhaps not, since they may continue sparkling intensely, reorganizing memory and forgottenness, the stony steps of the staircase with its shabby corners and metal bars engraved in the flesh on re-entering this room. Can thoughts and artistic deeds related to others' memories be lightened and eased by the wailing autumn wind? Or has my time spent with these memories permanently changed something in my corporeality despite of the evanescent nature of permanence? The dust moving in and around memory and corporeality creates space; it is about to change from lingering into a condition of almost landing on a page or on the earth as a token of its presence. Only almost. Lived temporal intensities keep on stretching until a break, forgottenness, shame, oblivion, sadness, anger, boredom, relief occurs. Do these lines of words tend to pile up and then curve again to prolong (almost) the inevitable farewell in this season of farewells? Sitting at the table and looking at the script written on the wind makes me wonder if I can ever let go of temporality, since the touch of materiality and immateriality in and around, present and past, that of things in my lifeworld and that connected to the project have eroded, engraved, cut, pierced into my corporeality, and their traces will continue awaking and disturbing me by their contingent tempo. And now, as I am tightly wrapped round by the notion of temporality that has rippled through my corporeality demanding even more space in it – am I face-to-face with death, the supreme condition of temporality?

These lines illuminate an experimental way of approaching writing as a method of inquiry, in which attuning to the memories, sites, corners and corridors of a mental hospital through corporeality with its spatialities affects the writing process during particular hours of the day and seasons with their light and shadows. Only in the act of writing, not before it, does

one get to know what one knows. All these factors comprise a layered field of perceptions, sensations, non-hierarchical affects imposed by the duration, closeness, or distance from the event. Writing, engaging with language and words through corporeality and movement seeks to go beyond discursive logic (Gansterer, Cocker & Greil 2017; Hug 2020). And here, writing is excessive, abrupt, as it searches hopelessly for modes of knowing, relating, and aligning with the temporality of memories.

DISAPPEARING PRESENCES

The situation of being lost in an interval is an essential feature of this experimental artistic research project. Pondering temporality engenders loss and solitude in the sense of having to face one's decisions and (artistic) acts, and the inevitable approach of death. Arlander (2014) asks whether attending to cyclical time, with its seasonal changes, instead of linear time strengthens the static notion of time and one's world view. Notions of time affect the way in which one aligns with temporality in each instance. For me, wandering among sites and written memories and awareness of one's investment in the cultivation of corporeality through somatic practices over several decades have all shown how the artistic process unfolds, intersects, transposes, and reveals something while hiding something else. Moving corporeality is a passage through which time passes and which makes time in choreography.

The notion of time has altered one's corporeality rendering it even more obscure and strange, and far from linear. Levinas sees time as "the very relationship of the subject with the Other" (Levinas 2005b, 39) or "infinite time" (Levinas 2005a, 268) both of which resonate with SRT in this artistic process in which the alterity of the other – memories, sites and oneself – that cannot be known, grasped or held onto is emphasized. Temporality creates an other that cannot be possessed without losing its otherness, even if its recognition has needed words, sentences.

Through practice, by being attentive to corporeality and being interwoven with others' memories, the history of a mental hospital and the on-site atmosphere, the layers of temporalities become alive and porous in one's corporeality. At the same time, encountering strangeness in them and in oneself, the singular self has been revealed, its way of being in the world, and how place and time are also singular when they meet each other

and the individual. Furthermore, communication may take place through the short film, if artworks are understood through the flesh, from a singular place that offers the chance of an encounter and shows the significance of experiencing a particular phenomenon (Varto 2012, 153–154).

The loss of something that will never return grew intensively when the shooting of the short film was over. Several months of reading the material, the year needed to finish the script and the shooting left me with a feeling of exhaustion and the void. A temporal passage in and around me had opened and it felt abandoned when the shooting was over. Time spent on the project had altered my corporeality and left a lasting imprint on it. Or perhaps the traces and wounds in my corporeality will fade, erode, and pass away silently or continue making their noise. Perhaps all this can be described as gravity, as the pull of momentousness, risk, solemnity, and urgency.

And yet, do I lean on the past because the present is already absent, while nevertheless carrying the need for endless future productivity at unbearable speed? Or, instead, would doing less open the artist up to the temporal dimension (Kunst 2015, 192)? Is it not so that the intensity and the length of time invested in each project leave something in the corporeal that is hidden, unnamable and obscure? Is this the risk to be taken, or is it enough, when stepping into the darkness, to trust an unknown corporeality, and give it the authority (cf. Bataille 1988, 7) to lead the artistic process? Trusting uncertainty might sound adventurous and bold, yet it entails fear, suffering, suspicion, doubt. The subject needs no gratification; the absence of the ego and the passing of time allow layers of lived and written histories to unfold at a fortuitous pace. My corporeality has been a carrier of memories; they have been given a space to dwell whatever the “end product” turns out to be.

The slow releasing of the intoxication induced by fates, memories and sites, the letting go of exhaustible realities and eternities are to be hoped for. Darkness as non-localizable temporality remains, and is darker than ever. In the midst of a disappearing presence, I align myself with the lines written by Blanchot (1999, 84), which resonate with this state of curving discontinuous pondering:

“They went, motionless, letting presence come. — Which, however, does not come. — Which, however, never already came. — From which, however, comes any future. — In which, however, every present disappears.”

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