MOVEMENT RESEARCH

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Tristan Garcia Nina Power Sri Louise Bojana Cvejić Mette Edvardsen Yves Citton **Eleanor Bauer Austin Gross** Nikima Jagudajev **Ingrid Luquet-Gad Anne Juren Daniel Blanga Gubbay** Alice Chauchat Franco Bifo Berardi **Tamara Antonijevic** Henrike Kohpeiß Ana Vujanović Ellen Söderhult Vanessa Desclaux **Graham Harman**

Mårten Spångberg (Ed.)









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Acknowledgement

This is an ordinary book but it is this book and only this book. In the ordinary things tend to become less visible. Details lose their "being special", although maintaining specificity, in favor or the unfolding of a landscape, an overview that without homogenizing still offers us to comprehend what is yet to be seen, understood or cared for.

This book, that was a magazine, is here now and yet it has only began. This is the starting point of this book's job, to be used and misused, to be studied and overlooked, to be something that isn't exactly wise or makes an astonishing point but that hopefully makes/creates? thought, that generates movement and that rearranges bodies. That is the task of this book, to generate agency, whatever agency to those and that to come. Thanks to all that use, thanks to all those hours – hopefully many or even more – when it is active as an open challenge to make happen differently.

Thanks also and most of all to the contributors of this publication. A gang that has put together thinking and

thought, minds and bodies, to exceptional patience and conviction. You made this book that is ordinary particularly unique.

Thank you even more, or even most of all to Moriah Evans whose spirit and enthusiasm made this book happen in the first place. Her cool and her mercilessness has been key and still is.

Thank you to Lauren Bakst who took on the endless task of proofing all those text with an exceptionally generous attitude and specificity. Impressive plus and a bit more.

Look what we have done together.

Thanks also to Movement Research and Barbara Bryant who through their long and short term work in dance and choreography that didn't only make this book happen but also provided the ground for that it could happen in the first place. A book that rests on the work of an organization where curiosity has been its first dictum.

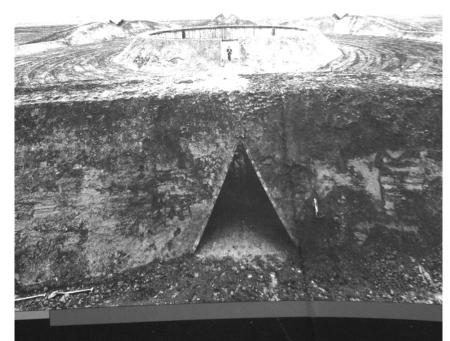
Thanks finally to Emmilou and Vega Lakritz Rößling för being there and entertaining whilst making this book real.

Now this book is out there with you. Spread it and don't be thankful but instead make it yours, own it and keep its pages open to the public.

CONTINUOUS ALTERED

PROJECT DAILY

The Writings of Robert Morris



Robert Morris

Introduction

Mårten Spångberg

Why movement research now? Well, obviously movement research all the time and especially today.

If you pass on something far fetch enough the response might just be similarly surprising. Perhaps it would have been more reasonable to propose people to write about - well whatever important topic, we all know them, but indeed the result might have become more predicable or lost its urgency behind a wish to be good.

Somewhere the French artist Francis Alÿs said that he preferred bad ideas in front of really good ones, because with half mediocre ideas he could be much more direct and experimental. Alternatively, good ideas generate beneficial and expected results, how could they otherwise be good ideas?

So here we are, some 20 essays and propositions responding to a call that wasn't much more than, what about movement research today?

Movement research was a phenomenon that showed

up in the later part of the 70s, initially in New York but soon in wider circles of dance practitioners. It could be considered an expanded understanding of dance in which a broader range of body practices could be integrated and where the aim first of all wasn't to produce dances for an audience but for those that practiced and their well-being. In other words forms of dance where shape and form was subordinate to the body's functions, desire and awareness.

Movement research further had a political dimension, not as representation but in respect of how it coincides with a historical moment when bodily awareness is gaining new kinds of interest and where alternative practices are making their way into dance, may that have been of eastern origin, to mention just a few tai chi, chi gong and numerous forms of yoga, emanating from different kinds of therapeutic methods such as Feldenkrais, Alexander technique, Body Mind Centering and similar, or being derived from more esoteric practices, meditation, Kundalini and so forth. Movement research is moreover grounded in a moment when the politics of and around the body is questioned and transformed, not least the understanding that the personal is political which also politicizes the body in new ways. Movement research more than so also comes out of desire to democratize the body, in respect of its internal hierarchies but more obviously to give prominence to all kinds of bodies concerning size, form, age, race, gender, class, social belonging etc. which also means that forms of practice, dancing and moving deviates from conventional forms of skill, technical ability and in general homogenized techniques. Movement research in other words is not a matter of making oneself and one's body available for a choreographer or any other regulating power bit instead of creating awareness of one's body and self in different dancerly as well as social environments.

Movement research although a rather diffuse and open phenomena or episode in western dance history was incredibly important for dance and choreography in general. It was perhaps a part of an organic development but never the less critical in respect of establishing what we might call contemporary dance. But as much as movement research was central to dance for a number of years it at some point in the mid 80s came to lose it relevance. One important reason definately had to do with that movement research focused on the politics of the body in the sense of practice and awareness and was not primarily concerned with dance or movement as political representation something that become crucial especially in the second part of the 80s.

As much as movement research was a child of its time there is however something that in a way makes it impossible already from the start. Interestingly, when philosophy and aesthetic theory, including visual art to a large extent dethrones essence in favor of language, dance and in particular movement research is obsessing about authenticity and, in lack of a better wording, the possibility of an expression of a "true self". A paradox appears to hide in the fold between a wish for authenticity (not least through different practices bundled together under the notion authentic movement) and the personal is political. This paradox is what makes movement research somewhat hopeless. The moment when identity politics makes its entrance in the artistic domain in general and more or less quickly in dance it, needless to say, becomes somewhat difficult to argue for authenticity as Butler's elaboration of the subject and the body as performative rests on the necessity that everything is practices and negotiated. The moment when identity becomes politics there is simply no place for either authenticity or autonomy, and that is both the up- and down-side of Butler's thinking. With identity politics the personal is political on the one hand gains a completely new understanding, namely that every choice made by a human being already is an iteration into the world and that provokes politics. More over an identity without foundation is the individual's problem, the responsibility is all on the person, which also means that identity becomes subject to economy. Identity turns into a matter of affordance and investment and hence primarily a concern for the already privileged. It is indeed interesting to take into account how Judith

Butler, although involuntarily, opens for a kind of hyper individualism that plays out perfect in neoliberal capitalism and how she implicitly crosses out the possibility of being equal, which might be naïve but never the less the moment when identity is articulated through performativity – supported by Austin and Derrida – identity and the body becomes a matter of positioning oneself.

It might be an exaggeration to argue that movement research relies on authenticity but it is not to conclude that it rests on an understanding that the body goes beyond language and, so to say, has its own reality. Movement research insists on awareness but it is an awareness of something external to the self. Forms of awareness that one through practice can develop not least in favor of being in harmony with one self. Postmodernism in general and identity politics in particular dissolve the opportunity of forms of awareness that is external to the self and turns awareness into something that always is an awareness in respect of what language enables, which is to say that one's awareness of the body is language awareness of a body that is accessible only through and as language. This is the moment when movement research deflates and turns into something utterly uncool.

One result of Judith Butler's ideas is conceptual dance

that exactly like conceptual art in the early 70s transforms art, or in our case dance, into a matter of signs and reason. Conceptual dance might present bodies but these bodies are, so to say, not of flesh and blood but only tokens and signs, and signs generate meaning not sensation. Consequently, dance becomes a matter of reading and interpretation not of experience and sensation, of being smart and able to decipher what a "dance" means and not of tactility, intimacy or transformation.

Of course movement research does not disappear. Not at all it is still practiced but it never the less was pushed of center stage and the term lost signification. Over the last decade, give and take, it however seems like practices connected to movement research is making their reentry into dance. Under new names certainly and with new relations to the world, society, the body, dance and what it means to be human. This anthology is an attempt to put focus on what those practices are and how they generate new forms of awareness or knowledge related to what kind of politics and political situations.

What does it mean to practice yoga guided by a person on YouTube that pronounce Namaste as if was an anti-depressant? Or, what does it mean to practice yoga on a daily basis in a society that makes money on all our resilient bodies? What does it mean to obsess about Pilates or Kundalini when physical and spiritual well-being has become commodities, or when your subject, or identity, has become something one invests

in and has transformed into one of your most important possessions? Or the other way around, does body practices of different kind today carry with them forms of resistance or even the potentiality for forms of insurrection? Can we identity forms of dance that generate forms of subjectivity that is posing a threat to our global capitalism? Is this a kind of dance 2.0 or a recapitulation of what we already know? Can we consider movement research not just as body practice but as ways of practicing being together differently?

We are not interested in one answer but instead in the multiplicity of possibilities and what can open up between perspectives. The contributors invited to this volume come from radically different places and they tackle or care for movement research in equally different ways. Some start from the body and the studio others take on activist perspectives or use movement research to venture into poetics or philosophy, imagination or political critique. As we said a somewhat far fetched entry point can not seldom generate surprising results.

The texts in this anthology has (with a couple of exceptions) been published before, in the magazine Performance Journal, a magazine published by the organization Movement Research in New York, which I was asked to be the editor of for the Spring 2018 issue.

After lengthy discussions with editor in chief Moriah Evans the somewhat self-referential thematic arrived; what if we make an issue of Performance Journal published by the organization Movement Research about movement research? And it seems that what came out of this somewhat ridiculous idea is that movement research, however in a very different costume is more active than in a long time and that both Performance Journal and Movement Research are important resources in dance.

But why should these text remain in New York City which is where the magazine predominantly is circulated when it can reach so many more. Here the so many more is, and the book will also be distributed for free and will be available on the internet.

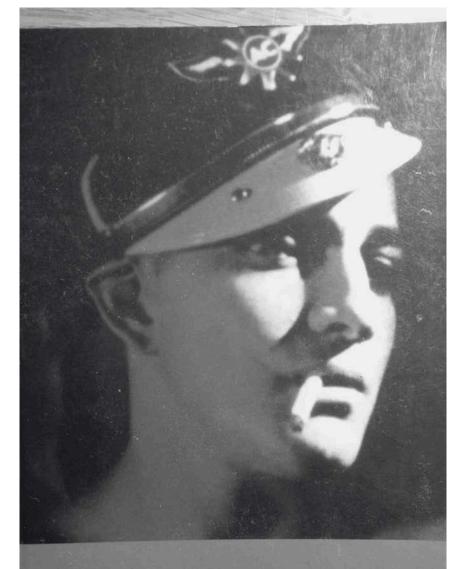
The contributions in this volume were commissioned during the spring 2017 which is one of the reasons why recent political events in the world, art and dance, that would have been highly relevant to include, is only implicitly present. It was on the other hand, this time, important to curate a publication that concerned dance and didn't use artistic practice as a vehicle for political engagement or activism, at least not directly but instead turn towards movement research and look for political relevance and potentiality in practices of the body and movement.

The images in Movement Research is the result of a

commissioned to the American choreographer Jennifer Lacey, who herself has been and is an extraordinary force in respect of movement research. The commission was simply to send images of books that for her has been crucial to her concerning movement research.

Movement Research is the first unauthorized continuation of the 2017 publication Post-Dance edited by Danjel Andersson, Mette Edvardsen and Mårten Spångberg. During the coming years further volumes using similar formats will show up, without any particular periodicity but they will show up. These books are created by and for us who make dance without publishing houses or official distribution opportunities, not least in order to be able to pass them out for free. Because at the end of the day those books are meant to be instruments, instruments in the work we engage in together, namely to create a wild and amazing conditions for movement, dance and choreography.

Why movement research now? It's obvious.



BLACK LEATHER LUCIFER

THE FILMS OF KENNETH ANGER

CULT MOVIE FILES

Twelve Rules to Put Thought in Motion Tristan Garcia

I Let be

Maximize the possible. Entertain the possibility of material things, of real as well as imaginary things, of each part of every thing, of each occurrence of every thing throughout time, of contradictory things, of impossible things;

Treat each possibility equally;

Make free and equal possibilities the element of thought.

II Map the situation of thought

Tell great theoretical accounts, so as to understand our situation: e.g., the emergence of modernity, and its decay;
Ascertain the principles that circumscribe a situation of thought: classical concepts of the absolute, the eternal, the in-itself, authority; modern concepts of autonomy, presence, intensity, emancipation; Understand how each concept is the hidden alliance of an image and an idea.

III Locate the cardinal promises of thought

In learned thinking, in popular cultures, seek everywhere and always for the concepts that undergird an era or culture as its principles;

Find the initial sense of a thought's promise, and the image that first struck the mind to allow an idea to direct life (e.g., the image of electric current, which has paralleled the modern idea of intensity and of "intense living"); Set thought's promises against their longterm effect on life: fulfillment, resistance, exhaustion, failure.

IV Take seriously any idea that orients a thought

Learn to familiarize yourself with any idea, though it seems distant, foreign, antagonistic;

Demonstrate nobility and never belittle an antagonistic idea; Strive to augment, rather than resist, what comes through thought.

V Never set one principle against another

Avoid moral and external criticism of a thought; such criticism does no more than object to consequences;
Do not conflate an idea with its defenders; rather, show yourself capable of making it your own as well;
Nothing that can be thought is foreign to anyone who can think: engage as thoroughly as possible in the ethical and internal criticism of any thought.

VI Determine the advantage and the cost of every thing

Establish the inverse functions of the thought in question, as in: what is gained for what is lost, and what is lost for what is gained;

Identify the advantage of a radical bias: what it alone can allow you to see and think (i.e., the advantage of idealism, the advantage of realism);

Estimate the price to pay for adopting a bias: the blind spot of a lucid thought (what idealism lacks with respect to real-ism; what realism lacks with respect to idealism).

VII Set the most radical biases back to back

Find and raise the watershed ridge between two thoughts oriented by two radically opposed ideas; Accept without the slightest pathos the tragic irreconcilability of the situation. Above all, do not seek a compromise between or hybrid of the two positions or otherwise negotiate an intermediary solution;

Use the arguments of one side against the other. Allow one to illuminate the failings of the other, and vice versa. Do not claim that each side has its share of the truth but, rather, that the one and the other are completely correct, until one shows the other to be wrong. Pay heed to extreme ideas. Work always with the most radical thoughts, the ones that put the most strenuous, opposing stretch on the field of thought.

VIII Draw a new line of thought that is distinct but equal, equal but distinct

Find a line of balance, a ridge, from which to consider the most opposed camps at an equal remove;

Be not cowardly but courageous in maintaining a line of thought that evades all camps. To classical and reactionary minds, which condemn the indistinction of all things to which late modernity has led, reply the following: You are correct, we must draw distinctions; but your purpose in drawing them is to reintroduce hierarchies. To modern and postmodern minds, which condemn the introduction of hierarchies in all things, reply: you are correct, we must equal-ize; but you seek to equalize by making everything indistinct, by eliminating all categories (species, genres, classes);

In all areas of thought, make do by observing at the same time both the need for distinction and the need for equality.

IX Transform a current non-place of thought into its future locus

Have the patience to linger long in a fallow middle ground of thought, and refuse to take part on either side: like the world itself, split yourself between antagonistic ideas, not to reunify the world but to transform the no-man's land be-tween enemies into a new locus of thought for others one day to settle;

Rather than deliver content to serve as a lesson in

thought, make your thought into an exemplary gesture, which others can imitate in their own way;
Build your thought to be a space where future minds can freely dwell.

X Resist the future domination effects of your own thought

Behave in such a way as to change your ideas as little as possible when a dominated idea becomes dominant;

Draw no legitimacy from a mere sense of being in the minority and misunderstood: always envisage the moment when what you think becomes the majority opinion, and acknowledge that our idea will become that of a school of thought;

Neutralize in advance the authority effects of what you think, especially the paradoxical domination effects inherent to the most liberal and emancipatory ideas.

XI Keep thought from legislating over life, and keep life from determining thought

Do not think for the defense of your life (your tastes, your values, your biases);

Do not live for the defense of your thought;

Hold to thought as to a non-living part of a singular, sensitive, suffering living organism, a part that is universal, that never feels or suffers. Imagine thought as an organ of the universal, developed by the human species

as well as by other animal species: the part of life that escapes—or tries to escape—life. Imagine thought as the sole irenic place, where each of us can try to escape the interests of our life, and seek concord with all that thinks. Imagine that life by the same token escapes thought.

XII Render powerful

Do not forget that the purpose of thought can be anything: that the purpose of life is whatever matters to life. Consider that he who thinks is dealing with anything that is possible, and that what lives is always choosing and sacrificing possibilities;

In thought anything is freely, equally, and distinctly possible; for what lives everything is linked and everything varies. Distinguish the possible from power (what renders possible or impossible). Acknowledge that the greater the possibility, the lesser the power; that the greater the power, the lesser the possibility;

Think so as to render possible; live so as to render powerful.

RICHARD KERN

MODEL RELEASE



TASCHEN

From the Sad Body to the Moving Body Nina Power

Introduction

What is a body? Is there anything else? Where should we look to find out what it means? The body is both obvious and hidden, complete, but unfinished, damaged, strange even to ourselves, we who are nevertheless nothing but this body. I want to try to investigate this body, firstly negatively, critically, and then, afterwards, to think passionately, collectively about what it might become.

In this regard, the essay is divided into two parts: firstly, a negative diagnostic account of the twenty-first century body via Juvin, Bifo, Agamben and Zupančič, and secondly, a more positive account of the possibilities of the moving body, as solitary and as collective. The second part becomes more speculative, but here I draw on the work of Cavarero, Deleuze and Guattari, and Katsiaficas.

1.0 We, The People of the Body: Juvin's Coming of the Body

In 2005, a French economist and essayist, Hervé Juvin, wrote a very strange, but very interesting, text, L'avènement du corps (translated into English in 2010 as The Coming of the Body). In this text he suggested that "[t]he great novelty of the early twenty-first century in Europe is that we have just invented a new body, one resistant to need, suffering and the effects of time. Resistant to the world too, the world of nature, of destiny."

Juvin argues that that body has come to assume the place previously occupied by history, work, family and religion and even God. Today's body is our property, our product: "after gods, after revolutions, after financial markets, the body is becoming our truth system. It alone endures. It alone remains."²

I want to suggest, with Juvin, but also with the negative pronouncements of Franco "Bifo" Beradi, that the body has indeed become the central bearer of the way in which meaning is organized, but that it has become one image among many, and is separated from its online incarnation, as well as from various relations we might have with other bodies. The body is indeed "new" in the central role it occupies in our life—what else do we have to measure our value, our situation, our status? But when this bodily market becomes sad, as I believe online life has encouraged it to be, we cannot reconcile our bodies with ourselves, let alone the bodies of others. We

are forever dancing on our own, hoping to be singularized, but not noticing that everyone else desires exactly the same thing, and therefore no one is watching, and we have forgotten how to be together. What hope, then, for collective kinds of movement? Can we launch a movement for movement?

According to Juvin, our body is a "performing one, a body for pleasure and an endless initiation into all the joys of living." And this body, its "rhythm and its lifespan,"is "going to overturn our relations with money, our patrimony and provision for the future."4 We, the "people of the body," living longer than ever, at least if we have enough money to eat healthily, enough time to exercise and enough self-internalised bio-political policing to monitor our excesses, are the future. But for Juvin, this is, paradoxically, a mournful development. The preservation and extension of the life of the body means that "a sort of frivolity about ourselves has gone. Life is too long now to be thrown away for nothing."5 We no longer throw ourselves into love, passionate decisions, whimsy and risk. We are the keepers of meaning, like jealous and possessive mini-Gods, stretching out time at the cost of experimentation. But what if we are expending our energy on sad passions? Franco "Bifo" Beradi asks, following Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's Spinozism, "What can our body do nowadays?"6 For Bifo, the contemporary body does not

move. It is separated from the "automated brain," and it is impotent. Solidarity and collective being is not happening, and the social organism is "behaving like a beheaded body that still retains its physical energies but no longer possess the ability to steer them in a reasonable direction." We are headless bodies, fucked up by the insomniac time of the internet, reduced to "smashing" other bodies we meet through an algorithm, and we have forgotten what the friendship of bodies might look like: "When friendship dissolves, when solidarity is banned and individuals stay alone and face the darkness of matter in isolation, then reality turns back into chaos and the coherence of the social environment is reduced to the enforcement of the obsessional act of identification."

1.1 The Twenty-First Century Body

Juvin is right to stress the changed body of the twenty-first century, but he underestimates the way in which this organic bearer ("My Body Is My Whole Inheritance" as one section has it) has been split across competing demands. What, for example, is the "body" online? 90s cyber-fantasies of multiple/dissolving identities and of the virtual playground, teledildonics and encounters with strangers thousands of miles away, who are also pretending to be someone else, has ceded ground to the cold, absurd reality of online life: the porn-iceberg, and

the competing tendencies that surround it, splashing about in the run-off—half seeking to shock and hurt, the other half attempting to make some kind of life online by the ever-more-inventive but strangely restrictive proliferation of identities.

The "obsessional act of identification" that Bifo identifies as the death of friendship, surely what we are witnessing, as people become more and more dispensable (we can "ghost" friends as surely as we can hookups), is all that is left. Putting one's body online is brave, and "revenge porn" exists for a reason: to capture the image of the other's body in passion, moving, is shocking. We can't handle it. Clubs are closing, everyone dances on their own. The internet is the space of images and words, and the fusion of the two (in memes, most notably). Moving images loop round so as to avoid leaking horror, the body is a funny gif, just another kind of emoticon. It's not real. You can be anything you want online, but it is not free and it is not fun. The policeman sleeps inside our keyboards, and we all play the game of identity. It doesn't matter what body types the words, or how the body is in fact treated in the world, for better or worse. There is more or less complete disconnect between what we say we are online, and how we are in the world. It is not playful, but rather a way to channel drives that are mainly negative.

In The Use of Bodies, Giorgio Agamben, following Guy

Debord, describes the image of 'private life' as the flipside to the 'life' that we live in public, or have no choice but to live publicly:

What does it mean that private life accompanies us as a secret or a stowaway? First of all, that it is separated from us as clandestine and is, at the same time, inseparable from us to the extent that, as a stowaway, it furtively shares existence with us. This split and this inseparability constantly define the status of life in our culture. It is something that can be divided—and yet always articulated and held together in a machine, whether it be medical or philosophico-theological or biopolitical. Thus, not only is private life to accompany us as a stowaway in our long or short voyage, but corporeal life itself and all that is traditionally inscribed in the sphere of so-called intimacy: nutrition, digestion, urination, defecation, sleep, sexuality. . . . And the weight of this faceless companion is so strong that each seeks to share it with someone else—and nevertheless, alienation and secrecy never completely disappear and remain irresolvable even in the most loving life together. Here life is truly like the stolen fox that the boy hid under his clothes and that he cannot confess to even though it is savagely tearing at his flesh.9

Our aloneness, and our corporeal life, is a secret that destroys us, that we seek to share but cannot truly escape. Online, there are very few places for collective bodies. We may mob and scapegoat a named individual, because everyone gets their fifteen minutes of shame,

but we do so from a position of isolation. We may overshare, and attempt to make public our most private feelings, how we feel we ought to be recognized and treated, rather than how we are actually perceived when we leave our desks and our bedrooms, but we cannot escape the singularizing force of the private life that haunts our sad body. The internet does not help.

When Bifo tells us that the general intellect has become separated from a collective body (what communism might be), and that "the social body is separated from its brain,"10 we understand that cognitive activity, and online life, has become separated, split apart. The mind/body split inaugurated again for a new generation, despite centuries of work by feminists, Spinozists, anti-philosophers and materialists to put it back together again. The internet is our Cartesian machine, projecting its own infinite, insomniac shark-like time onto our anxious bodies, afraid to sleep in case we get denounced during the night and are not there to see it. "The hyper-stimulated body is simultaneously alone and hyper-connected: the more it is connected, the more it is alone."11 How can the body be a temple of pleasure when it is so fragmented and atomized? Simply, it cannot. Bifo suggests that our desires have become spatialized and spread out over the whole field of commodities: "The sex-appeal of inorganic matter that electronics has inserted between bodies has resulted into a sort of widespread sexualization of the environment "12

Is it more exciting to watch a video of someone unwrapping a new mobile phone on YouTube than it is to flirt with and go to bed with another body? What happens when bodies are replaced with identities whose desires are in turn completely transfixed by non-human, inorganic objects? Must we make our own bodies inorganic in order to compete with gadgets for our share of desire? Has desire itself been technologized beyond the point of no return? To each his own sex robot . . .

Juvin notes that the consumer is the movement and the meaning of the now-central body: "[i]mages [of merchandise] are powerfully validated by the obsession with the consumer that haunts our own societies: how to arouse his desire, how to reawaken his desire, how to ensure that he stays unsatisfied, hounded by insatiable longings?"¹³ We know this very well, of course, but now we must understand that it is not sex that sells products, but products that sell sex, and perhaps no one wants to have sex anymore with another living being. Too messy, too confusing, too untidy, too much a reminder of one's own organicism, shame, and private being. We live in age that is "pruritanical," both puritanical and prurient, judging and disgusting, because lust is everywhere, but it is the lust of and for images and objects, and not for bodies as beings like us. Let us not believe, however, that the assault of bodies is incompatible with this tendency: older forms of power and desire are perfectly compatible with inorganic, expansive (and expensive)

social lust. All the things that people knew but are only now becoming known—that Hollywood moguls treat actresses like shit, that people in positions of power routinely and systematically abuse their positions in order to get some kind of thrill, etc., etc.—are knowable precisely because we now in general find desire so repulsive, and recognize the genuine harm done by unwanted desire. We recoil collectively at the horror of such actions, whether it be an unwanted touch or something much more violent, and we are right to do so. At the same time, we are more unsure than ever what desire and sexuality are.

In What Is Sex?, Alenka Zupančič, following Freud, stresses the "always problematic and (ontologically) uncertain character of sexuality itself." ¹⁴ Sexuality is a "factor of radical disorientation," and this factor brings into question "all our representations of the entity called 'human being." ¹⁵ Sexuality is not what makes us human; on the contrary it is what makes us subjects, it is the "operator of the inhuman, the operator of dehumanization." ¹⁶ Psychoanalysis, rather than seeing sex "everywhere," as a common fantasy would have it, works instead to "deactivate" the satisfaction we seek from sex in terms of meaning. Psychoanalysis, for Zupančič attempts "[t]o produce sex as absolutely and intrinsically meaningless, not as the ultimate horizon of all humanly produced meaning." ¹⁷ To be clear, it is

not that there is a humanist reserve of sexuality or embodiment that is warped by technology and the online mind/body split that we should aim to get back to. Sex and the body never existed nicely in the first place. But that is precisely why they are both precious and precarious, like walking a tightrope with another person, one wobble from either of you, and then simply a plunge. It is not that anyone knows the real or true meaning of sex or the body, simply that everyone has adopted a particular strategy, and in some eras different strategies come to dominate.

Those who believe they can "use" sex to dominate others, to establish meaning for themselves, represent an older model (though again, of course this still happens and "works" today), but now we also have a confused dispersal of sexuality across the visual field that moves us further and further away, not only from our own body, but from the other's body too. Perhaps it is safer this way, but perhaps we are losing the opportunity to struggle together in the face of the inhuman. If Juvin is right, we do not have anything else we can reach for but the body, and if Bifo is also right, our bodies are currently fucked up, isolated, uneasy, tethering desire to weird things, hating ourselves, reading images as if they were skins we could simply assume. These are all static bodies, hunched over, blood cut off to vital organs, cruising identity because there's nothing else to do. A kind of cerebral sadness that deals in ever-changing but

fixed concepts, fixed notions of identity, but with no movement, no rhythm, no spontaneity, no joy, no life beyond the private, shameful one....

2. Movement in the Age of Sad Bodies

What of those people who do move? Those crowds, those protestors, those rioters. Are they merely the unrepressed body at play, to be quickly extinguished in state violence, trials, prisons? What, after all, is a prison but the suspension of the clock and the prevention of movement, a violent recognition of the Kantian a priori of space and time without which we cannot understand the world at all? What does it mean to "get wild" when all bodily movement is carefully channeled into securitized zones, and you must show your passport to get in, be frisked, monitored? We know, too, that a certain kind of body-monitoring is all-too-compatible with state power and the logic of the market. We get healthy, not for ourselves, but for the regimes of domination. And all morality is reduced to what is good for the regulated, state, market body. As Juvin puts it:

The advent of the body means that the possibility of a meaning disappears, along with any notion of a good, or an evil, ordered by an external truth. Good and evil are what is good or bad for the body, for its satisfaction, its desire, its long lifespan, its emotion, its sensations. Meaning gets swamped by rhythms,

sounds, colours, the digital screen reality . . . It could be that madness is the only freedom left, in a society so reasonable, so comforting and protective. Or even that the fierce joy of drawing blood, the good fortune of killing an enemy, even just the commonplace richness of having an enemy to face, could be needed to remind us that we still exist.¹⁸

We do not need to go as far as Juvin's Schmittian image of friends and enemies, and his romanticization of blood-lust, to recognize that there is some truth to the idea that meaning has been reduced to the body. But what of "rhythms, sounds, colours?" Juvin ties these to images, to "the digital screen reality," a kind of bewildering music video. It is no doubt true that our understanding of what a body is, what it can do, how it might be looked at are highly mediated, and highly influenced by flat images.

Movement is rendered uni-dimensional, because we are looking at it through a double-perspective—that of the camera, but also that of our own fixed point. We suffer from an excess of distance, we are never in the moment, and our desires become projections which we internalize. When do we actually move? Our protests are kettled and contained by police, our walks step-counted and fed-back to us as regulatory principles (six thousand steps today, awesome! Why not aim for ten thousand tomorrow?). If we have time and money we might join a yoga class, or go on a meditation retreat,

and eat and drink only purified and whole things. None of this makes us radicals, and most people have stopped arguing it might. We have a problem—the violence we confront, that is daily everywhere, though hidden from some people rather more than others, is impossible to combat using bodies alone. It in fact destroys bodies, whether through undrinkable water, pollution, war, assault. People who are "healthy" in such a world are a tiny minority, and Juvin generalizes from the situation of a small few to a fantasy that what long and boring lives need is more violence. We need to begin with the damage, and with the recognition that to be able-bodied, independent, upright, is rare, lucky and temporary, and not the norm. As Adriana Cavarero puts it in her study of inclination:

Words like righteousness and rectitude, which occur frequently in dictionaries of morals, and were often used already in the Middle Ages for the "rectification" of bad inclinations, are an important anticipation of this scenario. The "upright man" of which the tradition speaks, more than an abused metaphor, is literally a subject who conforms to a vertical axis, which in turn functions as a principle and norm for its ethical posture. One can thus understand why philosophers see inclination as a perpetual source of apprehension, which is renewed in each epoch, and which takes on even more weight during modernity, when the free and autonomous self celebrated by Kant enters the scene.¹⁹

To be upright, straight, stern, erect, or to aspire to these things, and to judge others who fall short, who are "bent" (in every sense of this word), is to take the exception to be the norm. Cavarero's analysis of paintings depicting mothers bending over to pick up children provides a different moral account of angles. We could extend her analysis to a full 360 degree critique of the flatness of the image, and the excessive concentration on the face. As Deleuze and Guattari put it in the "Year Zero: Faciality" chapter:

The head is included in the body, but the face is not. The face is a surface: facial traits, lines, wrinkles; long face, square face, triangular face; the face is a map, even when it is applied to and wraps a volume, even when it surrounds and borders cavities that are now no more than holes. The head, even the human head, is not necessarily a face. The face is produced only when the head ceases to be a part of the body, when it ceases to be coded by the body, when it ceases to have a multidimensional, polyvocal corporeal code—when the body, head included, has been decoded and has to be overcoded [sic] by something we shall call the Face.²⁰

The face has become ever more separated from the head, and thus the body: whether it be through heavy contouring, tricks of the light, filters. The body is too complex a beast to take the place of the face, which, continues to dominate all our understandings of

images, and all our conceptions of what a person is. The Instagram square box is the exact shape for a head decapitated from the body, which permits the emergence of the Face, in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology. Can we reclaim the head from the face?

Can we reattach the head to the body, or is the brain now outside the skull, plugged into the mainframe, attempting to escape its fleshy container? Should we turn our focus towards other parts of the body instead? A philosophy of the foot? The ankle? The knee? The arse? The belly-button? What about a philosophy of flab? Of hair? Of bones? Of blood? Politics jumps in too quickly to claim some of these things for itself, with disastrous consequences. But there are many politics of blood, from the fascist ones, to the care of those with HIV or at high risk of contracting it. The body is a political zone, to put it lightly, and there is a war over its future and meaning, heightened ever more when it becomes the central thing that measures everything else. How many "losers" are there in the great war of the body?

What would happen if we turned instead, let's say, to a philosophy of parts? A philosophy of the foot, for example? This would be a mode of thinking that took into account those unable to stand, those unable to walk, or run or dance. It would think about how much time we sit down, of how the foot is often treated as a tool, thoughtlessly. It would look at what a foot can do, what happens when it breaks down. It would think about the ground and the earth, it would think about balance, marching, protesting. It would take note of choreography, of fetishes, of nail-painting, of horror and absurdity (Bataille's example of the big toe in isolation, for example). It would think of Roman soldiers as much as of Chinese women, of shoes and dog-walking, of feet as flippers in water, of reflexology and massage. It would put reason closer to the center of the earth, we would look upwards from the pavement towards the sky. An entire philosophy could be built out of all our different parts, which are, at the same time, only ever members of a whole, however damaged that whole might be. We could take as our conceptual starting-point a certain kind of impossibility: "We must try to run, we can no longer walk, walk, walk" as The Associates put it in 1982's "It's Better This Way." Our resources are everything and everywhere.

A philosophy of movement in general would need to ask: why movement? What kind of movement? Where are we going to? We are told again and again, "there is no outside." Do we even go outside often enough? What is nature, and how can we move in it? Most everyday movement is monetized, whether it be sports, dancing, sex, work. "Voluntary" movement is often simply disguised work—the commute, or taking care of oneself and others so that capital has a steady supply of unproblematic workers. We might dance for ourselves, or hold

someone without any exchange, beyond the embrace itself, but these are small, slight enterprises, but all the more meaningful for all that. Is it possible to have a vibrant body that outshines the multiple captures, whether they be image-captures or labor-captures? What do we risk when we move our body for no other reason than sheer delight in its capacity to do so? History and the present is over-flowing with examples of those who seek to harness the potential of the body in nationalist formations, in war formations, in sex formations. The compelled and brain-washed (or body-washed) body is a permanent danger, and nothing has been more weaponized, whether by being accessorized with actual weapons, or as cultural and racial norms, from the Kodak girl as the marker of whiteness to the bikini as a kind of nuclear device

Where can we find truly free movement? Certainly not at borders, where those who have moved "illegally" to get to where they are, are penned in, held, moved to camps and detention centers, totally restricted in space and time, as we understand. There are spaces and times when bodies come together, for sure, and sometimes hedonism and friendship is enough. But sometimes it is not. Without falling into Juvin's nostalgia for war, we can understand with Freud and others, that social life and "civilization" is a very thin veneer over a smoldering void of drives, desires and aggressions, itself

a flat surface beneath which many resentments, desires, loves and violences simmer and occasionally erupt. And sometimes, we must acknowledge, there is a destructive joy in that. We see the "bloodless" cruelty of this online in mobbing, in doxing, in the waves of moral panics that sweep with ever increasing speed across networks. But we become crueler the more we see division, and the very possibility of violence and cruelty is the same possibility for mass communion and mutual love. If we are feeling this love, we might look instead to George Katsiaficas's idea, following Marcuse, of the "eros effect":

The eros effect first appeared to me as I completed a decade of research on social movements in 1968. As I sat overlooking the Pacific in Ocean Beach, California, I had a eureka moment as I uncovered the specific synchronic relations to each other of spontaneous uprisings, strikes, and massive occupations of public space. During this world-historical period, millions of ordinary people suddenly entered into history in solidarity with each other. Their activation was based more upon feeling connected with others and love for freedom than with specific national economic or political conditions. No central organization called for these actions. People intuitively believed that they could change the direction of the world from war to peace, from racism to solidarity, from external domination to self-determination, and from patriotism to humanism. Universal interests became generalized at the same time as dominant values of society (national chauvinism, hierarchy, and domination) were negated.21

Katsiaficas argues that, "When the eros effect is activated, humans' love for and solidarity with each other suddenly replace previously dominant values and norms. Competition gives way to cooperation, hierarchy to equality, power to truth."²² Can we bring about the eros effect through an effort of collective mass will? What might trigger such a mass movement (in all senses of the word)? How might we prevent such an overflowing of love from turning violent and sexually oppressive?

There is a way of moving that comes from individual bodies, but that takes into account the movement or the stasis of other bodies. Dancing from the standpoint of the other—not necessarily an audience, but rather, a participant just like you. This does not require a complete sense of self-abnegation, but rather a sense that you are the other and the other is you. It understands that the movement that passes through you is a temporary location for a broader and bigger form of movement that is global, cosmic, anti-egoistic. We do not "own" movement. In that sense, it might not be something that we "do," but rather something that is "done," through us. This is not a question of postures, though it might be a question of learning, or a certain kind of pedagogy.

Recently, following an idea from the late Mark Fisher, Jeremy Gilbert and others have pushed the idea of "Acid Communism," a kind of fusion of hippy-expansiveness and a return to the commons. Recently, people got together to discuss this idea in relation to the socialism that runs like a historical muddy stream through Britain, despite all its hierarchies and divisions. People have started to talk about "Acid Corbynism," a kind of psychedelic politics of the commons and of kindness, of solidarity and wondering if it would be possible to unseat the endlessly cruel Conservatives, to make Britain a kind of socialist paradise.

After the event, people started dancing. Someone videoed it and put it online, mocking the older people who dared to move their body in public. #AcidCorbynism became a brief, fleeting topic. But really the dancing was amazing, not because it was technically competent, or whatever, and in any case, that wouldn't be the point. It was amazing simply because it happened and because it was moved by an idea. It is not that movement alone will "save the world," but that saving the world, or even ourselves, will be impossible without it, whatever we might mean by it now, and whatever it might come to mean in the future.

Notes

- 1 Hervé Juvin, The Coming of the Body, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 2010), ix.
 - 2 Ibid., xi.
 - 3 Ibid., xi.
 - 4 Ibid., xi.

- 5 Ibid., 6.
- 6 Franco "Bifo" Beradi, Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility (London; Verso, 2017), 11.
 - 7 Ibid., 23.
 - 8 Ibid., 25.
- 9 Giorgio Agamben, The Use of Bodies: Homo Sacer IV, 2, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), xx-xxi.
 - 10 Bifo, 50.
 - 11 Bifo, 51.
 - 12 Ibid., 53.
 - 13 Juvin, 27.
 - 14 Alenka Zupančič, What Is Sex? (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 7.
 - 15 Ibid., 7.
 - 16 Ibid., 7.
 - 17 Ibid., 8.
 - 18 Juvin, 156.
- 19 Adriana Cavarero, Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude, translated by Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 6.
- 20 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, translated by Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 170.
- 21 George Katsiaficas, 'Eros and Revolution', in Spontaneous Combustion: The Eros Effect and Global Revolution, edited by Jason Del Gandio and AK Thompson (Albany: SUNY, 2017), 38.
 - 22 Ibid., p. 38.

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LENNY BRUCE

INTRODU

HOW TO TALK DIRTY INFLUENCE PEOPLE

ocial satirists and a moral conscience

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The Ceremony of Us in The Legacy of We

Sri Louise

I Ceremony

I'm looking at an iconic photo from Anna Halprin's 1969 dance piece titled *Ceremony* of Us. It's unlike any contemporary dance image I have ever seen, black and white bodies in seemingly equal number, laying on the floor, bare limbs intimately intertwined in what appears to be, racially integra-tive bliss. I've been studying the faces in this image for days wondering, what happened to Us?

Why didn't I know this history? How had I never seen this image? Why Parades and Changes? Why not a recent replay of Ceremony of Us? Why hasn't Ceremony of Us as a score prompted subsequent dance makers to continue to explore racial constructs in performance? Was the image just performative utopian fiction? Did it help set the stage for the fallacy of the post-racial? How did the beginnings of postmodern dance go from an experiment in integrative performance, to a segregated, artistic dystopia of white, liberal feminism?

A few years after the 1965 racial unrest in Los Angeles, Anna was invited to work with Studio Watts on a performance for a festival at the Mark Taper Forum. She saw this as an opportunity to explore race relations through dance. For five months she worked separately with an all-black group in Watts and an all-white group in San Francisco, doing the same scores. Then, for ten days, she brought the two groups together to develop the performance. "During those days, working and living together," Anna later said, "they collectively created their performance around the experience of becoming one group. My role was to see what the group was most ready for and what materials turned them on, then to guide them in choreographing their own responses." For the performance, the entering audience had to choose between two doors into the auditorium: one where all the black performers were lined up or one with all the white dancers. At the end the performers brought the audience together, inviting them to join a conga line processing to the plaza outside.1

I'm immediately reminded of Imponderabilia by Marina Abramović and Ulay . . . where a decade after Ceremony of Us, the "living door museum" is no longer racialized, but gendered. Marina and Ulay stand facing each other in the threshold of the performance space where audience members have to choose as they enter to face/brush the frontal female body or the frontal male body. As my

mind re-turns to study this image of what transpired between a group of bi-racial dancers in Watts in 1969, I regret the ways in which white artists in performance have obscured race for decades, not just in Eu-rope, but also here in America—and hailed as the new radical while doing it.

This 1969 image from Ceremony of Us recently resurfaced on Aug 4th, 2017 in a New York Times article titled, "Renegades and Radical Bodies In 3 New York Exhibitions," by Gia Kourlas. "Radical Bodies" is an exhibit dedicated to the work of Anna Halprin, Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer. I'm not trying to dismiss the unique and invaluable contributions to conceiving and performing contem-porary dance that each of these women have created and transmitted, but I would like to challenge the "collective" narrative in a way that takes "us" out of white feminism into something more "intersectio-nal," something that can potentially renegotiate what it means to be Us, if there can be such a thing... Kourlas writes:

As violence ravaged cities across America in the 1960s, Ms. Halprin — reacting to the 1968 assas-sination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the race riots in South Central Los Angeles — held weekly workshop sessions in Watts, commuting from the Bay Area. In an interview in her book, "Moving Toward Live: Five Decades of Transformational Dance." Ms.

Halprin says, "I wanted to do a production with a community instead of for a community.²

James Woods, who launched Studio Watts Workshop in 1964 in the Watts neighborhood of Los An-geles with jazz musician, poet and activist Jayne Cortez, invited Halprin in 1968 to set a work on members of his workshop. This is an important distinction because, although Anna agreed to his commission, she may or may not have initiated such a racial process on her own, and for Kourlas to give credit to Anna for these workshops only continues to obscure the labor people of color undertake to both desegregate white society and provide opportunities for themselves in their own communities, in this case for black artists.

Janice Ross quotes Anna in her biography titled, Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance, about her first encounter with Watts: "In those days to see that kind of poverty was shocking. And it reinforced the sense I had of the polarization in our community and our society. It was much more of a ghetto than anything I had seen in San Francisco. You really didn't see any white people at all. I was the only white person in sight."³

Neither Anna nor her biographer commented on the demographics of Anna's own neighborhood, which to this day is 91% white. The 2016 consensus for Kentfield, California, where Anna's famous dance deck resides, didn't even list black as a demographic, the percentage of those who live there is so low.

II Reach-Out

The Studio Watts Workshop began as a community based arts organization to promote art as a means for social change and public engagement, it was "a collective of writers, dancers and visual artists, who fought to create affordable housing." Anna immediately renegotiated Woods' initial offer to set a piece on his workshop and chose to work with segregation and desegregation resolving the racial dialectic in performative integration.

Janice Ross writes of the process, "Not so much a dance as a lived experiment in attempting to erase boundaries, prohibitions and taboos, Ceremony of Us would turn out to be in equal measure both dar-ing and timid, both a challenge to the status quo of racial stereotypes and unwitting reinforcement of the sexual and class myths embedded in them."

When I first began to research the archives on Ceremony of Us, my sense was that both the process and the performance were full of cliché, essentialist libidinal notions, which is echoed by Robby Herbst in his phenomenal essay titled, "Ceremony Of Us" where he describes the documentary film that was made of the rehearsal process, titled Right On/Ceremony Of Us:

Yet the film ends with a mixed-raced couple making out and the integrated crew of dancers ly-ing together, exhausted from the practice, dressed in leotards, T-shirts, sweat, and their own post-workout, post-coital, dancerly bliss. While it may conform to then contemporary ideas, it's difficult not to guffaw at this radical "art as the tool for social change" happening perform a myth of the adventurous white woman and the virile black man.⁵

Also reinforced were the social and professional hierarchies involved, a ranking dynamic that is still prevalent among dance collaborations today. At the time of the performance, the dancers, both black and white, were upset that their names had not been on the original program, but were revealed as an afterthought and therefor added later by insert. Although Anna prompted the scores, the actual materi-ality of the performance was produced by the dancers themselves. The means of production, however, would remain in the hands of those who had the power to produce i.e. the choreographer and the thea-ter. The tension around this collaborative oversight was highlighted by the fact that at the same time, Anna handed out consent forms, which the dancers signed, relinquishing rights to the documentary that was made of the process.

The grant money that Anna received as compensation for the film had been deposited into her Danc-ers' Workshop fund and distributed to the white dancers, who were all middle class. The black dancers felt they were being exploited for white art, by white artists, who already had money and the privileges that accrued to it. Still, all rights were reserved to Anna Halprin. At present, the documentary Right On/Ceremony of Us is for sale on Anna Halprin's website and I'm curious if any of the proceeds go to the Watts dancers or the Watt's community.

I emailed Anna to ask specifically about Ceremony of Us and to inquire into a performance her multi-racial Reach-Out company performed at Soledad prison in 1970. The reply came from her assistants, who informed me the fee for her time would be \$250 an hour. I apologized for being so naive and insisted I appreciated her need/desire to be paid for her time and story, but her financial terms were out-side of my monetary means. After I pressed send, I again wondered how much an interview the black dancers were netting for their participation, especially over time.

Unfortunately, the most noted member of the Watts dancers, "the unofficial poet laureate of L.A.," Wanda Coleman, passed away in 2013 and James Woods passed in 2006, so two key voices on the black perspectives within Ceremony Of Us would remain silent on this particular issue...but in 1993 Janice Ross interviewed

both Coleman and Woods for her book, Anna Halprin: Experience of Dance. (I emailed Janice Ross to ask if Wanda and James had been compensated for their interviews in 1993, I have not received a reply.)

Wanda Coleman shared this with Janice Ross at the time,

It's complex. Racism is the largest part of it because it was black and white statement and you could not ignore that. But if we were truly going to function on the level that they said we were going to, then we had to come to a certain understanding. [But] there was a sort of naïveté on Ann's part. That we could get eleven black kids together and eleven white kids together and make this wonderful racial statement. Well, they made one all right. It is not a simplistic thing that all is peace and love and light and candles. All this stuff was nice. But it had nothing to do with what is the ugliest and nastiness of what racism really is. Until you get down to the root, you ain't going nowhere. And as artists, the minuet they got close to that they started running scared.

III Encounter

In 1964, Anna Halprin was introduced to Fritz Perls, a German born psychiatrist and former student of Wilhelm Reich, who founded "Gestalt Therapy" with his wife Laura Perls. Fritz became involved with the Human Potential Movement at Esalen, which birthed and nurtured the idea of reverse social change, i.e. individuals

affecting their potential will bring about social change and not the other way around.

Esalen fostered a mixture of "secular and religious woo" as the 6os counter-culture experimented with eastern meditation, LSD and cathartic emotional expression. One of Fritz Perls "Zen" like approaches was centered around "an interest in the here-and-now rather than in a person's childhood history or supposed unconscious conflicts." Perls was involved in using sensory awareness techniques to spon-taneously resolve psycho/somatic tension.

Personal independence was essential to Gestalt therapy and to this extent, Perls crafted a "prayer:"

I do my thing and you do your thing.

I am not in this world to live up to your expectations,
And you are not in this world to live up to mine.

You are you, and I am I,
and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.

If not, it can't be helped.

The last line of this "prayer" is sometimes dropped in modern circles, but nevertheless the underlying apathy and or individual narcissism that was systemic to these environments became enmeshed in the liberal somatic model. White self-reflection would only go so far and would not include the not-beautiful and was therefore unwilling to engage the shadow of whiteness in any of

its authoritarian violence. It was within this therapeutic milieu that Anna approached her own multi-racial company, particularly in *Ceremony* of Us, which I believe she did more out of creative curiosity than political necessity.

At Esalen, "The desired goal was no longer civic equality and participation, but individual psychic well-being." Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn in her book, Race Experts: How The Racial Etiquette, Sensitivity Training, and New Age Therapy Hijacked the Civil Rights Revolution, criticizes the racial confrontation workshops at Esalen for trivializing structural racism by relegating race relations and their possible resolutions to the emerging field of pop-somatic psychology.

IV Amnesia

Thomas Hanna, who was deeply influenced by Feldenkrais, Fritz Perls and the Esalen community, coined the term somatics to describe methods of sensory-motor re-education. Hanna formulated a theory of sensory motor amnesia, which posited structural tension as a "habitual state of forgetfulness" and he saw his process of somatics as a method of waking up.

For Hanna, sensory-motor amnesia was an adaptive response of the nervous system, a learned response that could just as easily be unlearned. He recognized three causes for sensory-motor amnesia, red light, green light and trauma, all adaptive neuromuscular reflex patterns resulting from stress.

My interest in somatics took a dramatic turn in 2010 when I enrolled in a Body-Mind Centering Yoga and Developmental Movement course with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen in Berkeley, California. There is no one more accepting than Bonnie and to be in the presence of her unconditional empathy is a somatic revelation in itself, but the program hinged on the cultural encroachment of Yoga and height-ened my conflict with somatic appropriation of Eastern practices and ideologies. I had other epistemo-logical concerns and would eventually drop out because of them, but not before I awakened to my own racial amnesia.

During a mid-day program interval, I invited somatic and social justice facilitator Carol Swan to lunch. The only thing I remember about our conversation was a passing comment she made on the way to the thing she was actually talking about. I said, "Wait, wait, go back. What do you mean you're ra-cist?" I had never heard any of my white peers refer to themselves as racist and I certainly didn't see myself or Carol as racist and so if she saw herself that way, I needed to know why. Carol responded, "If I don't actively desegregate my life, I'm racist."

I was stunned. In my mind I began to look around the rooms of my adult life: they were all white, or mostly

white, usually non-black. I raced my memory and my self-construction to see if her conclusion was also true for me. I grew up in an integrated suburb of Chicago, where my grammar school was desegregated in the early 70s. The principals of my grammar and junior high school were both black men. Every year we had Martin Luther King Jr. school assemblies where we linked arms and sang, "We Shall Over Come." At least, those were the things I always told myself and others when confront-ed with the, "Am I racist?" question. When we returned to the BMC workshop there was not a single black person in the room; there was one Asian American, the rest of us were white, Euro-American.

My own somatic engagement dramatically changed when I understood that as a white person, I was not who I thought I was, in spite of twenty years of self-awareness practice. I had yet to contend with centuries of white, settler colonial conditioning. No matter how much of a spiritual or bohemian spin I put on my identity, my comfort zone, my default allegiance was to the privileges I accrued from my whiteness. Admitting that shattered my white innocence.

I followed the precepts of somatics. If racism was learned, it could also be unlearned, because what if the blunt trigger of the trauma reflex is not singular, but systemic? What would it mean to have aware-ness of the ways this structural trigger induces trauma in the collec-

tive body? What would happen to my own self-concept if I were to understand that in a world of white supremacy, I as a white person, with all my racial amnesia, am like a bull in a tea shop? What if I acknowledged that my racial amne-sia causes collective trauma or is complicit to the multifarious mechanisms in society that maintain this trauma? What if I came to know that the whole of the society was a reflex adaptation of this trauma?

Anti-racism became fundamental to my Yoga pedagogy. Although my practice had always been con-nected to social justice, to "collective" liberation, it had not included race or how my racial identity was part of the injustice. I started to use the process and inquiry of Yoga to loosen the epigenetic fas-cial reflex of my racial history, i.e.: the capitalist racism embedded in my colonial conditioning. Alt-hough my workshops are motivated by theoretical political discourse, they are ultimately an embodi-ment practice that uses asana as a psycho-somatic process for unmasking internalized and institutional-ized racism, creating a kind of "woke" reflex.

V Cognizance

2012 marked the fiftieth anniversary of Judson Dance Theater. Movement Research in collaboration with the New Museum hosted various events to celebrate the occasion. One public discussion was ti-tled, "A Pluralistic View of the Judson Dance Theater Legacy" and featured Yvonne Rainer, Aileen Passloff and Wendy Perron. This Movement Research podcast is currently available on iTunes. At about 51:00 into the conversation, Wendy asks Yvonne about Judson Dance Theater's relationship to race and her tone reveals that she is somewhat irritated by the underlying assumption of racism as inte-gral to the Judson legacy.

Wendy Perron: I have another question, because in all this planning about Judson this fall one of the questions that has come up about, or almost accusations, is like, either Judson was all white, or it wasn't all white and where were the people of color? What is your response?

Yvonne Rainer: We certainly did not exclude anybody from these workshops. Anyone, who pre-sented work in the workshops could get on the program. The programs were organized by a nom-inated committee of three people, I was on one of them or two of them. We, when was this, '62? I mean the freedom bus rides, voter registration in the south, this was about to happen...I must say for myself, I was not very tuned into that. We did not do outreach to bring different ethnic, ethnici-ties in...people of color into our orbit, we were kind of oblivious . . .

Racial amnesia or in this case, racial oblivion, can only operate for white people within the logic of white supremacy, which I think is one of the reasons why it

is so difficult for whites to contend with their racial entitlement. If white supremacy is relegated to the Ku Klux Klan or tiki torch wielding neo-klan members and not to the founding institution of American Democracy, then it is easy to disassoci-ate whiteness from white supremacy.

But if we look at our spaces, at the history of our spaces, we have to account for the dynamics of ex-clusion. What are the socio-economic factors at play that lead to such segregation? And rather than be annoyed by the accusation of the post-modern dance experiment being enmeshed in whiteness, a more fruitful conversation would have been to acknowledge the implicit racism that America has al-ways operated within, from genocide and slavery to the new Jim Crow, and to begin to deconstruct the racial order that everything about ourselves is lodged in, including our dance form.

While white artists in 2012 were having difficulty even beginning an honest conversation about race in contemporary dance, artists of color had already undertaken the labor of desegregating Movement Research. Trajal Harrel, who explored the intersection of race and postmodern dance in his seminal choreography, Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church, began quietly curating artists of color into the Monday night Judson Church performance series in 2000. From 2009 until 2011, Trajal curated the curators, inviting artists of color

to continue to carve out space for other artist of color in the Monday night performance series. In 2012, he transferred this curatorial responsibility to Tara Aisha Willis, who is now associate curator of performance at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

After years of curation by artists of color to integrate artists of color, an autonomous group was forged within the umbrella of Movement Research. In October 2016, after a sixteen-year process, the artists went public with an event titled, Diversity and Accountability: A Conversation with the Movement Research Artists of Color Council. (This is also available on the MR podcast on iTunes, and an edited transcript was printed in MRPJ#50.)

During this event, the Council read their mission statement:

A cohort of artists of color addressing cultural diversity, equity, and sustainable structural integra-tion in MR's operations, programming, outreach, and throughout its extended communities. The council aspires to increase visibility, opportunities, and engagement with resources for artists of color within the field.

The Artists of Color Council also created Artists of Color Council Curation, which each season invites a member of the AOCC community to curate three artists of color into the Judson Church performance series, effectively implementing many of the goals on their mission statement.

In the interim between Ceremony of Us and the Artists of Color Council, diversity initiatives promot-ing multi-cultural programming operated with the confines of white supremacy, allowing organiza-tional structures and resources to maintain racial dominance rather than create institutions that fostered multi-racial equity.

In relationship to the Artists of Color Council, the Movement Research's Board created an Undoing Racism Committee to learn and address how structural racism was embedded in the operation of their organization. Movement Research, as a non-profit, was also chosen for a long term, city-wide training conducted by RaceForward to help dismantle racial inequality and create equitable solutions through-out Movement Research's framework. This includes staff at Movement Research undergoing mandato-ry anti-racism training.

I'm encouraged by the work that is happening at Movement Research and would like to amplify its process, so that other arts organizations can implement anti-racism into the core of their structural iden-tity. In emailing with members of the staff and Artists of Color Council, it is clear the procedure of breaking down dominant racial order, especially in existing institutions is challenging—there is white fragility, hostility, ignorance and even apathy.

Often there is not the same shared political urgency to create equitable relations, which leaves artists of

color burdened with a kind of uni-lateral responsibility for the labor of change. Without the Artists of Color Council insisting upon forging equitable access to Movement Research, It is hard to know how long the white dance community would have continued its "we don't exclude" self-image. I'm grate-ful to the AOCC for interrupting this myth.

"The work of emancipation is embodied, durational, performance practice."

— Ebony Noelle Golden,

Visiting MR @ Judson Church Artist of Color Council Curator 2017/2018

Special Thank you to Tara Aisha Willis, J. Soto, Moira Brennan and Barbara Bryan

Notes

- 1 https://www.annahalprin.org/performances
- 2 Gia Kourlas, "Renegades and Radical Bodies in 3 New York Exhibitions," The New York Times, August 4, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/04/arts/dance/radical-bodies-anna-halprin-robert-rauschenberg-rei-kawakubo.html.
- ${\tt 3}$ Janice Ross, Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 268
 - 4 Ibid., 303.
- 5 Robby Herst, "Ceremony of Us," East of Borneo, April 15, 2014, https://east-ofborneo.org/articles/ceremony-of-us/.
 - 6 Ibid., 274.
- 7 https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Human-Potential+Movement.
 - 8 Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, Race Experts: How The Racial Etiquette, Sensitivity

Training, and New Age Therapy Hijacked the Civil Rights Revolution, (New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 2001), 81.

9 Thomas Hanna, Somatics: Reawakening the Mind's Control of Movement, Flexibility, and Health (Boston: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1988), xiii.

)unset UM POEMS BY DOROTHY PARKER

"Oh, what beauty! and oh, what fun" -FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

Pull BOOK EDITION



Imagining and Feigning

Bojana Cvejić

Poetics can be distinguished from other kinds of thought exercised in art by virtue of its capacity to pose a curious question: "What is the art I would like to see before I can see it?" To muse on a poetical principle, for instance, how to be with empty hands in a performance, is different from creation by posing (or choreographing) a problem or devising a technical procedure within a received theoretical framework. While problems are posed in order to be resolved in composition, and procedures applied to technically shape a process, poetical principles direct the thought of creation toward imagination into futurity often leading to a poetic usage of language.

This text will explore elements of contemporary performance poetics in which imagination gains ground. Rather than a faculty of forming images from perception into memory, imagination here accounts for the ability to think of something not presently perceived, for thoughts without experiential content. It involves feigning, as in Spinoza's sense of knowingly entertain-

ing fictions. I will discuss these poetical principles in a close reading of a few performances.¹

After choreographing problems . . .

In 2015, I published a book in which I posited a kind of thought that arises from, and gives rise to, problems, a problematic and discordant, and not harmonious relationship between ideas and forms of sensibility.2 In a word, such performance work was considered "difficult," and many other misnomers were tossed around, like conceptual dance and the importance of "kawr-ee-ogruh-fee."3 What differentiated the experimental segment of European dance from the rest of the performance production in that period, roughly between 1994 and 2010, was the expression of how things came to being, how bodies, movement and time were thought and composed on the same plane of practice, debunking the dominant logic of representation. They were expressed through posing problems within making, performing and attending performance—a method affordable when uncertainty, makers and attenders getting lost or being destabilized or persisting in negativity was also tenable. Nowadays another image of thought prevails: images, words and procedures must respond to a growing expectation of managing an audience's experience. Performances are pressed to provide desirable experiences or deliver political or moral messages in a facile

manner. The manner of speaking in applications or post-hoc reports for subsidy bleeds into program notes and this idiom is calibrated by instrumental reason. Reducing language to a principle of exchange forces a self-conscious style: spectator, you are supposed to read what you are going to get. And artists, like other thriving individuals, agree to self-perform, and over-perform, which means comply with the requisite of producing evidence, a preview of the experience (and value) their art promises to provide.

The upshot is that audiences arrive knowing what they are about to have for an hour and a half. We are locked into a presentist predicament of temporality: not only is only the present real, but the instant must also hijack the near future into the ever shorter present. How are we to imagine or even dream of an art we would like to see in the future without the obligation of knowing how to make it now? Can the possible be something else than the feasible?

Let's make an effort and think out of deficiency, outside the scarcity that mars the current situation. In fact, elements of another performance poetics are readily discernible in which imagination gains ground. What is common to the performances I will discuss here is that they operate with poetic language, orienting it towards the corporeal or incorporeal imaginary. Without proclaiming yet another (poetic) turn, we might see

these choreographers and dancers more like poets than judges, if to author is to be a bit of a poet and somewhat a judge.⁴

... po(v)etry deluxe

Poetry is often said to be at the lowest level of the food chain. As a mode of production, it is cheap, requiring a minimum of ownership of means, often as little as a writing device, which is less costly than hiring rehearsal space and skilled performers. This doesn't make it a purer form of art, unspoiled by the market condition. We can speak of the poverty of means only if we agree, after Marcel Broodthaers, that the artist is a worker de luxe,⁵ in the sense of luxury products beyond the pathos of urge and necessity to express themselves. There is also something less perennial about poetry's resurgence now. It's about the commons of poetic language spawned by personal portable devices and social-media interfaces, a cross of immediacy, informal style and intimacy, on the one hand, and disembodied mediation, on the other.

Letting out a hyperpersonal voice seems like a jerky reflex to the call to claim visibility. A poetic mode of writing can also shield the personal, pleading opacity and ambiguity, the right to withdraw from the spectacle. Such writing favors another pace of cognition, the time of reading and listening. I am here thinking of Mette Edvardsen's living books, in her project Time Has Fallen

Asleep in the Afternoon Sunshine (since 2011). A group of people learn by heart a book of their own choice, thus they become living books forming a library collection. As an attendee, you book a "book" that you would like to read read as if you are picking it up from a shelf. And the book will recite itself to you inside a venue, or outside on a park bench, for instance, for thirty minutes. You might return to continue the reading at another date. The title of the project makes reference to Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, which recounts how books are banned and burned, because they are deemed dangerous for the public happiness. Edvardsen's project draws the parallel to the exiled book-lovers in the countryside who memorize books for an upcoming time when society might be ready to rediscover them. Bradbury's dystopia targets two historical contexts, McCarthyism during the Cold War that saw "purges" of the intellectual left and the first boom of mass media distraction (TV that killed the radio, and for our times it might be Internet that changed the nature of literacy). The project develops into a second generation of books made through oral transmission.

When you commit yourself to becoming a book, learning it by heart is a chancy process. Nobody knows how long it will take and you might have forgotten the beginning once you've reached the end. You are memorizing a book of your choice and you will be the book that

reads itself to an attendee. No multitasking when you speak or listen attentively either: the dictation is linear and corporeal for both the reciter and the listening ear.

A slow process of growth unfolds—of one's memory and of a library of living books—interminable. A book, or a poem, writes Gaston Bachelard, "is permanent: it is a kind of object present before our eyes. It speaks to us with a repetitive authority that we would not experience in the presence of the author himself. We must read what is written." Poetry crops up in the displacement of meaning that occurs with every reading, an exercise of imagination. Roland Barthes: "Reading is precisely that energy, that action which seizes the very thing which refuses to be exhausted." We must go back to it again and again, repeat it as we please.

Perception vs. imagination

My aim is to show that imagination is the ability to think of something not presently perceived. I am not interested in imagination as the subject discussed by the philosophy of mind and cognitive science. I will sieve instead through an eclectic and heterodox assemblage of ideas about imagination from Aristotle to Bachelard. These ideas serve as poles for a parallel slalom, in which to ski between philosophy and poetics.

In the genealogy of the philosophical concept, imagination was dependent on perception. To imagine

meant to recall, or rearrange sense data, as in re-seeing or re-picturing something in the mind that was previously perceived. For empiricists and rationalists it was analogous to, if not just an inferior kind of perceiving, imagining as "decaying sense" (Thomas Hobbes). For George Berkeley, sense perceptions were more strong, lively, and distinct than our imaginings. For René Descartes imagination is a peculiar effort of mind in which one tries to construct an image with the mind's eye based on perception or understanding.8 In De anima Aristotle described imagination (phantasia) as "different from either perceiving (aisthesis) or discursive thinking (noesis), though it is not found without sensation, or judgement without it."9 Imagination for the Pre-Moderns retained a confusing intermediate position between sensibility and the understanding, which was untangled by Immanuel Kant.

The first distinction that Kant makes is in relation to the presence of an object (again perception!): all sensibility is divided into sense and imagination, whereby sense comprises faculty of intuition in the presence of an object and imagination is intuition in the absence of an object, which is either based on the object once present and now recalled by memory from the past or an object anticipated into future. This counts for empirical (or recollective) imagination, which is a cognitive activity we aren't even conscious of as it does the

schematizing work by itself in order for memory and prevision to take place (for us to be able to discern, recall or predict objects). It is a faculty of derived representation dependent on previous perception. Between the first and third critiques, Kant introduces another kind of imagination—productive or poetic imagination.¹⁰ It is a faculty of original representations, that is to say, it produces ideas that have no experiential content nor are they derived from experience. They aren't willful or accidental such as products of fancy, but ordered. What makes this kind of imagination productive or original is that it doesn't apply laws of the understanding (as in recognition, whereby intuitions are synthesized into concepts). Productive or poetic imagination simultaneously invents and applies laws as in aesthetic judgment.

Let us rephrase our initial proposition: imagination is thinking of something that is not what you are seeing. It is not just that you are thinking of something absent or unperceived. There is something present, there is something you are perceiving, and you are nonetheless able to relate to this something in such a way that it does not saturate you, does not prevent you from thinking something else as well or perhaps instead. This liberates us from the preoccupation with the here-and-now presence: its elusiveness, the exclusivity and preciousness of the instant condemned to passing and fading in memory. It indicates a shift in theater's quest from the experi-

ence of the impossible "real" to the possible "imagined," independent of presently experienced.

No Title (2015) is the middle piece of the trilogy (together with Black and We to Be) by Mette Edvardsen, the Norwegian choreographer and performer, who has been developing a consistent poetics in which imagination is paramount. The apparatus of her works has been unchanging: performers or one performer in this trilogy of solos is alone on an empty stage. Edvardsen herself is enunciating a series of speech acts. Their structure seems invariant: while the subject changes, the predicate remains the same. Something is gone:

the beginning - is gone
the space is empty - and gone
the prompter has turned off his reading lamp - and gone
a room, not even a room
walls, other walls
a door, opening and closing - gone
the ceiling - gone
lamps and speakers, hanging shadows moving in silence - gone

From naming things that the situation of a theater performance is made of, and the audience can be made aware of, the utterances begin to ramify toward outer circles. They encompass abstract notions ("forms and

planes," "surfaces and shapes," "things and beings twice as invisible"), words from previous statements ("the distinction between thinking and doing is gone," "distinction is gone," "between is gone"), but also, taken by surprise, a theater play direction elaborating a scene, which also "is gone." It is hard to determine the law by which the subjects are selected. While at times, a taxonomy of world problems could be discerned ("ignorance," "acceleration," "sea level," "overpopulation," "poverty, precarity, inequality," etc.), a few notable references pop out in their blunt contingency ("Khrushchev's shoe," "Schrödinger's cat," "Now is the winter of our discontent..."). The rhythm is one of invoking things only in order to erase them into the past. It flows like a film tape burning by words at their pace of utterance: steady and relentless.

At the outset it is interrupted by a sort of refrain that points to the presence of the figure on the stage, the speaking performer, who says:

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something's gone
me - not gone
me - not sleeping, not done, not gone
and another time:
dog - gone
me - not dog
me - not dead, not bone, not not
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and lastly:
all - gone
me - not all
me - not god, not all, but gone
```

Twice has the performer crossed herself out: first, by closing her eyes (and keeping them closed for the length of all utterances) and second, by placing artificial eyeballs on her eyes (which keep her still blind although they give her the theatrical guise of looking like a doll with wide open unblinking eyes). Iterating negation becomes a wordplay of obstinacy and exhaustive variation, when the predicate "is gone" is replaced by the monosyllabic "not":

not alone
not not alone
not alone alone
not doing doing
not not doing doing
not not doing doing doing
not not doing doing doing
doing not not doing doing doing
doing not not doing doing doing doing doing not not doing doing doing doing doing not not doing doing not not not doing doing not not not not doing doing not not not not not not doing not not doing doing
not not not not doing not not doing doing
not not not not doing not not doing doing
(...)

It is important to note that the performer tries to maintain the logic of multiple negations in the stress and tone of her speech, so the seemingly visual organization of the poem sounds reasonable and plausible for our ears.

Logical sense is prominent in a series of disjunctions that assemble contrasting terms and near-opposite differences:

```
not up - not down
not standing - not sitting
not a dog - not a table
not coming - not leaving
not seeing - not looking
not same - not different
not no - not yes
not warm - not cold
not finding - not searching
(...)
```

The long series of opposites produces equivocacy through annihilation: if not this, and not not-this, then, inversely, both this and not-this are possible. Such a constellation is against the law of the excluded middle (everything must either be or not be). When the law of the excluded middle applies—"if not one, then the other"—it is impossible to negate both. If both are negated, one is forced into "the middle" that is indeterminate in

logic. The obstinacy of the indeterminate is found in negation: freedom in negating—as an existentialist idea (as in Sartre's The Imaginary¹¹)—creates a substitute world, a world of unrealities.

Time stands still. There is no reason for hurry as there is no progression. Admittedly, as the performance persists to devour the words of a world, imagination resembles a journey that must come to an end. Exhausting the possibility of language to count and discount items has a liberating effect, as if everything must go and it is no cheap sale:

everything that is not written down is gone everything that is written down is gone time is gone the edges are gone there is only inside, the outside is gone illusion is gone there is only outside, the outside is gone darkness — gone

The words onto the world

Imagination imposes language as a pattern onto the world. No Title is made of imagination without images. Instead of pictures evoking memories of the order of vécu (lived experience), which are said to be all different

in every spectator, the spectator is presented the generic language of dogs, tables, something and nothing, simple clauses. She is not asked to fill up a color book with her own colors.

Edvardsen's language doesn't describe images nor does it ask the audience to visualize. It states things in an apodictic manner, as if these statements are propositions to reconceive the world and we cannot negotiate them. This corresponds to the shift of meaning of imagination in the eighteenth century, which finally rids itself of dependence on perception and recollection. Imagination doesn't have to entail a process of visualization at all. To imagine can be to think in the sense of to suppose or believe; to simulate, make-believe, pretend, or, as in the case of No Title, state, negate, exhaust words in a generic fashion. How does genericness relate to imagination? The generic isn't easier to share than the singular. The opposite is the case, anyway according to common wisdom, which holds that people are more able to create a mental image if presented with a vivid and lush account. But, as we said, No Title does not give orders to its audience to form images. Bachelard again: "We must avoid ordering the image as a hypnotist orders his somnambulist subject."12

It draws bare contours rather than colorful and rich images. Resisting mystery, plenitude or intrigue, and offering substitution and exchangeability of thin images and disjunctions, it is the language that extends its power of movement aside from experience. In L'Air et les songes: Essai sur l'imagination du mouvement (1943), Bachelard notes:

How unjust is the criticism that sees nothing in language but an ossification of internal experience! Just the contrary: language is always somewhat ahead of our thoughts, somewhat more seething than our love. It is the beautiful function of human rashness, the dynamic boast of the will; it is what exaggerates power.¹³

Sensory, but bodiless

In a number of works deploying imagination through words, the question of the body surfaces having two faces: the corporeal and the incorporeal, the embodied and the disembodied. Moreover, in a number of works issued from contemporary dance, the body doesn't appear on stage. Its subtraction is superseded with the words that invoke it. This possibility was thematically suggested early on in Tales of the Bodiless (2011), a performance by Eszter Salamon.¹⁴ The fantasy of not having a body spurred four fictional worlds in the genre of speculative narration, which we could also consider as fiction without science. The wager was to imagine various destinies that involve the subtraction of humans from this world, and the motivations and implications that bodilessness

could have for the care of the body and the self, sexual desire and reproduction, evolution, kinship and species companionship. Bogbodies, dogs left behind after the humans are gone, a form of prostitution referred to as "substitution" that provides the bodiless with vicarious pleasure in textual fucking, as illustrated in the following fragment in which various voices alternate in speaking these words:

You know why you are here?
I have what you don't have.
You desire what I don't need.
I need your desire to make me grow.
I'm your substitute.

Doesn't matter if you were a man or a woman
Or if I am a man or a woman
Please listen to me
Don't stress me,
or my cells will breakdown.
Let's prolong this moment for a while.

I feel a rush of fluid.
I'm swelling.
If you could only see now - thousands of cells are erecting.
My pores are steaming.

I'm five degrees warmer.

My skin is smooth.

I see the first bubbles.
I'm beginning to foam.

Imagine you're touching me now. The vibrations are taking over.

I want to laugh.
I'm reaching a threshold.
Can you feel it?
(...)

Can you enter my words?

This entering is a moving into the halls, with all their walls.

I don't think this space which we were now in was my body . . .

More important than the text, bodilessness entailed transformation of the theater apparatus. A series of subtractions where theater sent parts of its body on vacation.

No bodies = no live presence

No figure = no tableau

No tableau = stage no longer central

No dominance of vision = no clarity, transparency or stability

The bet was to compose the sensorial imagination by mainly using words, voices, sounds, light, but no images

and no palpable bodies present on stage. In hindsight, it was to absent oneself, which would allow a leap toward a new life. The only human organ left was the voice, divorced from the body, an acousmatic voice that narrates and demands: "listen to me."

Imagination can be sensory if it subtracts physical embodiment and supplants it with the verbal imagining of sensing bodies. This proposition falls under the type of deliberate imagining: occupying the subject's explicit attention. It is also referred to as engaged imagination that demands aesthetic participation. The words describe sensations that cannot be had, enabling a kind of vicarious experience: the fictional body that is not mine is having that experience, whose intensity is shared by the effort of imagination.

A sophisticated example of sensory imagination is to be found in Anne Juren's Somatic Fictions (2016). In the work of this French choreographer and dancer, the audience members are admitted in a room in which they can choose to lie down on the floor, each person on a yoga mat. They can also stay sitting, but the majority of people—in the performance I attended in Oslo in June 2017—lay down with their eyes closed, some eventually falling asleep. For the whole duration, the performer—Juren herself— speaks in a quiet yet suggestive voice. In a narrative present tense, she addresses action

to "your" (audience member's) body. The performance begins with these words:

A hand gets in contact with your skin
It tries to touch it
Trying to grasp it
Something to hold on to.

it brushes something, maybe a part of your foot

It slides

It disappears

A hand extends, its fingers recognize the round, back part of your foot, the tendon of Achillea [sic]

The fingers grasp it, not to lose contact

The palm of a hand sets down on the front surface of your foot the hand is on your skin

It discovers that your skin can be lifted layer by layer It pulls your skin

It lifts the skin of your lower leg

The skin peels off, it coils above your knee,

The hand pulls again lifting the skin of your thighs

it peels off up to your pelvis

the hand lifts tactfully the skin of your belly

The skin slides down the length of your lower belly

the hand delicately slides under the transparent skin under your skin, the hand traces the long shape of your abdomen.

then it slides deeper. It feels the inner warmth of your body,

underneath your skin
its palm can feel the round belly muscles
It slides easily under them
it finds a place to rest on your liver, feeling its visceral texture,
massaging it a bit so as to understand its structure, its texture
then another hand, a children's hand plunges inside the long
and soft structure of your small intestinal tubes
It holds them tight in a grip, pressing them
(...)

From the beginning, that seems plausible in comparison with a physiological image, the narration becomes more and more quirky. After a hand, it is the beetle and then the performer's "I," her whole body entering "your" body and then the cavities of the body become rooms and houses out of which people loom. The narrator's body explores "your" body combining the elasticity of a superdancer with the accuracy of a quasi-scientist. Her body eventually gets entangled with your body, extending or losing its own body parts.

While it pays studious homage to so many details that make up a sensation, the action told is a fiction, drawing itself semantically close to the root verb fingo, meaning, I shape or fashion. The words weave a seamless texture, touching the body as if they would like to envelop it, not just penetrate it but also infiltrate its flesh on a molecular scale. The words skillfully describe the feel of the bodily architecture, the texture of tissues, the body

heat—the places in the body and its sensations that are commonly unknown to us. Lapsing into a hypnotizing repetition—"A tongue… licks your knee… it licks your thighs… your vulva… your belly…"—asks for surrendering to one's own imagination.

We are stringing image after image. But once again, it is important to note that these are far from familiar images. Rather, imagination operates here as a faculty of deforming images. An image that is readily present for us to recall must give rise to an absent image, or as Bachelard remarks, "if an occasional image does not give rise to a swarm of aberrant images, to an explosion of images, there is no imagination." The explosion of transformative images is the imaginary that belies imagination. The "imaginary radiance" of an image is, then, the measure of its value for Bachelard.¹⁶

Feigning what you feel

Recently, dancers have shown considerable interest in the so-called somatic reality of the body. Myriads of body practices have surfaced in Europe, each claiming to have discovered a truer and more insightful access into viscera. Most of the time, this knowledge is framed as personal, contingent upon the idiosyncratic techniques of the practitioners. On a more rational view, some dance practitioners admit that it is a matter of imag-

ination. We would regard this kind of imagination as feigning.

Imagination is like feigning, pretending to know. Feigning takes place in the gap between ignorance and action. For the notion "feigning," we have to jump back to the pre-Kantian philosophy, first Descartes, for whom, feigning is the reason why imagination is worse than useless. Descartes believed that it was a dangerous detraction from clarity and distinctness of rational thought, and so he dedicated his efforts to bring it down to earth by dissecting the heads of various animals in search of it. For his fellow rationalist, Spinoza, imagination is also opposed to reason. In so far as it is an affection of the body, imagination is more of a hindrance than a help in metaphysical speculations.

In Spinoza's theory of knowledge, imagination or feigning has a place, even if it acquires fictions rather than truths. It is a way of knowing which is half way, as it were, between truth and falsehood, fictions giving access to adequate ideas without being themselves adequate. Fictions have a role in the process of arriving at adequate knowledge. Therefore, feigning should be regarded as an expression of our lack of complete knowledge, it is a positive response to our limitations as knowers: "The less the mind understands and the more things it perceives, the greater its power of feigning is;

and the more things it understands, the more that power is diminished."¹⁷

Instead of inadequate, we could regard it as a surrogate knowledge, which takes confusion and contradictoriness as part of our engagement with the things that we don't know. Toni Negri reads it as the savage power that imagination endows reason with: it is constitutive rather than distorting; it shifts emphasis from the knowing subject to the world as object of knowledge; it gives delirious, fantastic and crazy material for analysis. This is the wild thought that keeps somaticians busy with their bodies. The goal of a pursuit of knowledge is not to spurn imagination but to complement it and collaborate with it. As long as we treat it as an aid to, rather than a substitute for, understanding, feigning is a point of access to truth.

But is art, performance or dance driven by the will to understand and acquire truth? For example, what can we know about the capacity of the body? Are speculative fictions solely cases of feigning? What would happen if we regarded all somatic practices as imaginative exercises of feigning? If we considered feigning as a specific faculty of explorations of the body (and many other things we have no certain knowledge of), then our propositions would be relieved from the intimidating ethos of necessity and would embrace contingency. In

that way, the problem of delusion would be avoided. Imagining is the sort of pretending that typically aims at convincing oneself rather than others. But many cases of imagining involve no attempt at persuasion—even of oneself. We imagine something to be true-in-fiction, or make-believe-true, or pretend-true. This could be the epistemic horizon of somatic explorations, a pretend-true game.

Let us close this brief prolegomenon of the performance poetics of imagination with the words of one more thinker of imagination, Denis Diderot. Diderot associated imagination with artifice, fabrication and production. In his poetics, reflecting the spirit of Enlightenment, the artist, scientist and philosopher share a common activity: "Each imagines rather than sees; produces rather than finds, seduces rather than guides." ¹⁹

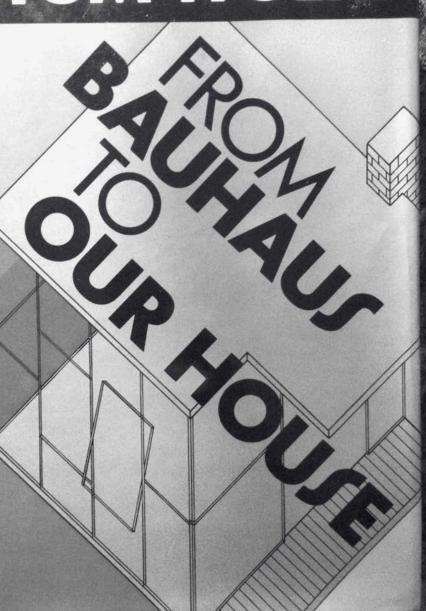
Notes

- I An earlier version of this text has been commissioned by Anders Paulin, "Towards a Performance Poetics of Imagination," forthcoming.
- 2 Bojana Cvejić, Choreog raphing Problems: Expressive Concepts in Contemporary European Dance and Performance (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- 3 See Corpus Web (2011), online journal, theme "What is Choreography?" http://www.corpusweb.net/tongue-6.html, accessed on September 5, 2011.
- 4 Isabelle Stengers, "La Question de l'Auteur dans les Sciences Modernes," . Littérature 82 (1991), 3-15.
- 5 See Isabelle Graw, "The Poet's Seduction: Six Theses on Marcel Broodthaers's Contemporary Relevance" *Texte* zur Kunst (Number 103, September 2016 "Poesie/Poetry"): 48-73.

- 6 Gaston Bachelard, La Poétique de la rêverie (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), 22-23.
- 7 Roland Barthes. The Rustle of Language tr. R. Howard (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1992) 43.
- 8 René Descartes discusses imagination in the Sixth Meditation: "When I imagine a triangle, for example, I do not merely understand that it is a figure bounded by three lines, but at the same time I also see the three lines with my mind's eye as if they were present before me; and this is what I call imagining." René Descartes, The Philosophical Works of Descartes, tr. Elizabeth Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968).
- 9 Aristotle, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York: Random House, 1941, 427b) 16.
- 10 Kant developed his account on imagination in Critique of Pure Reason (1781), where he focuses on empirical imagination, and in Critique of Judgment (1790), where he discusses productive or poetic imagination.
- 11 Jean-Paul Sartre, The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).
 - 12 Gaston Bachelard, La Psychanalyse du feu (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 9-15.
- 13 Gaston Bachelard, L'Air et les songes: Essai sur l'imagination du mouvement (Paris: José Corti, 1943), 282–85. In the same book, Bachelard contends that "To perceive and to imagine are as antithetic as presence and absence. To imagine is to absent oneself; it is a leap toward a new life," (L'Air..., 7-13).
- 14 I collaborated on the concept, text, and musical setting of Tales of the Bodiless. This performance belongs to a phase in the work of the Hungarian choreographer (after and then, 2009), in which dance is sidelined in favor of text and an intensified aesthetic dimension of a spectacle which is nonetheless staged with a choreographic mind of setting movement, words, lights and sound.
- 15 Her text is interrupted with foley sounds, which serve as clumsy acoustic accompaniment of described sensations.
 - 16 Bachelard, L'Air et les songes..., 7.
 - 17 Spinoza, The Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, viii § 58.
- 18 Toni Negri, Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
- 19 Denis Diderot. Oeuvres ésthetiques (ed. P. Verniere, Paris 1968), 15. Cited in Michael Moran "Metaphysical Imagination" in Dictionary of the History of Ideas (ed.

P. P. Wiener, New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968/1973, vol. 3), 215-17. "Imagination is the quality without which one is neither a poet, a philosopher, a wit, a rational being, nor a man" (Oeuvres esthétiques, 218).

TOM WOLFE



The Moment Before Mette Edvardsen

It's six thirty in the morning and I am sitting in the dressing room of the theater where I performed the last show of a series of performances last night. It's Sunday. In front of me there is a big mirror with lights around that are not switched on, so the bulbs have a milky grey color, which bulbs typ-ically have when they are not switched on, unless they are clear bulbs, but these ones are not. Next to me there is a big grapefruit and some empty, used, coffee cups. When I look up from my comput-er screen I see two grapefruits, the one that is next to me and the one in the mirror. Further away, six cups.

I realize I have never sat down to write anything in this space before. Perhaps some fast notes, or answering some emails, but not really sitting down to write something. It's not a space that is meant for writing, it's a space for the body, but not for writing. This is where I spend the last mo-ments before going on stage, and also the first moments right after a performance is over. It's not a private space (private space is overrated), it's a space that is connected to the stage. Like the prompter has, or used to have, back in the days, her prompter's box, a hole in the ground, this is the hole in the ground for the performer. It has a shower and toilets, a coat rack, a water boiler, a first aid kit, an ironing board, fresh towels, and the programs of the theatre.

It's not a space for writing, but also not really a space for the body. It's a space for the moment be-fore. Or just after. A dull space, but it does its work. When the mirror lights are on the space breathes the glow of glamour, it's the button for fiction and make-believe, and is part of the prepa-ration for the stage. Depending on each particular dressing room I might put the lights on or not, before the shows, but never after—that would feel nostalgic. Like a Christmas tree, where the lights are everything to the feeling of Christmas, and without the context of Christmas, the magic spell of the lights is broken. In fact, that's the one thing about Christmas that I like, the tree with the lights that welcome the dark, greeting the darkness with light. In the dressing room, the lights are perhaps of a more practical order, and also they give some heat, which is usually the reason why I switch them on, to warm up the room and myself. Nevertheless, the bulbs around the mirrors re-mind me that we are, unmistakably, in a theatre and that it is something special.

Now it's after, and I am sitting in a chair in the dressing room, nothing special about that, except perhaps the fact that I am here, still, or again, this many hours after the show is over, the next morn-ing, and why so early? I know why, but it's not important for what comes after. Now that this is established, I might as well stay, I thought. It's a moment for introspection, to go inside this hole. This space is a hole, with and without lights, with and without warmth, a space for me to go inside, a sort of non-space space.

In this dressing room there are five identical chairs. The kind of chairs we used to have in school when I was a child, partly wood and partly metal, the seat and back of the chair in wood, legs in painted metal. The proportion of this chair, however, now fits me perfectly. I sit a bit towards the front of the seat, connecting my sit bones with the seat of the chair. My feet are on the floor, and my knees in a right angle above my feet, aligned with my hips. Two parallel lines can be traced from my feet to my knees and my hips. My body is almost shaped like the chair, with my head on top of the spine, above the sit bones, knees in a right angle in front of my hips, so that the upper leg, or thighs, makes a parallel line with the floor. The feet are flat on the ground right underneath the knees. If I would make a drawing in profile the chair would almost trace my body like a shadow, or a visual echo, a sort of scaffold, an exterior skeleton to

my body, a supportive structure. My weight is equal-ly distributed between my two feet and my two sit bones, which are connected to the ground through the legs of the chair. The chair and I coincide in sitting.

I lean a bit back from my computer, my neck moves down and I can now see my two feet on the floor, my shoes, they are white with 1984 written in dark blue. The spine follows the movement of the neck and my whole back curves, as I am rolling over my sit bones and my weight is now press-ing towards the back of the sit bones. I roll back up again and my spine lengthens. I look straight in front into the mirror again, and feel myself sitting upright, on top of my sit bones, connecting into the seat of the chair. I repeat this movement, rolling down and up again, a couple of times, keeping the connection to my feet on the ground, and distributing the weight equally between my feet and sit bones. I can feel how my hips are moving, and as I am rolling up and down, my sit bones are moving a bit back and forwards again. After doing this gentle bounce a couple of times, and as the movement becomes a bit smoother and easier, it also becomes clearer and more precise, then smaller, until I stop.

In sitting, I look at myself in front of me, and I shift my weight a bit forwards and back, moving closer to the mirror and further away. Then, moving from side to side, I stop looking, but my eyes are open, shifting the weight from left to right, not so far, but just enough to feel that the weight shifts from one sit bone to the other, feeling how it is pressing into the chair, perhaps differently on one side than the other. I move a bit around like this, only shifting the weight, making small circles, in one direction and then the other. I try to feel the connection of the sit bone to the chair, to feel the shape of this bone, and to see if I can find where the middle is, remembering to keep the weight also supported by the feet on the floor. What else is moving? Is there a movement in my upper body, in my ribs, my head, am I moving my head, or can I remain quiet and only focus on the sit bones and the weight shifting? I breathe normally. The chair feels hard to the bone, even if there is the softness of skin. flesh and muscles in between the two.

I place my right hand under the sit bone on the right side, so that I am sitting in the palm of my hand, or more precisely on my fingers. I make the movement of slight weight-shift again, front and back, side to side. And now the shape of the sit bone is getting clearer. I can feel the flatter, middle part of the bone more distinctly, like there is a plateau or a surface. For the front of the hand, how-ever, the knuckles of my fingers, it's a bit painful, as it is being pressed into the hardness of the chair, and I gently remove my hand from under

my sit bone and bring it to rest on the thigh in front of the hip. As I sit back on the chair, now with the hand removed, I feel my right sit bone expanding into the seat of the chair, as if I am sitting further into the chair on that side, that my right side is widening and making me sit more grounded and also with greater ease and comfort. It's such a great feeling, like a release, my body sinking into the chair. I feel out of balance now, between my two sides. My left side, my left sit bone, feels stiff in comparison. I can almost feel it all the way up to my neck, that it's more tense and held. My right side feels softer and more there, more full. I want to be complete so I immediately do the same exploration on the other side, sitting now on my left hand, until the left sit bone also expands into the seat of the chair, bringing my whole left side more or less in balance with the right. I observe differences between my right and left side, the usual things when I have not been tuning in with myself like this for a while, or just because it's early in the morning. Still, and even if a mountain is not exactly the image of softness, I feel grounded like a mountain, sitting in the chair, I could sit like this for a thousand years, without any effort, just there, solid, calm. Slowly persisting through time.

I have not eaten yet. I pick up the grapefruit and peel it. The peel is very thick, and the white on the inside is soft and sponge like. Yes, this gets closer to the feeling of sinking into the chair, the soft-ness of this sponge like texture. I don't eat the inside of the peel of a grapefruit. Orange peel I don't mind, but grapefruit I do. Then the two grapefruits are both eaten. I get up to wash my hands, which are now full of grapefruit juice, so I cannot continue writing on my computer. There is a sink just behind my chair, and another mirror. I make two or three steps around in the room, and then I stand still and close my eyes. I feel myself standing. I try to feel how my weight is distributed in my body. If there are some places I feel heavier than others, if there are some parts of my body that catch my attention.

I feel my feet on the ground, how is my right foot in relation to my left, how much distance is there between my two feet, how do I feel my knees, are they soft or is there ten-sion around my knees, at the back of my knees. Where under the feet do I feel my weight, more to-wards the back and the heels of the foot, on the inside or outside of the foot, towards the front, or the toes—are the toes grasping the floor, or just there, relaxed, and is this different on the right and the left side? How is my breathing, is my breathing circulating through my whole body, or are there parts where no air is entering? Can I feel any movement in my ribs, the ribs on both sides, towards the back of the ribs as well? If I try to visualize my spine, what does it look like, if I would draw it on a piece of paper, what shape would it have, how would it curve? How is my head balancing on the top of the spine, is it tilting a bit towards the front, a bit more to one side than the other, where is my nose pointing? If I were to measure the distance between my left ear lobe and my left shoul-der, then my right ear lobe and my right shoulder, would that distance be the same on the right and left side? The face, the muscles of the face, the jaw, the tongue, the eyelids, the forehead. . . I contin-ue like this for a moment, tracing my whole body, feeling how my body is this morning. I think about how the floor can give very clear feedback to the body, detecting where there are tensions, how the body is organized, different on one side and the other, by being a clear and stable reference. I want to lie down, but the floor here is too cold, and besides, a chair, provided that it has the right size, and that it is not too soft, can do the same. I go back to the chair, the same one, and sit down again.

A small light is shining. If you focus on it, you see that the light has a glowing ring around it. Beneath the light, an open book. Hands, arms, body, sitting, still, no shoes, a water bottle, on the floor, dust.

A small, dark, dusty place. In the hole, narrowness, closeness, no landscapes in the distance. A space within a space. Like a closet. Or a box. A black box. An unbreakable prison. To let in and shut out the dark. A container for one human body. It has been said that someone once slept in one.

Light shining in from outside. The prompter awakes, as from an afternoon nap.

THE PROMPTER (tries to sit up) I will have fallen asleep. I will have wrestled and tried to resist, leaning forwards, rubbing my arm, squeezing my hands. It will have been the quiet and the darkness. I will have felt my body getting heavier, my weight slowly sinking further into the seat. I will have been afraid to really fall asleep. I will have rested my head in my hands to sup-port myself just for a moment. (rests her head in her hands) One of my legs will have fallen asleep, it will have been the lack of blood circulating, probably, from sitting still like this. (leans forwards) I will have tried to move it, carefully, with the help of my hands. It will have been almost painful. I will have tried to just let it be, let the prickling pass, it will surely have passed, and then I will have been able to move it again, like normal, change my position, shift my weight. I will have taken my sweater off, the warmth will have made it even worse, I will have imagined. Finally, I will have slept, but it will have felt like a very short time. I will have woken up, suddenly, with my arms crossed in front of the chest and both legs pulled up, as if I will have been cold. Curiously enough, I will not have been. (looks forward)

By the time I consciously register what is surrounding me, I understand that I have already picked up something long before, some vague sensation, or maybe not me, but something in-side of me. Maybe my body has received signals corresponding to physical experiences that were very common thousands of years ago and have been buried in the more recent period of our civilization, but are still existent and are faintly resonating now without stirring the sur-face. Something that was up to just a moment ago not in line with my mind-driven reality that dominates my mode of operation when I sit in the theatre audience. It could be a certain odor or subtle fragrance, caused by one or more volatilized chemical compounds that register with the deeper levels of myself. Yes, now I can locate this certain smell that undisturbed escapes into the room when certain body parts are exposed to the air, without insulating layers of clothing.

When I look into the room and my eyes adjust to the dim light, I can slowly make out the con-tours of the people around me. The slender shapes, the unusual curves, the narrower frames of bodies without clothes, bodies otherwise covered and formed by the outlines and surfaces of the fabrics; the hard angles of the shoulders of a suit jacket, the gentle folds of a silk blouse, the thickness of a woolen turtle neck, have given way to the awkward differences of nakedness.

The already familiar view of the profiles of people in the front rows, the back of the head of the person sitting right in front of me, is now also including various shapes of shoulder blades, col-larbones, the upper vertebrae of the spine, the softness of the skin around biceps. I carefully keep my knees towards the front, in order to not touch the thighs of the person sitting next to me. From the corner of my eye, I look silently to the person on my left, and take in an impres-sion of this body sitting there before I cover up my deliberate look with the gesture of a cough. Self-awareness and curiosity resonate in the movements that fill the room; a room full of people sitting together, in the dark, naked, looking towards the empty stage in front.

The room is warm and comfortable. The cover of the seat, brushing against my skin, reminds me of where I am: without a doubt, in a theatre. I can't help visualizing the pattern of the woven material leaving its structure imprinted on my skin, complementing the impression of the per-formance, remaining for some time after it is over, as an experience or a memory. This structure, like a relief painting, a literal impression of the experience of the performance, is offering a tactile reading on the surfaces of our bodies to the touch of a hand. How long will this impres-sion last? Will this physical imprint, the patterns on our backs and behinds, enter the exchange of our conversation in the

bar after the performance? What defines the duration of these im-pressions, these patterns on the skin? Do they gradually fade, like the light, or is it more like memory, a more porous and unstable matter that slips away and reappears without warning?

Sitting here in the dark watching in front of us, we are an audience watching a show, and at the same time bodies co-existing in a total situation. What if it is just a convention, and nudity is a common, like in a sauna, and we don't think about that people are naked, and at the same time we do?

A breeze of air is coming from the doors at the back, and is immediately felt on our exposed bodies. A reminder of the vulnerability of the naked body in a physical sense and a metaphor for the exposure we feel when nakedness is experienced un-moderated in a social context.

The room gets darker.

I must have fallen asleep, because I wake up again. I count the coffee cups, six; they are not completely empty, there's still some coffee left inside of them, cold of course. I continue writ-ing. I move my whole upper body towards the front and back again, and feel how the sit bones are pressing into the chair. I stop in the middle. Then I gently shift my weight from side to side, letting the weight shift from the left to the right sit bone,

a couple of times. This movement now feels very clear. I sit still for a moment and feel what I feel. With both hands on the key-board and eyes closed, I slowly let my head fall towards the front, making my spine curve and my sit bones roll towards the back.

My body is folding itself together, so that head moves closer towards the tail, or the sit bones, and my spine is being elongated with each vertebrae coming up to the surface, nearly visible under my knitted pullover. I roll back up again, starting the movement simultaneously from the head and the pelvis, so that the sit bones find again the contact with the chair, this flatter part of the bone, following each vertebra, until the spine and the upper body have unfolded and I am sitting in an upright position. I continue writing, folding and unfolding my upper body like this, and paying attention to where I can feel the movement, so that it's not just a mechanical repetition. Where does the movement begin and where does it end? I place one hand on the top of my head, without adding pressure, but to accompany the movement, the other hand behind my back, trying to touch the tail bone. I do the movement of folding and unfolding, between my two hands, on my head and my tail. Then I move my hand from my head to the front of my chest, my pullover is dark green and very soft. The touch of my hand is warm on my pullover. The other hand I place it on my belly. I feel how my attention now moves towards the middle of the spine. The hand

on my chest continues reaching further up towards my neck and makes a V-shape with my fingers touching the collarbone on both sides. I lift the other hand and reach towards the back of the neck. My fingers are gently touch-ing the vertebrae at the top of my spine, and observe how they move in and out as the body is folding and unfolding, rolling up and down. I notice that my shoulder blades are sliding out to-wards the side when the body is folding together, and move back towards each other again when I roll up. I place my hands on different parts of my body, feeling how the sides are being moved, my ribs, I touch my ribs, and I can feel how my lungs fill with air and empty out again, as the front of the body gets smaller and expands in the movement of folding and unfolding. I make the movement smaller, until it stops. My two hands are resting in my lap. Only breathing, still perceiving the movement of the pelvis rolling back and forwards, how the breathing is moving the body, feeling the whole body in sitting. I slide further back on the seat of the chair, as far as I can, until my back leans towards the wooden back of the chair. These shapes now make one. My breathing is calm and deep. I open my mouth.

AGNES MARTIN



WRITINGS

HATJE CANTZ

Learning to Derive: Financial Moves and Attentional Gestures in the Ecocidal Maelström

Yves Citton

Movement research revolves around one basic question: in which measure can one say that bodies move, instead of saying that they are moved? This could be seen as a philosophical question, belonging to speculations about metaphysics and ontology, disqualified long ago. But it is indeed a very concrete question, which—even if generally unacknowledged as such—haunts virtually all of our discourses in social sciences. Although this is a question that Performance Studies are probably better placed to address than any other field of inquiry, I will approach it from a somewhat lateral perspective, provided by the recent upsurge in Attention Studies, revisited here through Randy Martin's attempt to theorize a "social logic of the derivative."

The Saturnian Gaze

All kinds of things move in the universe. Usually in circles or ellipses, but not always. Along the way, bodies form, coalesce, split, clash, collapse, merge, vapor-

ize. Were we to visit Sun Ra and his joyful Arkestra on planet Saturn, we would see all kinds of things moving on the surface of planet Earth, along a series of rhythms that would soon appear massively predictable. Fourwheeled devices display a daily movement of back and forth between city centers and suburbs. In the Northern Hemisphere, they tend to follow longer trajectories every seven days or so. In the summer, bodies flow towards beaches; in the winter, towards mountains. Stadiums and concert halls get filled and emptied according to fairly stable patterns throughout the years. Observed from Saturn, this collective dance of daily, weekly and yearly movements must seem remarkably harmonious.

Experienced from the inside of traffic jams, it seems less so, no doubt. And yet, watching from close-by a pedestrian while she crosses the relentless flow of bicycles and mopeds on a major Vietnamese boulevard, or following a walker make his way through the thick moving crowd of a major subway hub in Tokyo, Paris or New York, may give the same impression of a well-oiled and well-rehearsed choreography—where incredibly few participants end up breaking each other's glasses and noses.

It would be ludicrous to decide in a strictly binary and exclusive fashion if such bodies move or are moved. Belying their names, "automobiles" do not move by themselves. Up until recently and maybe for a few more years, they needed a driver. This driver herself, if asked about where and why she was taking the road, would most of the time invoke some form of "obligation" (to go to work, to bring the kids to sport practice, to buy stuff to fill the fridge, etc.). The manner, as much as the purpose, of her movements would also involve much more than individual will and subjective desires. All Brits drive on the left, without even thinking about it; men gather and walk on the central boulevards of Algerian cities at the end of the day; millions of French families escape from the inner cities on the weekend; our going to beaches and concerts is largely gregarious. Seen from Saturn, we tend to move in (homogenized or distributed) herds. Our bodies are moved by such collective movements, which cannot be explained on a strictly individual basis. Social logics are at work from within our intentional motions.

Over-Driven in a World of Super-Objects and Distributed Agents

Should we part from Sun Ra's company and land back into our incarnated earthly bodies, as neuroscientists analyze their attentional behavior, we would question even further the part our intentional agency plays in such movements. Yes, every one of us "decides" to drive a car, take a walk, plan a weekend outing or a summer vacation, but the way our body actually moves in order

to actualize such decisions is remarkably different from our traditional conception of attentiveness. As Jean-Philippe Lachaux has explained, it is as reductive and misleading to identify intention with attention as it is to identify attention with concentration.2 When we drive our car in the evening traffic, we do not concentrate on the road. As a matter of fact, should we be truly "focused" drivers, we would constantly run into accidents. Neither the truck in the rearview mirror, nor the car in front of us, nor the motorcycle passing us from the left, nor the city bus two cars in front of us becomes the object of our focused attention. In Kolkata as in Cairo, in Rome as in Manhattan, accidents happen miraculously rarely because drivers let their vehicle and their attention be somewhat carried by the flow of which they are a part.

As Lachaux puts it, the driver constructs a "superobject" constituted by the ceaselessly evolving assemblage formed by the surrounding bodies in motion (the truck behind, the car in front, the moto on the side, the bus ahead). The traffic flows as long as we feel ourselves being a moving part in this complex moving configuration. And in order to remain intuitively attentive to this collective configuration as such, we must refrain from getting absorbed by a concentration focusing on any one in particular among its components. While it seems that we drive our car, we are in fact driven by, in and over the

flow—much like a surfer is borne by and over the wave. As Bruno Latour stressed on many occasions, we are constantly overdriven (and surprised) by our own actions, insofar as they are part of larger assemblages that carry us well beyond the narrow purpose and limited control of our individual intentions.⁴

But this regime of attentional overdrive is not only characteristic of gregarious behaviors immersed in collective superobjects. It is also a prominent feature of our most demanding individual performances, whether they belong to athletics, acrobatics, theatrics, dance or music. The notion of "flow"—as popularized by Czech psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi and as applied, for instance, by Guerino Mazzola to the area of free jazz improvisation5—invites us to understand our most successful performances, less as a form of movement initiated by our individual will and sustained by our personal strength, than as a process borne by a transindividual wave of agency we precariously manage to ride upon.6

"I" can be credited as performing amazing gestures (as a speaker, an artist, an athlete) only insofar as "a power stronger than itself"⁷—usually a "we"—sets in place a configuration of movements of which I find myself in position to benefit. British anthropologist Alfred Gell has described in very general and convincing terms this "distributed agency"⁸ which manifests itself in our encounters with shamans, sorcerers, gurus, sacred rituals

(in so-called "traditional" societies), as well as during art performances and through objects of art (in "modern" societies). Independently of the "author" who produced it, a painting, a photograph, a tale, a film, a song or a dance have an agency of their own, by which we are carried when we act upon them. All forms of ritualistic and aesthetic encounters rely on complex entanglements of such agencies, distributed among the various "actants" (human and non-human) involved in them—including, of course, that of their "spectators" who count among their most necessary participants.

Attentional Movements

The more specific question I would like to discuss is the following: How are we to understand the role played by attention in such entanglements of agencies that allow a performer to override her pre-existing individual limitations? In other words: how does attention overdetermine the ways our bodies move/are moved?

A first response, at the individual level, can be constructed following Aurélien Gamboni and Sandrine Teixido's inspiring assemblage entitled A Tale as a Tool (2017), which invites its participants to read Edgar Allan Poe's tale "A Descent into the Maelström" (1841) as a highly suggestive and accurate modelization of our attentional behavior in times of stress. The tale narrates the horror experienced by three brothers, three

fishermen who took excessive risks in order to maximize their profit by increasing their catch, making it "a regular business"—"a matter of desperate speculation, the risk of life standing instead of labor and courage answering for capital"9 to fish in threatening proximity to the mother of all whirlwinds, the Norwegian "Moskoe-Ström" which gave its name to the phenomenon of the maelström. Partly because of carelessness, partly because their watch broke down, failing to warn them of the perilous hour of the day, their fishing boat fails to cross the bay before the maelström forms its deadly trap, and sucks them into it.

The first brother is swept out of the boat by the first terrible wave that breaks and carries away the mast. The second brother loses all feeling of brotherly love, as he violently pushes the narrator away from the ring he was holding on to, apparently the safest remaining place on the wreck. Taken by surprise, the narrator is pressured by the centrifugal force of the whirlwind against a barrel that was attached to the side of the boat. In this hopeless position, terrified, discouraged and disheartened, he can only wait for the monstrous maelström to slowly swallow him down to his death.

At this point of total passivity and resignation, though, having fully accepted to be moved against his will towards his destruction by the whirl, the narrator writes that his moving body "could not help observing" certain physical features in the movements of the surrounding bodies. A "strange interest," an "unnatural curiosity" pushes him from the inside, against his well understandable (and pretty reasonable) desperation itself, to pay attention and to find "amusement in speculating upon the relative velocities of their several descent towards the foam below."¹⁰

Attention does not result from an intention to identify, focus, analyze the trajectory of certain objects, but from an inner drive one cannot help obeying, even against one's best judgement. This drive will soon fuel a lifesaving "art of noticing," a condition of survival in the ruins of capitalist fishing for profit." But it starts as an uncontrollable and irrational urge to observe.

Because his body had kept a memory of the type of objects seen on the beach unbroken by the maelström, and because his irrepressible (and inexplicably joyful) curiosity pushed him to interpret the relative velocities of descent as "the natural consequence of the forms of the floating fragments," the narrator observed "that a cylinder, swimming in a vortex, offered more resistance to its suction." He thus decided to "lash [him]self securely to the water cask upon which [he] now held, to cut it loose from the counter, and [...] to precipitate [him]self with it into the sea, without another moment's hesitation." ¹⁷³

What we see in this tale, more clearly than anywhere else, is the intimate connection between, on the one

hand, the physical movements of the objects and flows that structure and populate our surroundings and, on the other hand, the attentional movements that govern our conditions of survival within such surroundings. My attention is in large part what governs my movements, but my attention itself is governed by the surrounding movements "on which we [are] borne." More than deciding whether we move or are moved, the crucial question consists in understanding the deeper nature and properties—the socio-natural logic—of the movements in which our body and agency is but one participant.

Learning to Fall

One of the amazing features of Poe's tale is the inversion it forces us to operate between horizontality and verticality: the centrifugal force experienced in the maelström exerts a horizontal pressure that comes to challenge the downward attraction of gravity (even if the latter remains, of course, the main source of anxiety, and cause of doom). As swimmers, surfers or fishermen, we usually approach the sea as a surface on which we attempt to move horizontally, seeing the vertical movement of sinking as an equivalent of death. The tale's narrator must learn to reconfigure his senses and intellect in order to surf on the vertical wall formed by the maelström. His attention must observe and com-

pute how the various shapes of falling objects manage to maintain a course as close as possible to horizontal circles. His choreographic challenge is to attend to a horizontal fall.

A similar challenge is at the core of the work developed by French choreographer Yoann Bourgeois.¹⁴ The dancer-acrobat proposes warm-up exercises where one person sits on a precariously balanced chair, prevented from falling only by the attention of another person pushing as lightly and imperceptibly as possible on the former person's knees; he stages trampolines in Alpine landscapes where bodies fly and fall against the background of vertical slopes; he places dancers on a suspended stage floor spinning in mid-air, with endless variations going from a horizontal to a quasi-vertical plane, challenging each participant to invent new ways to balance centrifugal force with gravity.

All such attentional experiments provide breath-taking lessons in the high art of falling. Rather than a metaphor of our slow but steady (and accelerating) collective demise in the maelström of climate change, radioactive contamination and shrinking biodiversity, Yoann Bourgeois' work can be read as an opportunity to learn how to move (towards life, love and beauty) within what moves us (towards collapse, competition and death). Here too, as in Poe's tale, we should not so much attempt to hold on to what appears as the most solid

and most reassuring rock of stability (the ring anchored in the body of the boat): survival looks more likely for those who will have learned to attempt lateral moves, to observe unnoticed phenomena, to attach themselves to improbable light barrels whose shape (rather than weight or roots) promises a more hopeful gradient of horizontal fall.

Learning to Derive

Before his untimely death, philosopher and dancer Randy Martin (1957-2015) strongly helped movement research by sketching transdisciplinary theses that are likely to inspire many artists and scholars to come. In his last book—which synthesizes previous efforts ranging from the financialization of daily life to analyses of hip-hop as an inextricably physical and socio-political movement—he has suggested for instance that, following the financial crisis, the series of environmental disasters and the media whirlwinds triggered by the obsession with "terrorism," "the financial and movement practices responded to a collapsed verticality with an emphasis on lateral mobility."15 Such a broad and highly abstract thesis is fleshed out by a fascinating analysis of the structure and function of the (financial) derivative as an emerging form of social logic. From their original narrow definition as "contracts to exchange a certain amount of something at a determinate future time at

a agreed-on price,"16 derivatives, insofar as they allow speculators to bet on anything for any duration of time, embody a much wider social logic characterized by the articulation of three types of movement.

First, derivatives "disassemble and bundle attributes of commodities, thereby removing the presumption of functionality on which the machine-like metaphor of system is based":¹⁷ the most distant and apparently independent aspects of our social lives can be recombined and re-bundled in derivatives, "without first or ultimately needing to appear as a single whole or unity of practice or perspective."¹⁸ In other words: through derivatives, any body in motion can be put in connection and proximity to any other body in motion. Second, "derivatives articulate what is made in motion, how production is inside circulation, and, as such, how to notice the value of our work in the midst of volatility."¹⁹

In other words: derivatives embody value insofar as it constantly moves ahead of itself. Third, "derivatives work through the agency of arbitrage, of small interventions that make significant difference, of a generative risk in the face of generalized failure but on behalf of desired ends."²⁰ In other words: derivatives operate at the level of the micro-movements by which value flows through us, carrying us on its try-and-error iterative and circular path.

It is no coincidence if Randy Martin's modelization of the social logic of derivatives summarizes a lot of what has been seen in the previous pages, from Lachaux's neurosciences to Bourgeois' choreographies. "Derivatives perform a dispossession of self and ownership. They re-sort individual entities into bundles of shared attributes and render the present pregnant with the collection of wealth needed to make the world otherwise." The superobjects, whose moves are identified from Saturn as human flows, are much better explained by a micro-sociopolitical approach which computes them as resulting from an intra-action within a multifarious entanglement of distributed agencies.

What is to be understood is precisely how this distributed agency is constantly altered, reconfigured, re-bundled, and along which lines of force—financial logics being of course a prime suspect when considered at the global level. We tend to move (as individuals) along the lines of force which push and pull various faces of our profiles in various (and sometimes incompatible) directions at the same time. And from an attentional perspective, global and digital capitalism can be characterized by the increasing alignment of all our human attentions on the sole finality of financial profit.

Under the increasing pressure of this global alignment, our distributed agency relies on a constantly shifting distribution of knowledge—which is fore-fronted as the prime topic of Randy Martin's book.

He summarized perfectly the attentional experience staged in Poe's tale when he observed that "knowledge is borne not simply by agents, but among the objects in their environment."23 Our selves are borne by the information carried through us (now via the circulation of electricity through our networks of servers, PCs, smartphones, TV screens and other connected objects)—and, much more still, by the affects generated in our bodies by this circulation of information. Unfortunately for us, the way information—i.e. electricity—currently circulates within our mediarchies²⁴ tends to precipitate us into the ecocidal maelström of man-induced climate change, biodiversity collapse and nuclear contamination. The industrially produced objects populating our mostly (sub)urban environments, as reflected and promoted through the lens of the currently dominating media (financed mostly by commercial advertisement), dramatically fail to "bear" the knowledge necessary for us to reorganize our individual and collective lives into more sustainable forms. Surviving this descent into the maelström requires not only other types of consumption, other types of production (i.e., other types of moves), but also other types of knowledge and, first of all, other forms of (medialized) attention.

D(e)riving the Drives?

Randy Martin often reminds us of the etymology of the "derivative", which originally expresses a form of movement: dériver, in French, not only refers to "drifting" on a liquid surface that bears us aimlessly but, more originally still, to "the redirection of a flow of water, as in the bank of a river (rive in French)—a redirection that results in some king of accumulation, surplus, or excess."²⁵ Dériver refers to an overflow, a flood which literally "de-banks" a river from the natural limits that used to contain it.

It is hard, however, to resist the urge to project the social logic of the derivative onto another verbal proximity bound to contaminate it fruitfully in the mind of English speakers. A great deal of the reflections sketched in the previous sections, about the many ways in which we are moved by our (supposedly intentional) moves, is condensed in the endlessly suggestive inner resonances of the drive. As a translation of the German word Trieb—used by Sigmund Freud to name the inner (mostly unconscious) impulse that leads us to make (mostly non-intentional) statements or gestures—the drive expresses the way we are moved by affections and affects largely out of our control. But, in the civilization of the automobile developed during the 20th century, driving also refers—highly paradoxically—to our capacity to direct, to lead, to command, to control our movements. Our initial question, asking in which measure one can say that bodies move, instead of saying that they are moved, can thus be elegantly rephrased as: how can one drive one's drives?

The (somewhat drifting) considerations explored in the previous sections suggest that this (old) question may be better addressed with the help of an additional letter: the most urgent stakes raised by the performing arts within the context of our ecocidal maelström may well be to devise in which measure one can derive one's drives. If the civilization of the car promoted throughout the 20th century led us to envision human agency in general—and politics, along with ethics, in particular—as an art of driving, our 21st century rapidly moving towards an era of driverless cars (i.e., real "auto-mobiles") may push us to reconsider human agency as an art of deriving. As the regime of overdrive synonymous with mediarchic capitalism sinks us, more obviously every day, into the ecocidal maelström, we too "cannot help but observing" how the very mechanisms supposed to prevent our descent (open markets of ideas, democratic elections, parliamentary debates) dramatically fail to do so. If (ever more disquieting) fools occupy the driver's seat, we may be foolish ourselves in concentrating our denunciation, frustration and anger on the persons of the buffoons who pretend to hold the wheel. We may be better inspired to revise the very conception of movement which commonly underwrites our treatment of politics: in the age of the driverless car, we must face the challenge of driverless government.

Here too, a detour through etymology may help: "governing" refers to the art of directing a ship by com-

manding its rudder, its tiller, its helm (*le gouvernail*, in French). Our economic and political systems, as overdriven by our mediarchies—which operate as "heterarchies" much more than as hierarchies or oligarchies²⁶ — no longer respond to the central command of a central helm. The government itself, traditionally seen as the Big Mover, is increasingly moved out of its control by the meshwork of drives that animate our increasingly entangled social lives and attentions.

We may feel despair in watching our ship drift aimlessly as it initiates its mortal descent into the maelström. We certainly feel rage when watching buffoons trumpet their impotent arrogance in the driver's seat. We could feel empowered, however, by a better understanding of the social logic of the derivative, insofar as it can help us elaborate strategies of derivation that redirect the overflow of information and affects produced by the capitalist overdrive towards more sustainable forms of life. Deriving our drives does not necessarily need us individually to master them through the governing power of our personal will. More than a cult of our intentional will, it requires a culture of attentional habits. And if the performing arts have a crucial role to play in helping us deriving our drives, it is mostly insofar as they foster and sharpen a certain art of attention.

The Arts of Attention

The arts of attention can be envisaged as arts of care. As a matter of survival, we obviously need to pay attention to our environments much more than we currently do. Developing an art of thoughtful action necessary to prevent our sinking into the maelström of ecocidal self-destruction requires an effort of reflection, whose general purpose should be to redirect our local (personal) moves in light of certain general (collective) orientations, determined by the material conditions of our common survival on planet Earth. This first range of attentional arts consider our moves as seen from Saturn: collectively, we simply cannot continue burning increasing amounts of carbon dioxide, using increasing amounts of pesticides and piling up increasing amounts of nuclear waste. Our local moves (turning on the switch of our air conditioner) need to be reconsidered in light of their aggregate implications, as our common circular choreography of boundless consumerism is digging the earth from under our feet. The analyses, reflections and argumentations developed for this attentional reorientation of our individual and collective moves belong to philosophy, the humanities and the social sciences.27 Faced with the imminent (and, for us, catastrophic) "victory of the Carbon Liberation Front." we need "an alternative realism," not only "yet another philosophy, but a poetics and technics for the organization of knowledge."28 In other words: new arts of attention.

Apart from such efforts of abstraction, which attempt to reorient our behaviors by re-locating the local within its implications in more global entanglements, a second range of attentional arts focus on our sensibilization to otherwise unnoticed dimensions or nuances in our most concrete experience. These are intuitive—rather than reflexive—arts of noticing:²⁹ they aim at refreshing our sensitivity to what is right under our nose, even if long-learned "disinhibitions"³⁰ prevent us from being upset by the constant noise of urban traffic, or disturbed by the lingering foul smells generated by industrial production and waste.

Such "receptive" arts of noticing provide a preliminary stage to more obviously "active" arts of intervening at crucial junctures of given situations—arts of hacking best illustrated by what Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker have theorized as "exploits." ³¹

These are punctual interventions exploiting the vulnerabilities of the various systems we live by and communicate through, in order to reorient them towards different purposes. In mediarchies, where what appears to wide audiences determines what drives individual and collective behaviors, the arts of noticing and the arts of hacking are closely linked to arts of gesturing, insofar as gestures (perceived) count as much, if not much more, than deeds (done).

Counter-Performing the Derivatives

It is this coalescence between arts of noticing, arts of hacking and arts of gesturing that the performing arts not only "stage" but practice, not only "in front of" but with their audiences. And this is why Randy Martin's audacious attempt to link forms of financial flows with forms of bodily moves paves the way for a better grasp of the social logic of derivatives. The level at which he situates his analysis in movement research—the level of the "kinestheme," in parallel with the Foucaldian "episteme"—is at the same time more abstract and more concrete than what we are used to observe. He invites us (abstractly) to connect two types of movements that seem to have nothing in common, while he (concretely) reveals how—insofar as we envisage these movements as motions—they indeed display striking similarities. Like the risky investments made in financial derivatives, but also like the vital arts of attention illustrated in Poe's tale.

the risky movements of postmodern dance, hip-hop, and boarding culture [...] all de-center bodies' relation to their surroundings, reorienting what is up and down, prize flying low and moving laterally, shifting suddenly, in the midst of a dangerous situation in which one has placed oneself. A gap, a break, an opening allows the body to move otherwise, to seize a moment in which a minor difference prevails and accelerate through, cleaving what had once been safely apart. Releasing, dropping,

verticality—moments of danger for each of these practices—suspend the mover as arbitrageur, between spaces of values, cutting into that space to leave it stitched anew with a residue of value behind. The value is both the accomplishment and the desire, the expanded sense of what is possible.³²

The simultaneously abstract and concrete characterization of the derivative that emerges from considering what financial operations have in common with hiphop, with contact improvisation, with ecological activism—or with the fortunate survival of a greedy and momentarily careless Norwegian fisherman—can be summarized in seven main features:

- I. Exceedence by overflow: the derivative results from a temporary superabundance of resources which pour over the banks of the present situation and explores new paths of survival or development.
- 2. Speculation on the move: the derivative operates within a moving environment, in order to adapt current moves to surrounding moves anticipated from the future.
- 3. Creativity by recombination: trading the pretense to originality for the practice of creolization, the derivative clears the way for a potentially different future, by disassembling and re-bundling attributes of the preexisting goods and situations.
 - 4. Perpendicularity to expectations: the derivative gen-

erates value through de-centerings and inversions of the reference frames, fomenting lateral moves unexpected and unpredictable within centered and vertical structures.

- 5. Arbitrage by iteration: the derivative forges a path of wider recombinations through a series of iterated local arbitrages.
- 6. Valuation by virality: the derivative rearticulates future valuations only insofar as its perpendicular moves manage to contaminate other behaviors and to alter expectations.
- 7. Dissolution of sovereignty: beyond performing a dispossession of self and ownership, the derivative tends to erode and undermine most of the traditional pretenses to sovereign power constitutive of hierarchies.

Such a definition of the derivative puts it in clear continuity with the dérive promoted by the Situationists since the late 1950s, as well as with the social logic of difference-and-repetition analyzed by Gabriel Tarde in the 1890s and refreshed by Gilles Deleuze in the 1960s. The association may seem anti-natural and distasteful between revered anti-establishment philosophers and the reviled operations of financial sharks who caused a near-collapse of the world economy, along with lasting misery for millions of families, due to the post-2008 impoverishment and asphyxia of many social policies. And yet, the most interesting theoretical move performed by

Randy Martin should be found in inviting us to investigate the (potentially positive) social implications of the (clearly calamitous) financial excesses of ecocidal capitalism.

Performance Studies can make a most vital contribution to our political debates by perforating from the inside the very notion of "performance." While a "performing" asset is usually interpreted in the damagingly narrow sense of "profit-making" (profit for the capitalist class who invested in it), the social logic of the derivative opens up a wider field of investigation, wherein a "performing" move is evaluated by its capacity to derive a more sustainable and emancipatory future from the superabundance of the present.

It may have been foolish (and dangerous) to pretend, as claimed by modernist politics during the 20th century, to sovereignly drive the drives. It is clearly insufficient (and equally dangerous) to satisfy oneself, as claimed by the apologists of financial capitalism, with merely riding the derivatives, no matter where short-term individualized profits may lead us (more and more obviously to our common ecocidal collapse). The escape from this false alternative should be seen in multiplying the attempts to counter-perform the derivatives—i.e., to perform perpendicular moves leading to a counter-valuation of the performance itself, now reoriented towards collective ends.

The Collective Dance of Attention

The place of the performing arts and of Performance Studies in this collective endeavor to counter-perform the derivatives is proportional to their capacity to foster our arts of noticing, of hacking and of gesturing. Erin Manning and Brian Massumi have eloquently described the knot that ties them together, by referring to the moments in our lives when we have experienced a certain "dance of attention," during which we were led to "think with our movement":

Your every movement was a performed analysis of the field's composition from the angle of its affordance for getting-ahead. Entering the dance of attention, your perceiving converged with your moving activity, and your activity was your thinking. You entered a mode of environmental awareness in which to perceive is to enact thought, and thought is directly relational. This actively relational thinking is also an expression of the field, but in a different mode than storytelling, poetic or not, with no immediate need for language, satisfying itself at a level with the body's movements: expression a-bodying.³³

Movement research can be approached simultaneously as a study and as a performance of our collective dance of attention. It is itself a form of attention—as well as, more importantly still, of attending—to what this collective dance does to us, as individuals, as a collectivity, and as dwellers of a certain environment. It belongs to

the arts of dwelling,³⁴ most necessary to oppose our current ecocide, insofar as they help developing habits and forms of life sustainable within a certain habitat.

While social critique and political activism remain almost exclusively focused on the (necessary) denunciation and (impotent) lament geared towards the predatory and vampirist colonization operated by financial capitalism over our daily life and globalized markets, another form of planetarization is at work under the shiny surface of financial flows. The kinestheme of the derivative, if not yet quantifiable from Saturn, can already be traced in countless locations North and South—from the French Alps revisited by Yoann Bourgeois' trampolines, to Prosenjit Kundu's teaching hip-hop dance to Indian street kids,35 and to Laurence Ligier's therapeutic use of dance and circus with abused girls in the Philippines.³⁶ Analyzed along the lines sketched by Randy Martin, the kinesthetic resonances that unite such diverse practices can be read both as a response to the colonizing grip of globalized finance, and as a moment of the decolonizing process that progressively erodes all pretensions of sovereignty.

Of course, the disproportion between financial markets and dance companies could not be more striking, in terms of power, organization, status and visibility. And yet, well beyond the singular case of Randy Martin, an increasing number of thinkers and analysts invite us to measure a groundbreaking change which, although largely unnoticed, is in the process of redefining on a global scale what the twentieth century has taught us to consider as "politics" or as "the economy." Whether they invite us to "change the world without taking power," whether they challenge the very notion of "political action" to favor an approach articulated in terms of pressures and gestures, whether they call for a "politics of dividualism" taking stock in a form of power located "at the end of the economy,"39 or whether they announce a possible upsetting of the power of finance by the very logic of finance,40 such analyses converge in rejecting the false alternative forcing us to choose between a surrender to the current triumph of neoliberalism and a nostalgic return to the conditions and promises of the Fordist era.

Learning to counter-perform the social logic of the derivative will not be easy, nor does it in any way suffice to guarantee an escape from our current descent into the ecocidal maelström. At the meeting point between social analysis, political activism and performance studies, investigating and experimenting with the kinestheme of the derivative may provide the most hopeful way to "think with our movements," and to introduce a promising twist into our collective dance of attention. The value of a movement research attentive to the social

logic of the derivative can only be experienced from the point of view of the future if, as Randy Martin suggested, "the value is both the accomplishment and the desire, the expanded sense of what is possible." ⁴¹

Notes

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 - 3 Jean-Philippe Lachaux, Le cerveau funambule (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2015).
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- 9 Edgar Allan Poe, "A Descent into the Maelström," in Complete Tales and Poems, (New York: Fall River Press, 2012), 400.
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 - 13 Ibid., 407-08.
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- 16 Ibid., 51.
- 17 Ibid., 52.
- 18 Ibid., 62.
- 19 Ibid., 52.
- 20 Ibid., 52.
- 21 Ibid., 72.
- 22 Karen Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Mean-ing (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
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LE TROISIÈME ŒIL La photographie et l'occulte

GALLIMARD

Effing The Ineffable

Eleanor Bauer

Introduction

The thoughts discussed in this article concern the relation between dance as a medium of thought and language as a medium of thought. The basic premise is that there is no abstract thought-as-such that is not situated in a medium that forms and informs it, but rather that there are several media of thought through which thinking is made possible—uniquely, idiomatically, and sometimes untranslatably. Thinking happens, about whatever, but always through and within a medium. Oral language, written language, drawing, sculpture, diagrams, mathematics, architecture, film, dance, choreography, etc.—are all unique media of thought: activities in which thinking takes shape and flight; materials through which experiences, things and ideas can be processed, expressed, sensed and reflected upon.

From this base, in my research as a PhD candidate in Choreography at Stockholm University of the Arts, I pursue three, maybe four questions. The first question is epistemological. As a medium of thought, what is specific about dancing? How does dance coordinate, organize, and synthesize sensed experience; what meanings is it capable of handling; how can it express; what can it exhibit? This includes thought in choreography, as the writing-of-dance that crystalizes fixed and repeatable structures for dance, from technical vocabularies to social choreographies to scores. Choreography has structured and ordered dancing for so many centuries that it has shaped how dance thinks as profoundly as writing has shaped oral language. However thus inseparable from its choreographic etymology, dancing—as done by and through a dancer—situates thought differently than choreography. Especially as an expanded practice, choreography has demonstrated its capacity to think beyond or at a distance from dance. Dance-thought, on the other hand, as I am concerned with it, is situated in and moves through bodies. The epistemological question of how dance thinks includes how bodily movement in general informs thought, but more specifically dancing, as a markedly social and cultural practice.

My second question is discursive, and perhaps more artistically than philosophically driven. How (if at all) can dance-thought be translated to language-thought? Dance is always partially mediated by language, not just theoretically or academically, but in studio practices and in a generally logocentric society. What kind of language

do we use to talk about dance? Could it better express the nature of thought in dance? How can dance-thinking, in its various techniques and practices of embodied sense-making, push language-thinking into new forms, new poetics? I suspect that on some level it is already happening, among all sorts of groups of dancing people whose ways of being in their bodies influence their speech. In which case it is perhaps a question merely of who is listening, what sense it makes, or new possibilities it creates for language.

The translation of dance-thought to language is not a necessity for dance-thought itself. I am not looking for a form of notation or documentation of dance. I am interested in this translation effort for what it can reveal about both idioms. Fluency in dance without any recourse to natural languages for explanation or disambiguation is at least hypothetically possible (though imagining a world without language is another project all together). Dance hosts and expresses thought sufficiently without subtitles. Fluency in dance, like in any medium of thought, is enhanced by practice and exposure. Considering myself fluent in contemporary and experimental dance practices of the northern and western hemispheres, as well as fluent in the English language, my interest in prodding at the gaps and pushing the frictions between dance-thought and language-thought is as much for the outcomes in the English language and poetry as it is about what it can offer the dance and choreography. It is also for whomever may stumble across this work and find something worth pillaging.

The wager is that there are methods of writing from an institutional base in the humanities disciplines that can be considered experimental practices. What they would invent (or reinvent) would be concepts and connections between concepts. [...] A concept by nature is connectible to other concepts. [...] A kind of conceptual struggle ensues, producing a kind of creative tension that may play itself out in any number of ways (depending in part on how much the importer of the concept actually understands the system left behind—or cares).²

The third and last question that concerns me is what happens with choreography (as the writing of dance, or dance-writing)—which is to varying degrees conditioned today by structures of natural language in the studio and out—if the practices of speaking and writing dance-thought are refined and reformulated. The paths suggested in the previous two questions pose interesting enough problems without the expectation of a new choreographic method as outcome. My questions are addressed towards conditions and practices that I encounter in my trajectory through the dance and art worlds. In the freelance project economy, lingual articulation of artistic concepts increasingly precedes materialization in practice (due to the necessity of

gathering and securing resources beforehand through funding applications or meetings with gate-keepers). If our language is constantly subordinated to the role of convincing people of the value of what we are doing, artistic discourse descends easily into projective commercial marketing jargon of a twenty-first century snake oil salesman.³ The way we language what we do deserves scrutiny, as it shapes what we do, in processes of preformation, collaboration and evaluation.

Inheriting from the work of Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Monique Wittig, who, under the banner of L'Ecriture Feminine deployed different strategies within language to critique, reinvent, subvert and resist the phallogocentricity of the world in which they wrote,4 I wish to suggest that a critical and inventive approach to language from within language is possible. These French feminists wrested their language from the patriarchal worldview expressed in its structures by reformulating language from within a female perspective and eros, re-centering the speaking, knowing subject in the female body in order to challenge and reveal the sexist values that language codes assumed (i.e. phallogocentricity). What would it be to place the moving body, more specifically the dancing body (of any gender), as the speaking subject? Human natural languages already express movement in their spatialization of thought, as they come from humans with moving bodies. To experiment with ways that the dancing mind can express itself in natural language offers an opportunity to re-think how choreography, as dance-writing, is influenced by and re-imaginable through language.

Choreography is to dancing, as writing is to speaking. This analogy suggests that choreographic problems indeed may be worked out in language, through a process of surrogative reasoning⁵ that allows writing to model and reflect the choreographic structuring. By way of moving from dancing to writing to choreography (to speaking), a diagonal shift across the analogy rather than just a lateral move allows language to be a place for working out the symbolic order of the choreographic. My hope is that if I am risky enough with my language-thought, the "conceptual struggle" with the "creative tension" between dance-thought and language-thought can indeed bring me to new places choreographically. In order for artistic practices and discourses not to be entirely limited by extenuating circumstances, to push back on the structuring forces that order thought even in experimental domains, is to affirm that "activities dedicated to thought and writing are inventive."6 Not to refuse language, as perhaps there is eventually no escape, but to use it in order to change it, and to question the things that it can adequately represent.

"I believe in the world and want to be in it. I want to be in it all the way to the end of it because I believe in another world in the world and I want to be in that."

The overall aim is to abandon language that reduces, confuses or misrepresents dance-thought and challenge words to come closer to, brush up against and be swallowed by structures of thinking that originate elsewhere than in language itself: in dance. Here the project of choreography as expanded practice which left dance behind is supplanted by dance as expanded practice which puts dance-thought in the driver's seat and everything else after.

Is That Radical Empiricism in Your Pocket or Are You Just Happy to See Me?

The maybe-fourth question, or the question before all the other questions are even possible to ask, is what would be considered "thinking" as consistent between any media of thought. Coming back to the premise of media-specificity of thought, could there be an "ideal language" that is capable of transcending, comparing, or inter-mediating all of these other media of thought which are always situational, nature-culture artifactual, and entangled in the constraints of their own evolution as thought-forming and thought-informed? Could there be "a method of analysis that allows conceptual invariance to emerge progressively across different domains?"8

Every thought process is bound to the constraints of the medium in which it is thought. Thinking, as native to the mind, is shaped by all the practices that a mind engages. Even if some ideal language, or meta language, would be conceived and deployed to transcend and connect dance-thought and language-thought, for instance, the fact that thinking is always and only situated in minds which are of bodies and in the world, there is no pure thought untouched by specific and limited media and practices of thought, and hence no mind bearing of the objective qualities to conceive of such an ideal language. It is perhaps the wet dream of artificial intelligence, to be able to achieve such an objective perspective by means of gathering enough data-experience from all the situated perspectives in all the possible languages and media of thought in the world, but programming language itself is a cultured, situated invention.

Nonetheless, I would stand for two common denominators to all thought in any media: movement and relation.9 Moving an idea around, studying or changing its relationships, is thinking. To claim that thought is movement certainly doesn't mean that bodily movement is ideal language, or necessarily imply that some kind of radical empiricism transcends or underpins all other forms of thought, but simply that thought is movement in the particular medium of thought that thought is moving within, and that thought is always in relation. Thought

is prepositional. We think of, about, through, with, next to, over, under, on top of, for, etc.

And so, in movement and relation, my questions unfold. Below are a series of fragments, a few of a lot of moving parts, to be read as a constellation, a map of thought paths, incomplete, far from comprehensive, but hopefully inhabitable. I have attempted to make a place here for the oral culture and interpersonal way in which knowledge circulates in the dance field. Much citation of others' words may appear in the form of stories rather than as publications with page numbers. I have for the purposes of this journal directed my ruminations towards the question, "What is movement research?"

Effing the Ineffable

In the world at large, as in contemporary dance, as in movement research, language mediates our agreements, about the rules by which we live, about what we are doing, about the conditions we are moving within. The persistence of logocentricity in our sociopolitical structures and interactions is reflected in dance, performance, and movement research, in which the social is unavoidable. I am not even talking about grant writing, program texts, performance theory or dance criticism here. I am talking about the role of language in studio practices. In experimental dance and performance, we

verbally define and modify the terms and conditions of our movement beforehand, we often work with verbal direction or scoring while moving, and we articulate and discuss our perceptions of what we have done afterwards, in order to create common understandings and workable material out of subjective ephemera. The increased presence of language as a tool to delineate and transmit movement for dance and performance in the last fifty years is due perhaps to the influence of language-based and task-based scoring from the Judson and Fluxus movements, as well as the widespread practice of somatic techniques in which the mind of the mover is the site of the formative experience. With the use of verbal language, the mover's imagination is inscribed in the choreography, so that how the dancer is thinking about what they are doing supplements or replaces the mimetic or nonverbally transmitted information. Yet the language always leaves room for interpretation, which is why laws are constantly negotiated and redefined in practice, why a performance is more than its score, and why no truly satisfying notation system has ever taken to dance. We still have to do the dance or see it done to "know" what it is, or to think with or through it.

During a workshop in the summer of 2014, dancer, choreographer, and writer Ellen Söderhult asked dancer, choreographer, and writer Alice Chauchat for disambiguation of the score for what would later become Telepathic Dance. Chauchat answered, "Say yes and then do whatever you want," quoting a dancer's life hack she'd acquired from dancer and choreographer Alix Eynaudi on what to do with confusing choreographic instruction. Söderhult decided to "do what you think it means," or even "make it mean something to you."

The agreement that supports Telepathic Dance is that a watching person without speaking or demonstrating, sends a dance to a receiving person who dances the dance. It is not designed to confirm or test actual telepathy, to affirm or dispel belief in psychic powers, nor to generate any empirical proof of transmission. The score creates a condition for dancing in which the not-knowing is such an explicit given that subtler intuitions and stranger sensibilities than mimesis or interpretation of instruction are necessarily called upon by the dancer. In this situation, the doer decides¹⁰ and the subject-supposed-to-know cannot be interrogated, for both parties are granted the status of subject-who-assumes, without negotiation. Söderhult's "do what you think it means" is a pragmatic and appropriate relationship to such choreography. With regards to the relation between the language of the score and its execution, "Make it mean something to you" also functions as an actively formative approach to what instruction can do for performance, and what dance can do for language.

If the words don't overly define what we are doing, we have to rely on other ways of understanding what we are doing. Even when the words overly define what we are doing, what we are doing is still and always was something else. We fill words with meaning through our experiences. We imbue scores, instructions, choreographies, somatic practices, and dance techniques with information that passes through teachers and colleagues, between bodies, and thus we define all of those forms and frameworks by doing, performatively and intersubjectively, with varying degrees of flux and stability over time. In relation to any embodied action, to find out what it means we have to roll up our sleeves and "eff the ineffable."

In order to leave space for finding out what the doing does, indeterminacy of instruction, or purposefully open language, is one tool for forcing tacit knowledge to the forefront. Imagine a door, left open in the words, for dance to saunter in.

A languid saunterer with long and articulate fingers named Chrysa Parkinson, standing in the artists' residency kitchen of Les Subsistances in Lyon in 2013, puts her fingertips together towards me and her wrists apart in an isosceles triangle, saying "words do this," and then inverts the triangle, joining the base of her palms together towards herself and pointing her fingertips outward to infinity, saying "movements do this." Her for-

mal illustration of the denotative tendency of language and the connotative tendency of dance she then extends to a comparison between concentration (attention converging on a single thing, excluding distractions) and awareness (open, inclusive, multi-directional). If we adopt Parkinson's model, what can the denotative tendencies of language do in relation with the connotative and slippery tendencies of meaning production in dance? What language is apt for the volatile experience and fugitive poetics of a moving body?

Persistent through the ages, we can note a penchant for fuzzy terminology in dance, with frequent use of broad and unspecified terms like "energy" among teachers and directors to try to refer to and conduct the stuff going on between or within bodies. For better or worse, when it comes to discourse, dance is very good at taking advantage of vague. After all, it's a great way to avoid being pinned down. But vague is not always a verbal shortcoming, it can also be a mobilization of thought to meet dance in its becoming articulable:

The logical resources equal to emergence must be limber enough to juggle the ontogenetic indeterminacy that precedes and accompanies a thing's coming to be what it doesn't. Vague concepts, and concepts of vagueness, have a crucial, and often enjoyable, role to play. [...] Generating a paradox and then using it as if it were a well-formed logical operator is a good

way to put vagueness in play. Strangely, if this procedure is followed with a good dose of conviction and just enough technique, presto!, the paradox actually becomes a well-formed logical operator. Thought and language bend to it like light in the vicinity of a superdense heavenly body. $^{\text{\tiny II}}$

Though he wasn't writing about dance, it's as if Massumi could have been: "a good dose of conviction and just enough technique," is what a dancer is often expected to bring to a choreographic situation, in order to make choreography something other than the writing itself—in short, to perform. Vague concepts, if stimulating or provocative enough, can provide a lightweight framework in which the performing itself and the specific materializations it unfolds are the site of working it out, so that the idea of what we are doing takes a back seat to the facts of what we are doing.

Rather than modeling the concept outside of dance and then executing it, the dance is the concept and the model, the matter in which the concept emerges. Vague concepts can be a way of getting out of the way of the dance, keeping a soft focus on a particular area of interest, and prioritizing dance-thought. Vague can also be frustrating, if there is not enough structure to support the doing. Massumi above mentions paradoxes as one structural tool for putting vagueness in play. "Paradoxes like it inside of contemporary dance," said the aforementioned Ellen Söderhult, in the studio one

day in October 2017, joking after she'd just said "No time for judgement," quoting choreographer Deborah Hay, and immediately answering herself with, "More time for judgement!" Not incidentally, Deborah Hay herself works often with paradoxes in her choreographic writing, for the dynamic they offer a mover to move within. Because a paradox is unresolvable, it creates a friction, anchors a tension within which perpetual movement can unfold.

Simplicity of instruction or rule can also be a tool for engendering complexity in action. In a talk on generative systems hosted by the Long Now Foundation in June 2006, game designer Will Wright and musician, composer and producer Brian Eno discuss the example of the board game "Go," as a system with very simple rules and an extreme depth of strategy.12 The idea, algorithmically, that simpler rules engender more complex outcomes, and that they are inversely proportionate (more complex rules limit outcomes) is visible not only in games but in the world around us—in nature, culture, politics and finance—and can certainly be applied choreographically, as well as to the connotative/denotative tension between dance and language. To go all the way for denotation in language by defining simple rules with precision and then setting them in motion allows the connotations to proliferate from a finite point of departure towards an infinite horizon of possible iterations.

In the same talk, Brian Eno described this generative approach to art as "designing seeds rather than forests."

But let us not assume that words can only denote and movement can only connote, nor settle for a simple inversion or exchange between the connotative tendencies of dance and denotative tendencies in language, for we risk flattening what both can do very well, within their own dynamic systems of meaning production and subversion. Both words and movements are capable of extreme precision. Both words and movements are also capable of escaping finite definition, of being suggestive and slippery, and both, through use, evolve and drift away from historical meanings towards new meanings.

Fostering an insightful and generative exchange between dance-thought and language-thought demands respecting and understanding what each can do on their own and what remains un-translatable between them. The non-indexical nature of language and dance means for performance, dance, and movement research practices that the one who gives an instruction always gets something else back. The unpredictability of what comes back is what makes the exchange attractive, interesting, and mysterious enough to keep us asking.

Accidental Truth

Truth has proper respect for the accidental.¹³

Within the frictions and gaps of untranslatability, the transport of thought and experience from one medium

to another arouses the pleasure of metaphor. Differences between systems of meaning production create invitations to traverse the gaps, to leap over and momentarily risk the confusion and disorientation of leaving behind one seemingly coherent order, hoping that in the surrogate space of another system of ordering and sense-making, the mind will be changed, the thought rearranged, and something revealed. As in a hero's journey, the thinker may return from their errand into the new field with some new skill or insight. This is no guarantee that all metaphors are necessarily useful. In the words of Chris Swoyer, "Not all representations allow detailed reasoning about the things they represent; no amount of pondering the embroidery of Hester's 'A' will reveal the details of her exploits." 14

Considering the possible modes for transport of ideas between language-thought and dance-thought, the notion of structural representation is helpful. How language can be manipulated or reformulated to better express structures of dance-thought gets us away from indexicality of vocabulary and towards composition, arrangement, and the movement of thought in either medium. Making use of the placement of writing on the page, as in Concrete Poetry, to better express the spatialization of thought in movement, for example, or challenging grammatical and syntactical rules to make use of how words operate in relation to one another, as

in Language Poetry, are just two ways that language and specifically writing can emphasize the structural aspects of expression.

Many of my peers and students have reported the common experience in their dancing that their sense of recognition, or language-able thought appears in words like islands in a sea of extra-lingual or sub-lingual sensory experience. The archipelago of graspable images in a sea of sensation has since transformed into a verbal score I call "islands," wherein any dance can be accompanied by verbalizing movement-thought in arbitrary list form when recognition of an image or memory or something known, reference-able, appears in the movement. The islands and the sea are a useful metaphor, a structural representation of the opaque depths of the unutterable that surround the occasional terrain habitable by words.

Over lunch one day in July 2017, in a conversation about the possible transpositions or uses of language to reflect thought or experience that largely takes shape and moves outside of natural language, sociologist Rudi Laermans said to me that "all language is metaphor." Which is to say that words, even if performative, full of potential to do things, and at the center of our agreements about reality, are assigned to carry things other than the words themselves into our thoughts. Asserting that all language is on some level metaphor suggests

that language is always a surrogate for experience outside of language, as a communication tool.

"If you want to make big claims about language," responds author Mara Lee a few months later, addressing this familiar position on language (citing George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen's 2003 book Metaphors We Live By) with another, perhaps an even more rudimentary claim, she poses "how about all language is arbitrary." Indeed, over a century ago, structuralism established in our basic philosophical concepts of language that the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary. With the exception of onomatopoeia, the relation between the word itself and what it refers to is bound only through history, practice, and repetition, everyday language full of floating signifiers. Words only have meaning because of the experiences tied to them over time, within a person's life of learning a language as well as over decades and centuries of people using any given word to name an expanding and drifting set of experiences that define that word through use. Language drift itself can be seen as proof of language as arbitrary: if the meaning of a signifier were given, immanent, and impossible to detach from the thing it signified, it wouldn't drift, and etymology wouldn't have anything to -ologize about. An essentially arbitrary set of signifiers gains surrogative status first in relation to the things it signifies or represents, and secondly on a scale of internal relations, within the grammatical and syntactical constructs

that can build sense. It is in reference, grammar, and syntax that language gains malleability as a structural representation for surrogate reasoning. Through the relationships it structures, thought moves through the floating realm of words.

If signifiers are arbitrary, metaphors maximize movement. Metaphors allow us to transpose ideas between systems of thought, producing relations between them. The nonequivalence of signifier and signified, of what we say we are doing and what we are doing, of theory and practice, all create a gap, allowing for negotiation and invention. This gap can be decreased by granular vocabulary and a willful drive for coherent analogy, but the preservation of this gap can also be productive of other dynamics and complexities. Without a gap, a metaphor has no use, no play, no performativity, only redundancy. Without metaphors, thought doesn't travel very far, towards nor away from experience. What language offers dance is distance, a structural representation to extract from the flood of experience, and tinker with at arm's length.15 What dance-thought offers language-thought is the opportunity to expand, to leak. Tethering language to dance with a bit of elasticity lets the connotative stretch the denotative, adding up (the con- in connotation meaning "with" or "next to") the possibilities held within an articulable notion.

As we accumulate experiences that attach themselves to concepts, ideas, symbols and words, we participate in the drift of what those concepts, ideas, symbols, and words mean. As the world changes and as people change, language changes, because we need different signs, different metaphors, different figures of speech, different words to render how the world feels and appears to us. Dance, and particularly movement research, is part of our performative participation in the doing-tofind out what a body is or can do, what movement does, what dance can be, as well as what any other number of concepts or words mean. With its basic trust in the empirical, in a context that says doing is knowing, that feeling is thinking, dancing provides that we participate in shaping the substantive instances that form and inform our symbolic, representational, and linguistic realms of thought.

There are many artists and audiences who fear language will over-determine experience, as if once something is named it is as good as dead. But words don't define and close the meaning of the things they name, words acquire meaning over time, thus it is use that remains the formative referent for how language evolves. Language is the original open-source code. People's intuitive and affective sensibilities about what words feel right where and when constantly push words around, along with other forces like education, economy, and technology,

in the cultural evolution of language. I am interested, as an artist and specifically as a dancer, in how to harness this malleability of language and ask what language can do for movers and perceivers, for creators and appreciators of ineffable and complex realities.

The etymology of the word "text" comes from latin, textus—"tissue," from text—"woven," from the verb textere. A text is a tissue, formed by handiwork, woven. Poet Marie Howe said in an interview on NPR, "Poetry is a basket of words to hold experience." It is up to the weaver to decide how tightly knit or porous the basket is, and if it's got a handle for easy transport.

Productive Misunderstanding

In theory and practice, an amount of wiggle-room between what we say we are doing and what we are doing allows for the mutual liberation of language-thought and dance-thought to serve and reflect each other from a workable distance. An acknowledgement of their basic difference is a necessary minimum for addressing their relation, before even approaching poetry, choreography, or dance criticism. At maximum, the difference between language-thought and dance-thought can be a source of so called "productive misunderstanding," in the words of critic, author, and dramaturg Jeroen Peeters.

When working as a dramaturg with choreographer

Meg Stuart on a major production in a large German theater in which Meg, instead of using a microphone as is common practice in such theaters, directed the performers from the house by way of her infamous "mumbling strategy," (as performing artist Janez Jansa calls it), Jeroen found himself in the role of translating Stuarts' incomprehensible mumblings for the performers. Somewhere along the course of his constant errands back and forth between the house and the stage, it occurred to Jeroen that her inaudibility was an opportunity for "productive misunderstanding."

Even in the studio, he observed that Meg deliberately spoke only in half sentences, so that her collaborators had to guess or make up the other half of her sentences, following their own intuition or imagination. Jeroen later recounted this story in 2010 while working with me on the sextet A Dance for The Newest Age (the triangle piece), as a way of giving me permission to digress from the theory I was reading (Bruno Latour, Jane Bennett and Donna Haraway) or to move from it tangentially, catching the momentum of whatever had sparked my interest, without having to finish entire books.

The advice as I understood it, especially coming from as avid a reader and writer as Peeters, was not to undermine the value of me reading Latour, Bennett or Haraway, but to make clear and certain not to mistake political theory for an instruction manual for art making. Productive misunderstanding means to use what is said or written, not necessarily to fully grasp its intended meaning. It grants permission for the reader to take maximum advantage of what the reading excites in them, what the language can inspire in action, as a way of not getting bogged down in technical concepts or arguments that won't necessarily translate to practice.

Productive misunderstanding, however beneficial to artists, and perhaps however unavoidable to some degree, also suggests a kind of individualistic opportunism. To productively misunderstand is to literally avoid the frictions of media-specific difference, to avoid the work of being confused and changed by something you don't understand. Productive misunderstanding if taken too far or too soon, means creating a kind of spacious laissez-faire relativity of meaning, an alone-together post-truth resignation to what sense-making or worldview any act of authorship is actually trying to propose to others for consideration. Beyond or perhaps before productive misunderstanding, language can do for dance what any surrogate can do for its referent: hold a place for an idea to incubate within a certain environment, nurtured by certain conditions and structures of thinking. Theory, as a practice of thinking in language, (if taken seriously) changes the mind. A changed mind then moves into action, makes decisions, relates to

meaning, arranges and composes in any other medium than language, changed as such. Not because theory is instructive, but because the mind has simply been reorganized. It works in reverse, or in other directions as well. A mind is changed by action, as movement practices shape one's thinking, affecting other decisions, composing relations to meaning in any other medium, including the changed mind's utterances in language.

Diagramming as a practice of thinking in formal relationships, mathematics as a practice of thinking in quantitative and logical powers, cleaning the house as a practice of spatial organization and physical/visual noise-reduction; dancing as a practice of synthesizing and coordinating many registers of perception simultaneously; each of these activities change and shape the mind of the doer. When I say mind, I mean the whole cognitive-affective complex of consciousness, subconscious, sensation, perception, reflection, representation, imagination and memory that is located not just in the grey matter suspended in cerebral fluid inside the skull, but throughout the entire body and always in relationship to an environment. Every practice changes the practitioner, their sensation of themselves and their environment, their way of seeing, hearing, sensing, feeling and thinking, in short, the organization of their very subjectivity.

Mind the Gap

If everything we do shapes us, then what is the difference between the passive or active accumulation of embodied experience, and movement research? What aspect of research makes the doing more than the acquisition of tacit knowledge? Doing to know how to do versus doing to find out what the doing does is the difference between wanting an answer and having a question, the difference between defining a goal and defining a problem. Research implies a rigor of inquisition, the formulation of a problem, a positive and active relationship to the unknown. The problem does not have to be formulated in words. A question, or contour of one's curiosity can be sensed or modeled otherwise, but the edges of what is known and not known, however felt, are what is important. Research, in any field, is using what one knows to move towards what one would like to know, including rational or intuitive methods of knowing.

Movement research includes scientific and artistic notions of research, scientific and artistic notions of movement, and also freedom to be neither. Movement research, as a barely institutionalized term, stands independent and autonomous from the fields of both science and art for legitimation, even if entangled with and mutually relevant to both. In a recent discussion on method and methodology, dancer and choreographer Juliette Mapp named four categories of questions

she considers constitutive of research: open questions which indicate direction, informational questions which build contextual understanding, leading questions which point to a blind spot or necessity, and closed questions which delimit, place, and define. Mapp emphasized the questions themselves, including the ability to change the questions according to new information, as the conditional force behind research. Some questions do their work in just being asked, which is not only true for rhetorical questions. "A question exists, and does something," Mapp said. An answer exists, and does something. They don't need to satisfy each other in order to collaborate.

I have to have a question to go into the studio or a performance, and not looking for an answer is the hardest work I can do. ¹⁸

Holding a question and doing to find out what the doing does, to the doer, to the watcher, and to the idea itself, is a way in which dance can be research without ever having to come to a conclusion, or "research outcome," as in scientific methodologies. Taking on the question of what dance can actually put into question, the 2001 duet Weak Dance, Strong Questions by Jan Ritsema and Jonathan Burrows tackles the paradox of dancing only questions when "every movement is a statement." While there are other ways than in words to know what you know and what you don't know, the purpose of

language in the context of movement research may be to explicitly mark what we know and recognize in order to circumscribe more precisely what we don't know, and cannot know until trying the thing by doing it.

Returning to Parkinson's model of the tension between connotative movements and denotative language, or the range between the opening of awareness and the narrowing of concentration, connecting possibly even to the dynamic between questions and answers, I am reminded of composer Pauline Oliveros' use of the terms "focal attention" and "global attention" in her scores for Deep Listening. Oliveros' Deep Listening practices underline how attention itself is an expanding and contracting substance, which we learn to conduct through our bodies, our senses, our actions. "Deep Listening is a practice that is intended to heighten and expand consciousness of sound in as many dimensions of awareness and attentional dynamics as humanly possible."20 Another of Parkinson's quotes I carry with me, from my time studying under her at P.A.R.T.S. (2004-2006) is that "attention is the medium of performance." The way we attend to what we do shapes what we do and how it is seen. This is the stuff of performance—attention is the medium used to make things sensible for others, the currency exchanged between performer and audience.

In movement research, attention is what makes our

knowledge sensible to ourselves. We perform research, for ourselves and for each other, through attentive skill. If a question instigates research, attention makes answers possible. When attention guides and follows movement, we observe how the doing does. How the mover or the watcher attends to the movement is what can make it research and not just movement. While the language "movement research" is also performative in so far as it sets the contextual expectation that anything which happens under the banner of "movement research" may be productive of knowledge, whether or not it is productive of knowledge depends entirely on the quality and direction of attention. Where the body and its learning of behaviors and patterns is concerned, perhaps the only difference between habits and knowledge is attention. In the careful garnering of attention to what we do and how we do it, to how we attend and how it shapes us, we have opportunities to identify patterns and actively participate in their reinforcement or interruption.

What the Doing Does

We are shaped by what we do, physically and psychically. The practices we engage in, as practice implies repetition, produce patterns in us. In being changed by practice, we sense not only consciously, but affectively, how our way of being in the world is informed by

experience. Our intelligent bodies are dirty containers, dense cyphers of socially, biologically, historically, culturally, and critically acquired filters through which information passes, imperfect processors full of corruptive tendencies. Everything that passes through and over us leaves a trace. Those traces form sensorimotor grooves and patterns in us, whether or not we like or choose them. When we move, we shake our dirty containers, we run our imperfect processors, we invite forces to pass through our multiple filters and rattle them, making visible and sensible the many things, beings, teachers, influences, desires, histories, fantasies, ancestors and ghosts who populate us, who have shaped and continue to shape us.

The body has its invariably public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is mine and not mine. Given over from the start to the world of others, bearing their imprint, formed within the crucible of social life, the body is only later, and with some uncertainty, that to which I lay claim as my own.²²

Our protean and remembering bodies are continually structured by cultural and natural forces, are the expressive products of power relations, are archives of techniques and educations, living palimpsests of embodied history. Our symbolic order is also evolutionary, bound to our changing selves and our changing

reality. Sometimes, however, the symbols don't change as quickly as our experience of the world does, as we reproduce ancient values and stubborn biases passed down through our speech, codes, sociopolitical conventions and institutions, in our bones and in our DNA.

In this light, and with the aim of progress, movement research aims for more than navel gazing. Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, various release techniques and other somatic practices that concern themselves with embodied patterning promote the exercise of choice in how we habituate our patterned body-minds. In light of where these patterns come from, the ability to redirect one's own patterns suggests the political promise of agency in relation to the broader contexts of history, power, and ideology. But choice is always limited by possibilities rather than directed towards potentials. The choice to do or not to do, to inhibit or enforce a movement or thought pattern, or to retrain our biases by taking the second choice in any apparent bifurcation of movement pathway, all operate as movement within a set of coordinates. Choice cannot reinvent, it can only select from within the givens. Choice can be evolutionary, but never revolutionary.

When we consider that the doing does the doer, the image of a free subject today is perhaps presented in one who decides what they do, as they are deciding what shapes them. This implies freedom of choice as attached to privilege, as in the privilege to choose your practices. Not all bodies, not all workers, not all people in the world have such a privilege. The choices of what patterns one inhabits are determined and informed by geography, mobility, ability, access, class, status, gender, race, age, and all other distributions of inequality that structure social identities. Which is to say that the movement of thought for the movement researcher is not automatically an emancipatory movement. It is always contained by and in negotiation with a set of larger patterns.

What is particular about movement research which is not true for many other forms of research is that typically, the mover is both the researcher and research subject, or the subject researching and the object of study. This demands a level of dis-identification with oneself, with one's own body, perceptions, sensations, feelings, experiences, values. The movement researcher has to be able to observe analytically and synthetically the layers of their action and understanding, including their own biases. While the embodiment of pattern forms identity, to distance oneself from those patterns is where movement research approaches the performance of identity as a choice. However, not only is that choice limited to possibilities, the possibilities themselves are limited by perception and conditions.

When we consider how the doing does the doer, the free subject is not necessarily one who decides what they do, but rather perhaps one who decides how they do it, as in, how they position themselves in relation to the doing. Here the performer's attentive agency emerges in the potentials of relation between the doer and that which they do. The degrees of distance, criticality, immersion, fiction and fantasy of what one does is the personal agency of every mind in relation to its practices. Here a subversive potential appears in notions of performance and performativity. With regards to dance-thought, the equal attention given to imagination and observation, or intention and sensation, along with the skill development of calibrating the two, makes dancers experts in becoming, equipped with the tools to open up inventive spaces for potential, beyond, within, and under the limits of possibility. Shifting the attention from movement as displacement on a predetermined grid to movement as transformation within, and consequently possible transformation of the grid itself due to what such transformation manifests in the world, is where even the smallest possibilities for change do appear.

On whose clock? In order to recognize a pattern, or to understand something by doing, time is a crucial aspect in movement research. This usually means more time, in speed or duration. In terms of speed, there are a number of somatic practices or technical training exercises in which a movement is done slower in order to study it, although, of course, the force and effort are also completely altered in the change of timing, since a movement's time and space are part of what define that movement in particular as that movement and not another. In terms of duration, movement research usually requires doing something for long enough to sift through the first, second, and third impressions, through the expectations, through the images, through meanings, through how it feels and how it makes one feel, makes one see, hear or think.

This sifting through the formative layers of movement is part of what allows the movement to displace and decenter the mover themselves, in order to step out of the way of their own transformation. A movement practitioner's ability to embody and inhabit a movement practice as a kind of subjectivity in itself opens the space for transformation. The capacity for dis-identification with one's movement that research engenders allows that it's not just about how one thinks through movement practices, but how any particular movement practice thinks through the mover. In the same way that language speaks through the speaking subject as much as the speaking subject speaks through language, revealing the language's structures and limitations in every utterance, dance moves through the dancer as much as if not more than the dancer moves through dance. By dis-identification and differentiation between the dancer and the dance, movement research highlights the epistemological nature of dancing, allows for movement practitioners to hijack and embody other subjectivities, prioritizes internal displacement before external displacement.

Techniques of attention, from performance to somatic practices to meditation, tell us that we are not victims of some Darwinist law of survival of the fittest, not reduced to instinctual and automatic reactions to our environment, not directed by biological imperatives, not limited by archetypes and destined to fulfill systemically defined choreographies, but that each subject, as a collection of histories combined with an amount of selfstudy and directed agency, can actively and behaviorally participate in their own transformation. From the Esalen Institute in the 1960s to the guided meditations on YouTube to Mindfulness Apps for smartphones, attentive training—taking time to dis-identify with one's own immediate experience—not just for dancers but in the general population, has seen increased popularity under neoliberal capitalism, when our own flexibility and variety of skill as workers in a post-Fordist economy is not a question of freedom (though it can be sold to us this way), but rather a question of survival within and adaptation to an increasingly precarious, variegated, and unpredictable set of working conditions.

Attentive practices also bear relevance in an era

defined by an exponential increase in available information, when attention has become a viable commodity, sought after through various media and technologies by investors in what has come to be called the attention economy. The same techniques of transformation that are in one instance subversive and rebellious are in the next instant one hundred percent compliant.

A Partial View

Every movement is a unique system of infinite nows that, when coupled with a spirit of research, discloses to the senses the relation between memory and anticipation, the relation between history and potentiality, the borders between knowledge and the unknown, in an experiential and immediate coordination of intelligences.

Through becoming intimate with the way we pattern and prioritize order from chaos, information from noise, and the biases that guide our criteria, the sharpening of attention offers us opportunities to order and reorder the sensible, to change and be changed. Movement research brings us into affective and cognitive contact with the continual structuring of our being in relation to the world.

Any mind, continually changed by any practice in any medium or discipline, constitutes a world within the world, changing in concert with the world it inhabits and the worlds it encounters. The degree to which the mind as a world does change at all is a question of

cognitive bias, receptivity to cognitive dissonance, and one's own willingness to be changed. If productive misunderstanding dominates one's practice of relating to that which they don't understand, if refusal to consider or even perceive that which appears incoherent according to one's existent way of structuring meaning is the habit being enforced, then we drift towards increased isolation, individualism, and differences between our worlds that do not make a difference in the world we cohabit.

Movement research has nothing to do with achieving neutrality or objectivity. There is no physical practice or perceptual technique that is free from pattern formation or alteration. As a functioning and interacting subject, there is no absolute erasure of cognitive bias. As long as we exist within sociality and in relationship to a context, there is no neutral body and no free mind. The improvisatory assumption of avoiding habits just forms habits of avoidance. There is no such thing as de-skilling to the point of not having skills. Every undoing leaves fertile ground for another doing to seed. Compost is the richest soil as decay and entropy offers invitation for new orders.

Beware "the illusion that consciousness is capable of change," warns performance theorist and author Bojana Cvejić.²³ The movement researcher should not over-estimate the conscious mind, will (no matter how good-willed) or intentionality (no matter how

well-intentioned) in regards to influencing one's own sensorimotor patterning. The majority of our embodied history is subconscious, automated, and remains non-manageable by means of our own awareness, no matter how acute. To consciously saturate with our own consciousness the full scope of how we are done by what we do, is impossible. Any perspective on or within movement research will always necessarily be a partial view.

The whole iceberg below the tip of what can be revealed by our own movement research is the unknowable, unobservable dance that escapes being named, the doing that does us without our grasping, and so we continue to rely on the subtler intuitions and stranger sensibilities, effing the ineffable indefinitely, observing as closely as we can to decipher how dance thinks through us, and shouting back over our shoulders from time to time at the symbolic ordering of our language to catch up. Consciously and subconsciously, our bodies and our experiences of our bodies shape our ideas about ourselves and the world. Sharing our experiences, socially, allows language to be shaped by experience rather than to determine and overcode it. In the jumping of registers between media of thought, in the efforts of translation and the adjustments of transposition, we can create new forms, new concepts, new symbolic orders.

The Long Now (post-script)

The practices we engage with have anthropological roots and extensions. Where a practice came from and where it is going means something, with regards to origin, access, and appropriation, the identities it forms and is formed by. While movement research is not necessarily by definition a set of techniques limited to a certain historical or geographical origin, nor is it limited to those activities which take place under the tutelage of any institution or organization that makes use of those words, there are some facts. Movement Research as an organization incorporated in New York in 1978, has a vast and rich history of practices and practitioners, events, workshops, performances and publications.

Many different kinds of movers and thinkers have passed through its structure and made use of it. It cannot be ignored, however, that the majority of people writing for this particular publication are white upper-middle class-raised secularly mystic female free-lance workers in the dance and performance field. We can discuss why this is in terms of curation, education, permission, time, income, valorization of different kinds of labor and so forth, but while I unfortunately do not address this problem here in detail, I ask rather how, as an open and leading question for the future, it could become otherwise. As with all other words that

acquire meanings and drift over time, I hope that the words movement research will continue to mean something else in 2057 than in 2017 than in 1977.

Notes

- 1 Walter J. Ong, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the World. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.,1982).
- 2 Massumi, Brian. Parables of The Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation. Duke University Press, 2002. 17.
- 3 For a critical play on the role of gallery and artist as complicit in the framing of an artist's work in language, see the September 2017 press release and artist statement for Kara Walker's painting show at Sikkema Jenkins & Co: www. sikkemajenkinsco.com/files/pdfs/5259_KW2017-PR.pdf
- 4 Jones, Ann Rosalind. Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of "L'Ecriture Feminine." Feminist Studies 7, No. 2 (Summer 1981): pp. 247-263. Print.
- 5 Swoyer, Chris. Structural Representation and Surrogative Reasoning, Synthese, 87 (June 1991), 449-508 is my source for the term surrogative reasoning, which refers to the ability to model, map or represent otherwise a concept or idea in another media (mathematics, language, diagram, etc) in order to work with it. The term came to me by way of a workshop at Performing Arts Forum entitled "PS: Surrogat(IV)e Autonomy," in which Lendl Barcelos is credited for introducing Swoyer's concept. The workshop was a part of a broader series of events under the banner of "The Stubbornness of the Empirical," organized by Matt Hare and Ben Woodard.
- 6 Massumi, Brian, Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation. Duke University Press, 2002,12.
- 7 Harney, Stefano and Fred Moten. The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study. Minor Compositinos, 2013, 118.
- 8 Hare, Matt and Ben Woodard, Anti-Eureka. Journal > Site 1: Logic Gate, The Politics of the Artifactual Mind, 2017. In this paper Hare and Woodard examine the tensions between the empirical and the formal at stake in the pursuit of an "ideal language."
- 9 While I am certain that this notion has its precedents and champions in phenomenology (Henri Bergson), philosophy of mind (Gregory Bateson, Alva

Noë), post-colonial theory (Édouard Glissant), feminism (Elizabeth Grosz) and countless others, I am indebted to performer Chrysa Parkinson for this bridge in my inquiry, as it landed in/came out of a conversation of ours on these very questions in November 2017.

10 "The doer decides" is one of the three operating rules that currently governs the self-organized activities at Performing Arts Forum in Reims, France. They are as follows: 1. Don't leave traces 2. Make it possible for others 3. The doer decides. Source: www.pa-f.net/basics

11 Massumi, Brian, Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation. Duke University Press, 2002, 13.

12 Brian Eno: "There's a book by Frances FitzGerald called Fire In The Lake about the war in Vietnam, and she once interviewed a Viet Cong general after the war, and she said 'Why do you think you were so successful?' and he said, 'well, the Americans were playing Chess and we were playing Go.' That really captures the difference between the two games." Will Wright: "Go is about a hundred times more complex than Chess in terms of the range in strategy. The compression ratio between the simplicity of the rule set and the depth of the strategy is an amazing ratio (...) that ratio is in the entire world around us (...) between generative system and emergence." Full video at http://longnow.org/seminars/o2oo6/jun/26/playing-with-time

13 Oliveros, Pauline. Divisions Underground: A Psychologist vs. A Feminist — Why Haven't Women Composed Great Music? Why do men continue to ask stupid questions? Published in Software for People, Collected Writings 1963-1980. Smith Publications, 1984, 103.

14 Swoyer, Chris, Structural Representation and Surrogative Reasoning, Synthese, 87, No. 3 (Jun., 1991): 451).

15 The analytic or distancing capacity of language, it should be noted, has its historical roots in writing. Primarily oral cultures did not even think analytically, as language was embedded and situated in the time and space of live speech, each utterance bound to its lifeworld. The capacity for language to be a tool for analysis and distance from that which it represented emerged only with writing. (see Ong). Now, as writing technologies are quicker, more accessible, and ubiquitous, the gap between everyday speech and writing is disappearing, radically transforming public discourse and language itself.

16 Oxford Dictionary of English, 2016

- 17 On Being with Krista Tippet, May 2017
- 18 Hay, Deborah. Live lecture performance at Stockholm University of the Arts. September 13, 2017.
- 19 Burrows, Jonathan & Jan Ritsema, Weak Dance Strong Questions: from the note-books of Jonathan Burrows and Jan Ritsema. Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts, Volume 8, 2003.
 - 20 Pauline Oliveros, Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice, 2005.
- 21 Parkinson notes this as an adaptation of a Deborah Hay quote, "perception is the material of performance."
 - 22 Butler, Judith. Undoing Gender. Psychology Press, 2004, 21.
- 23 Quoted in conversation between myself and Bojana Cvejic on 31 October 2017.

Premiers matériaux pour une

Théorie e la leune

The Bodies in Sade's Dream Austin Gross

Q: What purpose is served by the conflation of sadism with fascism?

A: Not the critique of contemporary fascism, but the reactivation, by means of fascism, of an obsolescent disciplinary erotics. Such, in essence, are Foucault's thoughts on the matter. 1) Sade's erotics is disciplinary erotics. 2) But it is not a Nazi erotics. 3) The sole purpose of introducing the one into the other (army boots in SM clubs, or Italian fascists in Silling) is to pretend that this erotics isn't historically dated. Freeing SM from discipline means letting Sade go and letting the army boots go, too.

The following text drops the boots, but holds on to Sade a little longer, to think through Foucault's suggestions. What is disciplinary erotics? What would a non-disciplinary erotics be? What traps do these questions set for dance and choreography?

In his fifth year of captivity in the tower of Vincennes, Louis Alphonse Donatien comes to believe that the dreams of the incarcerated have premonitory virtues. He confesses this theory to his wife: Dreams are ridiculous things. Yet I dreamed that the Duke of La Vallière, whom I've neither seen nor known, was dead; three days later, you send me the almanac that informs me of the same. I had the same dream about Madame de Saint-Germain, but if it was true, do not tell me, because I love her, I've always loved her prodigiously and I will be inconsolable. I am very far from believing in dreams, but I have come to be persuaded that nature gives very singular inspirations to a being that has been abandoned to itself and deprived of society.

Sade wrote The 120 Days of Sodom in the same prison. A new kind of power over bodies, which both multiplied their powers and obtained their subjection, by isolating, categorizing, monitoring, subdividing and optimizing bodies down to the smallest gesture, was still only in the bud. Foucault calls it "discipli-nary power." Its premises were emerging in the military, the school, and the manufactory, but it was still marginal.

Meanwhile, penal law underwent a deep crisis. Its judgments and sentences were no longer credible, nor even predictable, and the spectacular tortures it demanded presented more and more of a risk for public order amid the dawning class war. But public torture and the ritual of confession left a void. The first modern prisons emerged in this void, as the disciplinary technology of schools, armies and manufactories were experimentally applied to new subjects (criminals) and to new spaces. It was in prison that discipli-nary pow-

er achieved maximum consistency and intensity, and began to radiate outwards again, gaining power in the court system as well, where experts on the soul—criminologists, psychologists, and other "expert witnesses"—now rivaled the authorities on the law. The experts on the soul were now quasi-judges; this event transformed, in its turn, the schools and workplaces where disciplinary power had first emerged, turning educators, doctors, superintendents, social workers, and others into educator-judges, doctor-judges, etc. From that point on, all forms of discipline in society communicated fluidly in one seamless "carceral tissue" that traversed the whole of society and life.

This process only took about sixty years to reach completion, from 1760 to 1840. Nevertheless, for a no-ble like Sade, even if he hadn't been locked away for over a decade, its prodromes would have been as invisible and as remote as those of the French Revolution.

Sade's world was still feudal, and his incarceration was only legal under the absolute monarchy. All charges against him were officially annulled in 1778, after which he was held indefinitely by royal "letter of signet." He was free to go in 1790, when the constituent assembly stripped royal letters of signet of their legal force. In Sade's lifetime, prison wasn't re-educative, or even properly punitive. Most of the prisoners in Vincennes or the Bastille were held on royal letters of signet, like

him. The Bastille and Vincennes, where he wrote The 120 Days of Sodom, were unsophisticated and pre-disciplinary. Psycholo-gists, criminologists, and educators didn't have any power in them.³

Yet Foucault himself suggests, taking the risk of anachronism, that Sade invented the eroticism proper to disciplinary societies.⁴ If Foucault is right about Sade, Sade is right about the dreams of prisoners. His own body in confinement, Sade began to invent phantasmagorias of a new kind of power over bodies and of its social world.

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Lacerated by the realization that he might be held indefinitely, Sade developed an interpretative psycho-sis in the early 1780s. He saw numerological messages in his wife's letters, which alluded to the date of his release. He called them signals. Whenever his wife, or someone else, would slip a signal into one of her letters, he would be wrenched with rage and despair:

Your mother must be precisely drunk or mad enough to chain up, to risk the life of her daughter for the sake of writing a 19 and 4 or 16 and 9... Oh! The villainous woman, she must have had a prodigious numerical indigestion. I'm certain that if she dies of it without exploding, you could cut her open and millions of numbers would burst forth from her entrails. Nobody can imagine the horror of numbers it has given me...⁵

His wife often begged him to stop: "With respect to the signals, once and for all, I am not making any... You promised me to stop looking for them in my letters; and yet, you have broken this promise... Re-nounce, tender friend, this belief that I wish to vex you, or to make signals to you. You should know my heart by now." Over the next years, the signals from his wife continued to torture him, whether with hopes for freedom, or despair. Later on, they began to inform him of his wife's infidelity as well.

I mention this minor psychosis only to give part of the context in which Sade became a writer. A reader of Gilbert Lély's beautiful biography, Life of the Marquis de Sade (1952), is often struck by the extreme pain of Sade's first years in Vincennes, and by the loneliness that his paranoia brings on, by frustrating and humiliating the people who care the most about him. That kind of suffering was unsustainable. So something happens, and Sade becomes quieter. Perhaps a kind of death. His novels all come after this break.

He was not much of a writer before his incarceration, perhaps in part because his sexual fantasies had not yet attained the same degree of singularity. From what we know—in letters and in the testimonies of his accusers and victims—the acts that Sade engaged in never went beyond what's found in the first two parts of The 120 Days of Sodom. The novel is divided into four parts, in which the stories told will relate to four different, and

ascending, classes of passions: the simple passions, the double passions, the criminal passions, and the murderous passions. Sade's were simple or double; he whipped and was whipped, he sucked and was sucked, he ate farts and maybe shit, sucked spit; he loved giving and receiving anal sex, from his friends and lovers, in flesh or in porcelain; he blasphemed, and he forced others to blaspheme. That his passions were merely simple or double doesn't mean that they weren't violent; on several occasions he intentionally frightened prostitutes with weapons or threats, to get off on their fear. But this kind of violence wasn't specifically "Sadean," being widespread among libertines of the 18th century.

His first and probably most damaging scandal was the accusation of a young woman that he had forced her at knife-point to trample a crucifix (the kind including a representation of the Christ) underfoot, and had then masturbated himself to ejaculation on the same crucifix. A later scandal involved mis-dosing an invented drug that he had commissioned or fabricated in candy-form, which contained both Spanish fly (a poison that was commonly sold as an aphrodisiac) and extract of aniseed (which he believed would pro-voke flatulence). Having failed, obviously for lack of care, to test these candies on himself, he didn't realize that the dose of aniseed was too weak and the dose of Spanish fly too strong. He insisted that the pros-titutes he had hired eat an entire bowl of these candies, because he wanted to give them

(certainly without their knowledge) flatulence or diarrhea; they fell ill from the Spanish fly and could easily have died of kidney failure. Nevertheless, none of these acts are peculiar to him or would merit being named after him. Whipping, above all, was very widely practiced by libertines and in brothels, like sodomy and the rest, and, as for blasphemy, the paradigmatic libertine, Molière's Don Juan, tries to force a beggar to blaspheme, in a scene that was quickly removed by censors.

What changes in Vincennes? What is "Sadistic" about the writings from that period on? Well, obviously, the level of violence, but that's not singular enough to merit being made into a concept. One could also certainly say that what's Sadean is the encyclopedic arrangement of these excesses, and the imagination of worlds in which they have been made into a principle of organization for everyday life. And then there are some other obvious disciplinary elements in the The 120 Days, which are also new in the history of pornography. The victims are given points for every infraction; every hour of the orgy is rigorously scheduled and programmed.

But by focusing on these aspects of his fantasy, we have still left aside the sexual acts themselves. How should they be characterized? Let's come back to Foucault's proposal, from his interview with Cinématographe in 1975, entitled "Sade, Sergeant of Sex." Foucault characterizes Sade's fantasies not in terms of

what they do to a body, but in terms of what kind of body they presuppose.

What is the Sadean body, and above all, the victim's? "Sadism was anatomically well-behaved," says Foucault.8 "The object of Sa-dean relentlessness is always the organ. You have an eye that looks? I rip it out. You have a tongue that I've taken between my lips and bit. I will cut it. With your eyes, you will no longer see; with this tongue, you will no longer eat or talk." In other words, the victim's body, in a Sadean fantasy, is understood as an organism.

Admittedly, Foucault overstates the role of organic function. It's not clear that, for Sade, the eye is inter-esting in relation to sight, or the tongue in relation to its function of speech. More often, the organ is tak-en in relation to production or discharge, e.g. sucking saliva out of the mouth, sucking snot out of the nose, eating farts. And indeed, this production of saliva, of snot, or of farts, always has to be a prodigious or even excessive production.

He gazed at me, looked at me with half-closed eyes, and I couldn't understand where it was all leading, when, finally breaking the silence, he tells me to draw to my mouth the most sa-liva I possibly can. I obey, and as soon as he judges that my mouth is full of it, he throws himself ardently around my neck,

passes his arms around my ahead to hold it fast, and, glu-ing his lips to mine, he pumps, he draws, he sucks and swallows hurriedly all of the enchant-ing liquors I had gathered which seemed to fill him with ecstasy. He draws my tongue to him with the same furor, and, as soon as he feels it dry and he realizes that there is nothing left in my mouth, he orders me to begin my operation again. He renews his own operation, I redo mine, and thus eight or ten times in a row. He sucked my saliva with such furor that I felt my chest tighten.¹⁰

Likewise, when a fantasy takes the speaking tongue as its object, the speech is also a kind of discharge or trace—see the following passion from Part II:

54. He wants the girl to go to confession; he waits for the moment that she leaves to fuck her in the mouth. "

The confession is treated as discharge; the libertine in question is like one who wants to penetrate an ass-hole that is full of shit, or cum. Other fantasies of discharge or excrement are actually not even about dis-charge, but a kind science fiction, speculation or fantasy of kinship:

46. He makes a girl A and a girl B shit; then he forces B to eat the turd of A, and A to eat the turd of B; then they both shit, and he eats their two turds.¹²

This fantasy has to be put in a series with incest and

double-incest. But rather than two parents giving birth to one child, Sade imagines two women conceiving together, and each giving birth non-identically. The libertine consumes the two children, perhaps for the sake of double-incest, perhaps in order to honor the principle of leaving the stage empty, which usually seems to be one of Sade's dramaturgic conditions.

But although organic function seldom plays an important role, the organs themselves do. Most of the violent fantasies single out one or several organs for mutilation or torture. Even when the fantasy involves the disorganization of the body, it starts precisely from the body as organism; taking, for example, this passion from Part IV:

97. A bugger rips out the entrails of a young boy and of a young girl, puts the entrails of the young boy in the body of the girl and those of the girl in the body of the boy, then sews the wounds, tying them back to back to a pillar that holds them back, and, placed between them, he watches them die.¹³

Whereas, in the kind of erotics Foucault prefers, such disorganizations are superfluous, because the body was never an organism to begin with.

Take [the Werner Schroeter film] The Death of Maria Malibran, the way two women kiss—what is it? Dunes, a caravan in the desert, a carnivorous flower advancing, mandibles, a

crev-ice in the desert, flush with the grass. The anti-sadism of all this...! The cruel science of desire doesn't know what to do with these formless pseudopods, which are the slow movements of pleasure-pain.¹⁴

Foucault's metaphors—the desert, the insect, pseudopods—have now become clichés, and that's worth thinking about. They became clichés precisely because they were metaphors in the first place, and much too lyrical. Foucault is not enough of an erotician to articulate an erotics himself, which is why it's much better to watch Werner Schroeter's film than to quote Foucault's talk about carnivorous plants and pseu-dopods.

But nonetheless, the problem Foucault poses to erotics is valid. Disciplinary power emphasized the culti-vation of detail—in pedagogy, posture and handwriting:

Hold the body straight, slightly turned free on the left side, and very minutely inclined for-ward, so that the elbow can be placed on the table and the chin on the fist, unless the [indi-vidual's] eyesight doesn't permit it; the left leg should be a little bit forward of the right. It is necessary to leave a distance of two inches between the table and the body; for not only will one write with more promptness, but nothing is more harmful to the health than to acquire the habit of resting the stomach against the table; the left forearm, from the elbow to the hand, should be placed on the table. The right arm should be approximately

three inches away from the body, and extend about five inches beyond the table, upon which it should touch lightly. The master will teach the students the posture that they should have when writ-ing, and correct it by sign or otherwise when they depart from it.¹⁵

Such attention to detail is close to the "refinement" or "tact" that Sade prizes in libertinage. But in Sade's case, the libertine alone cultivates these details, in him or herself. The victim's body is not yet docile, in the sense of being teachable. Usually the victims are gifted by nature with a special sensitivity and re-finement (as Sade so often exclaims). In other cases, the libertines use artificial means, such as laxatives, to produce the bodily aptitudes they desire in their victim.

But although libertine discipline cultivates above all its own sensibility, rather than the capacities of the victims' bodies themselves, it still organizes these bodies in a disciplinary fashion, surveils them the way a disciplinarian does, subdivided minutely and articulated into details. In a way, it's a subversion and short-circuit of disciplinary power: rather than cultivating the bodies in their smallest detail, it cultivates the attention to detail itself. It takes discipline as pure means. Nonetheless, with respect to the body, it may well be the wrong subversion, closing itself off to any body other than the subdivided disciplinable body.

To subvert disciplinary power, it elevates the desire of the disciplinarian, gives it autonomy and makes it almost self-referential. But fleeing the subjection to discipline by occupying this role doesn't seem like the most interesting way out. What kind of a body does a disciplinarian have? Foucault, I think, is hop-ing for a cruelty that would teach us how to have an undisciplinary body; not to have the body of a dis-ciplinarian, nor to leave bodiliness to victims, ¹⁶ but to have a new kind of body. And this is something Sade can't teach.

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Can choreography pose this problem? It certainly can, and often does—which shouldn't come as a sur-prise, since both sadism and disciplinary power gnaw at the heart of its history.¹⁷ Choreography was born with discipline, and dance has had to pass through the cruel discipline of ballet. Many dancers still do.

One might think that choreography is too entangled with discipline, and unavoidably compromised by it. But I think the opposite is true, that choreography from the twentieth century on has had the opposite problem. Some of the ways choreographers have redefined it end up ontologizing its resistance to disci-plinarity. In that case, choreography can't pose any problems about non-disciplinary erotics or non-disciplinary movement, because it thinks dance has already solved these problems, simply by existing.

"Dance is a non-organized something," says Mårten Spångberg.¹⁸ The "excess" of the body, says Andre Lepecki¹⁹ — "uncapturable sets of movement." Is dance the Deleuzian or Foucauldian desert-body, pseu-dopod? Unwritability, non-organization, and indifference can easily become the Open sesame! for every coding—from disciplinarity to "value," to the abstraction of capitalism.

It's entertaining to note that Mary Wigman would agree with these claims. Although she locates the origin of movement in the self, and contemporary authors think of it as impersonal, she agrees with them on the essential: these organic movements that radiate, flow outwards from the solar plexus, are by nature something unquantifiable, unsubdividable, untrainable, and singular to the point of being ineffable. Be-cause it flows, because its body is the "soma," because it doesn't know about anatomy, it has a hard time helping us pose an erotic problem at the heart of which cutting bodies up has a central role.

In both cases, the ontologized unruliness and fluidity of dance becomes an obstacle. There is no sense in posing the problem of discipline through dance, because dance is itself, by its nature, the solution to this problem.

The choreographic moments in which the body resembles something inhuman are also not going to help (e.g. the superficial level of Self Unfinished). To expect a post-disciplinary erotics to emerge from the

in-human is to reduce the problem to Foucault's clumsy metaphors. Foucault does not mean that we will have imagined an erotics beyond disciplinarity if we actually become carnivorous plants. Trying to re-semble one on stage—if that were all that one retained from Self Unfinished—is not going to help us in-vent a new cruelty beyond discipline.

Dance and choreography can pose this problem (and even must); but only if dance is not, by its very na-ture, the solution.

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An afterthought: there's a sense in which choreographing Sade works too well. Lepecki is absolutely right to point out the choreographic element in Sade's fantasies, in particular social choreographies and mass ornaments such as these –

86. He has himself whipped by cab drivers and boy marshals, passing them two by two and always making one fart in the mouth of the one that isn't whipping him; he has ten or sixteen pass per morning.²⁰

89. Fifteen girls pass, three by three; one whips, one sucks him, one shits; then the one that was shitting whips, the one that sucked shits, and the one that whipped sucks. He has all fif-teen of them pass like this; he sees not, he hears not, he is in total

intoxication. A procuress directs it all. He starts this party over six times per week. (This one is charming, and I recom-mend it to you. It has to go quite fast; every girl should give twenty-five lashes, and it's in the interval between these twenty-five lashes that the first one sucks and the third shits. If one wants them to each give fifty lashes, the libertine will receive seven hundred and fifty, which is not too much.²¹

Let's talk by parable. Not only is Sade choreographic, he's structuralist. His combinatories lend them-selves so well to structuralist poetics that a structuralist has to work especially hard to write something in-teresting about him. To simply revel in the Sadean combinatory, because it confirms one's theories or because it suits one's taste, is ultimately an appeal to his authority. What's interesting, on the contrary, is to pose problems about his erotics. I see a similar risk in the transposition of Sadean choreography into contemporary dance.

Pieces like To Come (2005, Mette Ingvartsen) make an interesting choice to extract the choreographic form from Sade and to purify it of its erotic content. But when we adapt Sade's fantasies to choreography, although they are already choreographic, what are we repeating? Why produce such tableaux, such combinatories? Why does he produce them? What do combinatory and permutation do for him, and why would combinatory and permutation be able to do something erotic in the first

place? Are the stakes more erotic, or more ideological? Or aesthetic? Which aesthetics?

Faced with such materials, the appropriate procedure is, in fact, the one Sade presents in The 120 Days of Sodom. Indeed, what's most properly Sadean isn't a fantasy or an act or a form, but this procedure—a process of interrogation and experimentation. Every day from 6:00 to 10:00, each day, the libertines are entertained by the four storytellers they've cast for this role, four procuresses with experiences of all possi-ble human passions. And after these stories, one often reads an interlude like this:

"Did he want to see the porter's ass?" said Curval. "Yes, sir," responded Duclos, "One had to take care when one entertained the man whose cum he ate, to turn him around again and again... "Ah! that's how I conceived it," said Curval, "But otherwise I couldn't understand it in the slightest."²²

"And it was absolutely necessary," said the bishop, "that this creature be utterly redhead?" "Yes, utterly," said Duclos. "Those women, as you know, sir, have in an infinitely more vio-lent odor in that part of the body..." "Be it so," said the bishop, "but it seems to me, by God, that I would have rather smelled that women's ass than sniffed under her arms."²³

"Oh! As for this one, I don't understand it," said the bishop.

"Then I'll have to work to make you comprehend it," said Curval. "What! You would have a taste...?" said the bishop. "Watch me," said Curval, etc.²⁴

The Sadean process, proposed by The 120 Days of Sodom, is that of constantly challenging and interro-gating the fantasies proposed. Is it conceivable—is it conceivably erotic? Why, how is it erotic? From what principle does it follow? Is it a properly erotic principle, or a mix of erotic and aesthetic forms? Inter-rogating; experimenting, when necessary—trying it out (someone get on the table, can anyone fart in my mouth?); demonstrating, when necessary.

For each Sadean erotic principle—discipline, blasphemy, inundation, saturation, maximality, permuta-tion, sentimentalism—the crucial first question is, "Can I conceive it?" But that's only the first question. Desire does not stop asking questions when it gets hard. Taking the case of the combinatory—is it ideological, is it a fantasy of a world, is it a properly social desire, is it about interchangeability, is it rather a kind of amplification—e.g. "If one, why not six, ten or eighteen?" Or is it humor, "making a descent into consequences"? Is it a saturation, an occupation of all possible places? Or does it only look like saturation to someone who isn't used to this kind of amplification? When we borrow images and forms without ask-ing these questions, the result isn't so much desexualized as it is deproblematized. But

when we borrow this process, without knowing where it will lead, when we begin from the question, "Can I conceive it? Why, from what?," then the rest of the work comes back to life.

This interrogation is just as crucial if we are to take up Foucault's problem. We have to ask Foucault (as we will have asked Sade literally hundreds of times, reading his novels), "Really? That's to your taste?" In Foucault's case, "Really? A desert, a pseudopod, a carnivorous plant? You conceive it?" Doubtless, he could have shown us how to understand him.

Notes

- 1 Letter from July 1781, quoted in Lély, Gilbert, Vie du marquis de Sade, Paris: Mercure de France, 1989, p. 328f, note 1.
 - 2 Foucault, Michel, Surveiller et punir, Paris: Gallimard, 1975, p. 311
- 3 Sade's prisons were instead managed by corrupt petty nobles, and overseen by representatives of the monarchy, like Le Noir, lieutenant general of the police of Paris, who personally intervened throughout the 1770s to suspend or restore Sade's permis-sion to receive visitors or to take walks in the prison yard.
- 4 Interview, "Sade, Sergeant of sex," in Dits et Écrits, Volume II, Paris: Gallimard, 1994, pp. 818-822
 - 5 Letter from 1779, quoted in Lély, op. cit., p. 288f
 - 6 Quoted in Lély, op. cit., p. 289
- 7 A letter from April 1782: "It is exposed, your odious riddle. The date of my liberation is the 7th of February of either 82 or 84. [...] The detestable and idiotic play on words [that you've employed] is the saint's name of this day, which is Saint Amand ["Amand" appearing in his wife's letter], and, considering that in "February" one finds "Fèvre," you've connected that scum-bag to the numbers 5 and 7." Lefèvre was an acquaintance who bought his wife some books earlier that year, with whom Sade suspected his wife of having an affair. Quoted in Lély, op.

cit., p. 319

- 8 Foucault, Dits et Ecrits, op. cit., p. 820
- 9 Foucault, op. cit., p. 818

10 Sade, Œuvres, Volume I, Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, p. 115. The English translators for Grove Press didn't think the client seemed mean enough, so rather than translating straightforwardly, "He gazed at me, looked at me with half-closed eyes," they wrote "He stares coldly at me, then appraises me with narrowed eyes, etc." (The Marquis de Sade, The 120 Days of Sodom and other writings, New York: Grove Wiedenfeld, 1966.)

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11 Sade, op. cit., p. 316
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- 12 Sade, op. cit., p. 315
- 13 Sade, op. cit., p. 364
- 14 Foucault, Dits et Écrits, op. cit., p. 819
- 15 Quoted in Foucault, Surveiller et punir, op. cit., p. 154
- 16 Which, however, would be extremely un-Sadean.
- 17 See "Choreography and Pornography," in Post-Dance, ed. Danjel Andersson, Mette Edvardsen, and Mårten Spåndberg, MDT, 2017
- 18 I'm quoting an oversized flyer distributed at the performance of La Substance at Arsenic. Spångberg, Mårten, "Post-Dance, An Advocacy." [Brochure]. Lausanne: Arsenic, 2017.
 - 19 See "Choreography and Pornography," in Post-Dance, op. cit., p. 67
 - 20 Sade, op. cit., p. 319
 - 21 Sade, op. cit., p. 319f
 - 22 Sade, op. cit., p. 128
 - 23 Sade, op. cit., p. 129
 - 24 Sade, op. cit., p. 131

Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972: a cross-reference book of information on some esthetic boundaries: consist ing of a bibliography into which are inserted a fragmented text, art works, documents, interviews, and symposia arranged chronologically and focused on so-called conceptual or information or idea art with mentions of such vagu ly designated areas as minimal, antiform, systems, earth, or process art, occurring now in the Americas, Europ England, Australia, and Asia (with occasional political overtones), editec and annotated by Lucy R. Lippard.

Relations of Unpredictable Encounters Nikima Jagudajev

Nasty

Consider an assemblage as a way of troubling conceptual divisions between body and the environment, human and animal, living and nonliving. An assemblage, as Anna Tsing talks about, is a way of coming together; an open-ended gathering that remakes us as well as others. An assemblage is a kind of recognition of all of its elements or companions or associations and how each has its own time-making rhythm. Through this open-ended act of being together, varying temporalities converge. Existing in and making up a contingent spatio-temporality that is never closed or finished. It is also within these configurations, within the murkiness of entanglements, where forms of power can reside, where pervasive and overt supremacist systems are reproduced due to an inability to clarify their form and position.

Within assemblages is where patterns of unintentional coordination can develop. It is a space of en-tanglement. To notice the patterns that take place

in an assemblage is to "watch the interplay of tem-poral rhythms and scales in the divergent lifeways that gather." It is particularly important that com-panions at play are divergent. As soon as such a space becomes too homogenous it loses any potential for transformation, for movement. It is when differences entangle that new things take place. And it is when social relations are considered spatially that forms of power can be more tangibly positioned and disassembled.

I didn't really grow up with my father. He was in and out of my life as a child but exists in my memory as very distant. In a way it was luxury to be with him, eating sushi once or twice a week, sometimes taking it back to his office and sitting on the couch with my brother looking at diamonds and gold and all kinds of jewelry that he had in tiny little plastic baggies all over his desk. I remember the smell of sushi takeout. But the intimacy between my father and I was fairly non-existent. I don't remember ever touching, or talking for that matter. During my second, or maybe third year of high school he was sentenced to 39 months in the Tacoma, Washington prison as part of some internation-al drug bust, or so the news said. The most devastating part was seeing his image online—handcuffed and tucked away from society by the cops. He was released just before I graduated college.

In October I visited my father in Holon, Israel. He

has lived there now for three years, taken in after his discharge when no other country would open their arms. After his release he was stuck in immigration for three-plus months without anyone's knowledge of his whereabouts. His green card was revoked and he became heavily addicted to meth—I only just found out. Israel's invitation was a necessary relief. They are good to the Jews. That's about it. Anyway, last week I visited him and he gave me a documentary to watch on the United States prison system called 13th.

It was my second visit since he moved. The second time that I have spent more than five hours max with him since age two, when the divorce happened. Living alongside papa for eleven days was definitely something. There was friction and it was beautiful. A kind of friction that I initially recognized as the entanglement of two very different temporalities. A negotiation of intersecting rhythms that are both our own and that that is the relation. As we entangle, the encounter is contaminated, queered simply through the action of being and doing and ultimately relating with(in) a spatial configuration of difference.

The entanglement that happens between my father and I refers to two lifeways from the same species. Ultimately, I would like to complexify such a way of thinking by referencing queer ecologies that ex-tend such thinking to non-human matter and the interplays of relating.

Suddenly I realize that all matter is interconnected and therefore, without hesitation, all matter matters or doesn't, completely. For if matter is one then it is in fact impossible to differentiate between which matter matters more. For there is no matter that matters without the rest. But I will stop now before my poetry becomes forbidden.

I refer here to Karen Barad's concept of the post-human performativity of intra-acting matter proposed with the intention of contextualizing this essay within new materialist discourse, reiterating the im-portance of the material as a way of dethroning the human and Man from its central position. Instead I propose a non-essentialist, non-humancentric materiality. This is not a proposition of harmony or con-quest, but rather something like a recognition of what is at play, an optimistic approach.

Soft

My aunt was born in Uzbekistan into an extremely traditional, conservative Bukharian family. She immigrated and relocated many times throughout her life, conflicted between rebellion and personal life desires and her sense of duty to her inherited history and family. Eventually she willfully gave in, or as my father put it, was broken, succumbing almost completely to

the expectations of the religion and culture that she at one point was fighting against. She follows now a kind of dutiful retransmission of the ideology that she was born into. Not only does she live by it but has a certain need to transmit the information to me. She holds onto this ideology very tightly, almost as if there is a fear of letting go because if she were to let go then her whole purpose of living would crumble to oblivion.

And now I feel a little self conscious because I am giving an example at the expense of my Auntie, and yet, can't you relate? One's personally-built paradigm becomes a kind of protection. Holding onto old beliefs and constructed ways of thinking because they are at least a "stability" to hold onto in the midst of chaos. But stability in this sense is a brittle one—the paradigm itself does not allow for transformation and therefore what is held on to so tightly is a very thin argument that can easily be shat-tered. Such a paradigm must then be protected from conditions of vulnerability, openness and letting the other in. And now I get all sappy, but holding onto the past can also mean holding onto preju-dice.

In 2014 a blogger—I can't remember her name—wrote about precarity as our current "public secret." The secret part is fairly irrelevant, but it was her thing, so we go with it for a minute. Precarity was one of a few from a short lineage of public secrets beginning with misery,

followed by boredom and dis-solving into precarity, or anxiety—she equates the two. She proposes that these public secrets develop out of capitalist mentalities and transform through practices of resistance, claiming that precarity leads to general hopelessness.

We see this in the desolate number of youth that never leave home or that work themselves to death or the amount of people on antidepressants, or income insecurity and other instabilities that plague us. Such ideologies have also been explored within the concept of futureless-ness which could be understood as the impossibility of imagining an end from within the constant present. But perhaps we can look at precarity as the fabric of our current ecological system and see this as something to embrace rather than fight against. Perhaps we just have no choice—just kidding.

Anna Tsing is a big advocate of precarity as the current condition of our time, or more accurately pro-posing that our time is ripe for sensing precarity. As we find ourselves entangled in landscapes of ruin, we need to ask ourselves what emerges out of damaged landscapes, how can we become closer to our reality instead of inflicting vaster alienation. In her book, The Mushroom at the End of the World, Tsing exemplifies such a disturbance ecology. She talks about Matsutake mushrooms and Matsutake mushroom pickers in the hills of Oregon. Both the mushrooms and the pickers emerge from land-

scapes of ruin. The pickers are predominantly Asian immigrants, some undocumented Mexican immi-grants and your occasional white hippy from Portland or Seattle wanting to escape the restrictive struc-tures of capitalism and live "off the grid." Some of the camps are regulated by the government and some are formed, inhabited, and regulated internally. Many of the mush-room pickers have made a very conscious decision to travel from afar, most commonly from various provinces in Japan and China, leaving behind poverty and family, but not tradition, to engage in a precarious but consistent life-style as mushroom pickers.

It is a kind of dedication that comes from a commitment to a lifestyle as the income acquired by such labor is not equitable compensation, and yet the pickers themselves price the mushrooms. Tsing gives many examples of how these people refer to such a lifeway as "freedom." Far from the American dream, this lifestyle, or perhaps, this assemblage, exists on the fringe of capitalism.

The mushrooms also grow out of landscapes of ruin: blood ridden hills from mass logging industries during the industrial revolution, and of course the mass slaughter of the Native Americans who along-side such trees. The ghosts that inhabit and form these hills are an essential part of this assemblage. Uncultivated, picking and collecting is more of a scavenge then a harvest, and

when the buyers come, the pricing of these trophies is particularly irrelevant in the sense that the pickers price them as they please and the prices fluctuate a lot. Prices can double over the course of one night. It almost feels like a practical joke on capitalism. Of course, the mushrooms eventually enter into "normal" supply and demand chains across the ocean in Japan where they are sold as a delicacy, but the pickers and the mushrooms care little to none about this part. The care is rather in the assemblage—one that grows out of ecologies of ruin that highlight the possibility of living alongside precarity and indeterminacy as opposed to fighting against it.

What is happening in this depiction are various forms of entanglement that allow for alternative ways of living, entangled cultures as the pickers hold onto their traditions and reassemble them in the Oregon forests. Entangled species, uncultivated mushrooms, ghosts, pickers, etc. Entangled capitalism as the income made by such work is never thought of as compensation for the labor and the mushrooms are priced without considering supply chains but rather as a sort of a game. And so on. Consider then that this entanglement is an assemblage that through cross contamination becomes a happening; more than the sum of its parts, proposing new lifeways and landscapes.

Whiteness

Approximately four days into my visit with my father I

began to realize how stuck I actually felt, en-croached upon, confined to constructs that eat at my soul until I have no choice but to scream and break free. I have the tendency to adhere to others, to become malleable when in close proximity to them, attempting to fit into their space as opposed to imposing my own. My father is self-righteous and extremely particular. There is very little space for me in his life, unless I take it. I am not supposed to open the windows in his apartment . . . just a small example. I followed this rule until after my breakdown.

Night three I was overcome with a desolate and desperate freak out that left me hyperventilating by myself in the guest bedroom. I shivered through the night and had very vivid dreams of sucking on the pleasantly cold tongue of a fantasy lover that I have dreamt about (night and day) to varying de-grees since college. This was followed by a wave of vulnerability with papa the next morning. I ex-pressed to him my need to be close physically and emotionally, to be soft and open, to practice gentle forms of care. We sat on the couch with his hand on my belly and he helped me to breathe deeply. My digestion had been a knotted shit show since my arrival. As I attempted deep breaths I cried and felt cared for in the way that I needed. I was able to let go a little. I was able to move through the stronghold I had on self-containment. I found strength in vulnerability, in being soft. I felt safe.

After this encounter I had one night of fever but my head was clear(er) and I was ready to impose my-self. Oh, to feel entitled. Something that papa later told me I should do, and that he himself also struggles with.

It is urgent to consider the ways in which the world is available. When we begin to consider relations of power, one's ability to be, to act, to move around in the world depends less on intrinsic capacity, or even upon disposition or habits, but rather on one's position, or positioning in the world. In her essay, A Phenomenology of Whiteness, Sara Ahmed talks about the corporeal schema that we inhabit as not sufficient for a person of color since the schema is developed or situated and confirmed by the white man. So if the way the world is available, in the sense of corporeal schema, is not through individual sensation—visual, visceral, kinesthetic, tactile, vestibular—but rather situated by the white man's em-bodied reality, then one's experience as a person of color is always going to be made up of the "wrong" kinds of elements, elements that do not fit in.

We all know that through histories of colonial-ism our inherited world is white, and this is a given, prior to an individual's arrival. The colonized white world is the familiar world, one that we know implicitly, and such a world is prepared for certain kinds of bodies, "as a world that puts certain objects within their reach." A kind of orientation. This is our general spatial configuration, an inherited and inhabited whitespace.

Space is inherited, but it also takes shape through habitual actions, "such that the contours of space could be described as habitual." And here it is important to keep in mind what Maurice Merleau-Ponty said about bodies being both in and of space, that space doesn't begin "outside of us," but as we move through space, so does space move through us, like intra-acting spatial matter. To be orientated to a space is to feel a certain comfort, and "to be comfortable is to be so at ease with one's envi-ronment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins." White able bod-ies have the inherent ability to expand in space as the surfaces of their bodies disappear. To take up space, to extend one's shape, is a luxury that not everyone has access to.

Stuck

Whiteness coheres as an effect of repetition, in the passing by of some and not others, but it is so far beyond a simple body count. What is repeated is a style of embodiment; certain gestures, ways of moving, ways of inhabiting. These gestures accumulate and sink into that space causing certain forms of embodiment to become comfortable. Bodies that ease into the embodiment of that space take up space as well as engage in a kind of motility of that space; an energetic ability to move actively and with spontaneity.

Let's consider intersectionality as a way of confirming that relations of power intersect. How we inhabit a given social category such as race, class and gender, depends on how we inhabit others. "Becoming white" in the sense of institutionalized whiteness is closely related to class mobility: "You can move up only by approximating the habitus of the white bourgeois body." In order to have any sway at all, inhabiting such a body or at least the approximation of its style is necessary. As we know, the capacity to inhabit such a body depends on one's inheritance.

It was an ongoing conversation. On day seven or so we discussed queer politics in relation to gender binaries. It came up when he told me I was a smart woman and I said something like,

"Why not just a smart person?"

He brought up his usual argument that there is inherent difference between the ways that men and women act, think, etc. I attempted to blur these lines by bringing up non cisgendered people, considering where they might fit in. He said that there are always deviants and I said no, they are not deviants, for even somebody like myself, with a very discrete genderqueer body and style does not fit into the gender construct that is "woman." He agreed,

"I am not manly either, but what then should I call you?"

And I proposed just to leave it out, because it makes me feel confined to a construct that I don't want to be a part of. He asked me why and we got into discussions of body image and the way people look at me as if I am their property. I mentioned that the night before at Sukkot dinner I was consistently busy with trying to hide my tits, feeling extremely self-conscious. I wasn't wearing a bra and the whole night I felt as though my nipples were simultaneously screaming and trying to disappear. And this is amongst family. The family that papa, in his own way, and momi, with vigor, used to rebel against. I used to be ashamed of my own mother's nipples because I could see them through her shirt. And now I love hers, and am ashamed of my own. But actions linger. Ways of inhabiting, of deviating from the norm, leave traces. Allowing for contamination with the Other is what changes the world.

It is important that white bourgeois embodiment does not exist as the ultimatum, but in such a world, this becomes very difficult to challenge. Agency over one's own body can easily be taken for granted as an inherent ability, however something as seemingly obvious as movement or action is accessible to some and not others. So it becomes necessary to propose a different kind of movement, a transform-ative kind of fluidity

that develops out of intra-action and the entanglement and contamination with the other. How can a space propose motility for people that are stuck or confined by the motility of others? If bodies come to feel at home through orientation, how can a spatial configuration avoid the perpetuation of usual social and bodily orientations of whiteness? How can we disrupt such feelings of home, recalibrate them, reestablish and again disrupt? If we can agree that social configurations are spatial configurations of intra-acting matter, and spatial configurations oscillate between stagnation and disruption, then we have the ability to mess with whitespace by proposing new assemblages; entan-glements that contaminate. And yet propositions of entanglement and intra-acting matter are concepts that unfold from within whitespace.

Ever since I can remember, my breathing has been very shallow, constricted to my chest. Such restriction causes my digestion to suffer, and triggers headaches. While breath is not at the forefront of my thoughts, when I am reminded, I do all that I can to breathe into my belly. And then my physical habits of holding, of desperately trying not to expand into the world become clear. This action of holding my belly in and clenching my ribcage comes from a conflictual desire to disappear, to retreat from worldly pleasures or my own materiality and sort of implode as opposed to expand into and within the

world. This is of course not uncommon for (a) women, (b) sexual abuse survivors (c) people of color (d) dancers (e) queers (f) immigrants (g,h,i...).

Edmund Husserl as well as other scholars that I have mentioned—Merleau-Ponty, Barad, Tsing—propose a kind of movement in their ideologies. But one cannot look at movement without consider-ing who benefits or to whom these propositions are accessible. To discuss the potentiality of move-ment is also to come up against walls, barriers and various power structures that perpetuate stuck-ness. From a phenomenological perspective, barriers are as much internalized and inherited as they are ex-ternal.

Here we can consider Barad's proposal of intra-acting phenomena as entanglement that allows for movement to happen across and between structural borders. Consider the #metoo movement . . . its entanglement with technology allows for congregation, support, disruption and collective uprising to permeate barriers and disassemble power structures. And yet it is a feminist movement that is most accessible to white bourgeois women. Even more tangibly, there is a difference between #metoo and the physical walls that confine. There is no denying that physical walls still keep certain people con-fined more than others. Look at the prison system in the United States for instance.

I remember when my father was released from prison he didn't reappear into the public sphere for an-other four months.

Nobody knew where he was during this time, not even his attorney. Later we found out that he was being held in the limbo land of immigration as the US government tried to deport him. Nowhere would take him. Papa once told me that he never wanted a passport because he never believed in borders. Perhaps a political statement, or perhaps an attempt at reclaiming agency that is perpetually taken from immigrants.

The disruption of whitespace is not the responsibility of people of color. And for black or brown peo-ple to offer their bodies as an embodiment, a social promise of diversity to be used as a sign of diversi-ty, is nothing more than a confirmation of whitespace in which black or brown bodies are seen as the stranger or the guest. How, instead, can a space propose strangeness, propose itself as a guest to itself in which all of its inhabitants collectively make up the space and also deviate, or propose a kind of consistent strangeness that constantly transforms whilst sometimes stagnating? I would like to config-ure socialities that propose friction through contamination from the entanglement of contesting forms and deviant forces. This is a proposal for new movement.

Movement

With such a new materialist approach, it is our practice of being and doing that ultimately has an impact. It was four days ago that I left Israel. Papa and I talked on the phone today and when he said "I love you" I really felt it. I told him I had a really nice time and he agreed.

"Despite all the shit I get from my daughter, it was a really good time. And I have done so much thinking since you left."

It's undeniable.

A sort of high school dropout definition of sociality could be the tendency in individuals to gather together, forming packs or groups as a way of associating with one another. This terminology originally came to my attention while reading about wolves and other animal species that form packs as instinctive survival mechanisms. I quickly and simply made my own associations, as I was, at the time, reading Bruno Latour's writing on his rendition of the social as an assemblage of associations. "Associations" coming from the latin root of social, socius, which denotes a companion, an associate. While I find plenty of his claims to be totally uninteresting, I relate to his depiction of society as connectivity: far from being the context in which everything is framed, society should rather be construed as one of the many connecting elements circulating inside tiny conduits. These particular things that are being connected are not social in and of themselves.

When I speak about a sociality as some thing, I refer to Latour's terminology; an assemblage of associ-ations, but with a twist of Barad. She doesn't believe in assemblages because they propose each element as existing on its own as an independent entity prior to its encounter with the other. I would like to twist Latour's terminology to allow for sociality to exist as an intra-acting force, where all associations have a mutual constitution of entangled agencies in which the ability to act emerges from within the relation. I can act because of it. This is a transcorporeal perspective in which the human is always intermeshed with the more-than human world. Jason Moore, an environmental historian who writes a lot about the anthropocene and entanglements of capitalism, says sociality is like a second nature. Who knows what the first is, but I like having a second nature.

New materialism reconfigures sociality as it raises the possibility that there are laboring practices that are impactful. It proposes something more than analysis, engaging in prefigurative and generative discourse, where movement itself embodies the relation. As movement and movements take place, all that is entangled, all intra-acting matter, is involved.

Socialities, as well as assemblages, networks, hybrids, cyborgs and many more that have been offered as a way of comprehending the irreducibly dialectical relation between human and extra-human, de-construct the

Nature/Society binary that capitalism perpetuates. Instead what is proposed is to begin neither with humans nor nature but rather with relations, relations that are open to the organic and inorganic. While a sociality does not have a defining form, all social relations are spatial relations that develop through and within and among materiality. Moore says it nicely in one of his footnotes:

All social relations are spatial relations; social relations develop through, and actively co-produce, space; spatial configurations are always in motion, but are also fixed for definite periods of time. Space is, then, not simply "out there" but joins in specific complexes of social relations and "built environments" that shape the possibilities for contingency, but not infinitely so. 6

If we recognize that social relations are spatial relations then we can consider human bodies as sites of environmental history, recognizing what we engage in as producing and reproducing patterns and relations of power.

Safe

Safe space is a practice that has developed mostly out of universities. It is a shared space where mar-ginalized people such as POC or LGBTQ people come together to discuss oppression and personal experiences of marginalization without dominating power structures dictating the exchange. As the structure is proposed, organized, and produced by marginalized people, it somehow exists outside of or on the fringe of whitespace. If whitespace is the common space, safe space is other.

Thinking in line with disturbance ecologies, safe space has developed out of a landscape of ruin. It is a space where movement can happen for bodies that otherwise do not have access. It does not, in and of itself, disturb—in the sense of manipulate or transform—whitespace. It does however have the poten-tial to generate that which can be utilized outside of its context. My last experience in a so-called safe space for POC, which was also my first, was eye opening. With a personal gratefulness and minor astonishment, I was invited to join the meeting. Astonished only because I am, with slight indignation, often not recognized as a person of color. It is a conflicting matter, both externally and internally.

During this meeting, what really struck me, other than all the emotional content that was released, was the sheer importance of such meetings as a way of supporting one another. It was about sharing relatable experiences, not so much in content, but rather in relation and ability. I shared my self doubt and my inability to take space or make certain claims. I was confirmed in such expressions as we talked about the almost imperceptible effects of white supremacy. In everyday life,

such claims are constantly refuted and met with unknowing ears. Even among friends who attempt to listen, the experience of the other within whitespace will never be understood from the level of embodiment by somebody who the context caters to. I would also like to say that I am in no way an authority on the experience of being a deviant, this is rather a recognition of the grey zone that I and many others swim around in. And trying to explain water to a fish is not an easy task, and only slightly less confusing for a mermaid.

For me, and for many who are still trying to comprehend what it means to take space, engaging in conversations that attempt at depicting the components of whitespace whilst existing within it, often leaves me feeling more confused, uncomfortable and ashamed—a burden, and flat out wrong. Often, I feel like I need to apologize for taking up space and time and for not being coherent. My point is that safe space for POC and other marginalized groups is important as a way of accessing a vulnerability and finding a shared strength that can support each individual. The collective strength that comes from such meetings can also be used when entangling with whitespace. Something new can be proposed in a homogenous environment, something that developed outside of it, causing friction, contamination, and change.

It is pertinent that we recognize that these disturbance ecologies, that precarity, is what we grow out of and our access to its potential has to do with a kind of celebration of what this reality has to offer; a change in perception. We can use strange, transient and semi-spontaneous socialities that entangle and contaminate as a way of replacing Man with assemblages of species, objects, cultures and historical trajectories, proposing a post-Man ethics of vulnerability focusing on the relation of unpredictable encounters. This kind of contamination allows for new ethics, learning a heightened perceptiveness. Inviting contamination through entanglement offers us the opportunity for futures that embrace ecologies of difference and celebrate disruption.

Notes

- I Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 23.
- 2 Sara Ahmed. "The Phenomenology of Whiteness," Feminist Theory Vol. 8, No. 2 (2007): 154.
 - 3 Ibid., 156
 - 4 Ibid., 158
 - 5 Ibid., 160
- 6 Jason W. Moore. Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital (Brooklyn: Verso, 2015), 16.

IOHN GIORNO

SUICIDE SÛTRA

PRÉFACES DE WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS & BERNARD HEIDSIECK

ÉDITIONS AL DANTE

Never Stop Dancing. Or How to Sabotage Neoliberalism's Biorhythm

Ingrid Luquet-Gad

Berghain is the first non-utopic place in the history of electronic music. The first, at least, to symbolize this shift; and by its fame, allow us to analyze it as such. Berghain: when dropped without any further contextual precaution, the name won't mean much to the non-initiated. To the German-speaking, a careful dismantling of the linguistic shell will reveal encapsulated in the substantive a double reference to a place. A mountain, Berg, and a grove, Hain. To the others, the nocturnal creatures who started dancing around the turn of the millennium—as well as to most individuals immersed in today's mediatic ecosystem—there can be no doubt. The topic is Berlin's mythical techno club. Its dark aura radiates since 2004 from a former power plant between Kreuzberg and Friedrichhain—this is where the name stems from, combining the names of the two neighborhoods. In 1998, a prefiguration of the club called Ostgut emerges in the wake of the many clubs to open among the ruins of the center of Berlin—E-Werk, Tresor. Bunker, Suicide, but also the Snax parties, which will

later come to play a great role in defining the libertarian ideal of what will later become Berghain.

Without any fixed place or date, their inherent nomadism defined the freedom of the bodies that they brought together—"Pervy-Party - men only - break a rule." Nothing much has changed since the club moved into the building it still occupies. Of course, its success increases steadily, and any chronology, even a quick one, would have to mention a few key milestones. In 2009, it was crowned "best club in the world" by DJ Magazine, and in spring 2017, a third floor was added to the club, Saüle, dedicated to concerts and experimental music events. Those events are forerunners and symptoms of the excessive media exposure and the subsequent reorientation of the club's identity. That is, its reorientation towards the functioning of a concert hall, or at least, a conventional club, where the musical programming is foregrounded while the sexual and hedonistic aspect is played down. Substantially though, the turn that we will here try to deal with, the identification of a new paradigm, makes them appear not as qualitative differences but as mere quantitative ones. Rather than focusing on the evolutions intrinsic to the club, we will focus on its position in relation to the global ecology of other similar spaces. Rather than trying to assess its external influence, we will try to evaluate what kind of agency is at play when every weekend, bodies flock to dissolve inside its thick walls.

Pretending to be as naïve as the uninitiated when confronted with the name, trusting blindly onomastics so as to recognize a mountain and a grove, might not be as absurd as it first seems. The whole mythology woven around the concrete fortress we must forget; and strip our minds bare of each bit of sensational or scandalous element that still sticks to our image of it. What are we then left with? A club, whose surface area is wide enough to make it a place, and which we will, to make things easier, call by the name Berghain.

The first question presents itself: Is this place a public one? A sanctuary? An "event-place"?1 One of its specificities is indeed how people are let in, a process severely regulated by a doorman separating the admitted from the rejected. How, then, to deal with this preliminary inequality? Does it reenact the unequal logic already identified by Jean-Jacques Rousseau when he distinguished between "theater" and "party"? As Michaël Fœssel recalls in his own book about the night time,² Rousseau, in Letter to M. D'Alembert on Spectacles, considers theaters to be an unequal space because of their staged space that divides visibility between actors and spectators. Parties and celebrations, on the other hand, are suited to the kind of sociability forms found in 'republics,' as they open up a free space where everyone can appear just as they wish. If we follow his analysis, the legendarily strict door-politic would contribute to making the whole club a stage: somewhere you enter wanting to appear, not so much to an audience present in the same space as yourself, but to an absolute audience. That is, the unequal repartition of visibility would then operate between the secluded inside from which no images spill—taking photographs there is forbidden—and the outside left to fantasizing about an impenetrable box. Theater of the contemporary, Berghain would then, night after night, replay the ultimate performance of the hypervisibility era: one that exceeds its capture through image, being one reiterated and eternal climax. Performing for the image, but without producing any real images; orientating each of ones moves towards the perpetuation of the collective fantasy.

"Here, we try to give birth each night to a functioning society."

However, this hypothesis is not accurate. To be adequate, one must add one other element to the door policy: its unpredictability. In the chapter he devotes to the club in his book La Nuit, Fœssel raises this point as well. He writes,

In front of Berghain, the admission requirements actually have something nocturnal about them. The aspirants are not judged according to daytime requirements: be it golden youth, economical power, the promise to 'gently' go crazy. On the contrary, one better not overact to get into this peculiar night.

Neither daytime beauty (the one recognized by everyone), neither impressiveness of clothes are decisive advantages.³

Inside the phenomenology of night time that the author tries to build, the Berghain doorman announces the transvaluation of values that will happen inside. His discrimination criteria are thus not so much unpredictable as they are the exact opposite of their daytime equivalent. The reality is slightly different. True, some elements are without a doubt valued: wearing an outfit showing endurance—sportswear, no heels, remaining calm and composed, a predilection being shown to loners over groups.

However, no need to try and adopt a worn-out subterfuge well discussed on forums such as dressing all in black. If this uniform is indeed an existing one, it is conditioned by the functional aspect of not getting oneself dirty during the event about to be lived. Sven Marquardt, the renowned historical Cerberus of the premises, acts as an interface between inside and outside, as well as one of the only images to hold on to—he now stars in advertisements for the brand Hugo Boss. In his words: "We accept as well latex-masks and Scottish kilts, or the Pamela Anderson type blonde wearing Peak & Cloppenburg who comes with two 'Bear'-type men by her side, licking each other's sweat off their armpits." Nobody, not even regulars, can be assured to get in each time. For the decision making is thought anew each

time: "Here, we try to give birth each night to a functioning society, a crowd that, despite the numerous individuals it is composed of, keeps something intimate."

Without even having set (conceptual) foot inside yet, we can already glimpse the kind of place it is. As previously mentioned, Berghain stems from the Snax parties, the first organized by the clubs' two co-founders, which were characteristically not held in any fixed place. From then on, the religious imagery of the church or the temple so heavily present in the electronic music scene is not necessarily adequate anymore.

If the architecture is indeed reminiscent of a concrete cathedral, if many of the regulars speak about "going to Church" on Sundays, the day when the techno tourists and generally curious ones give way to a more focused crowd, the spirit is a far cry from the one to be found in Chicago clubs back in the heydays of house music. For example, one remembers a famous quote by Frankie Knuckles describing Warehouse, the Chicago club where he was resident DJ from 1982 to 1987 as "a church for people who have fallen from grace." Berghain is neither a church nor does it welcome the disgraced: everyone wants to get in. The second distinction thus appears. Berghain also breaches with the rave and free-party model, which in a certain sense was not so different from the Chicago spirit. Thus, the mere principle of a selection, be it unpredictable, is a contradiction in

terms with the community idea of raves, illegal gatherings where location was known through word of mouth, and later through Infoline or SMS. To think of this community as one of disgraced or chosen ones does not matter: in both cases, a permanent group constitutes itself in time and thinks of itself as such. A group, or maybe even a movement, since for many, raves were part of the last great utopian movements of the 90s, side by side with the dreams of Temporary Autonomous Zones to which the early years of Internet gave rise. A "nonsite," to quote Marc Augé, where partakers are right away united through their adhesion to rave's values: communion, adherence to a whole, selflessness; under patronage of leading lights going under names such as Cosmos, Universe of Gaïa. Or as the slogan printed on many flyers of the time would go: Peace, Love, Unity, Respect (often shortened to PLUR).

Creating an agonistic, symbolic space

On the contrary, Berghain, because of the selection, can't renew the utopia. One does not go there to get back to one's own kind, but one has to accept that there will be an effort to transform the heterogeneous crown of one night into one's own kind after all. As such, Berghain, as we already suggested, is not so much a place as an "event-place." There is an effort to be made to square with the present bodies, precisely chosen because

of their difference as such. A difference which, let us stress it once more, does not differ from a fixed norm, just as it is not a mere carnivalesque transvaluation of values, but a difference that is, so to speak, mobile, that the doorman is in charge of recomposing each time—a representative difference, so to speak. By all appearances, it would therefore seem as if was constituted, inside the walls of the former powerplant, a society similar to the model that Chantal Mouffe calls "agonistic." She writes:

While antagonism represents a relation us/them where the parties are enemies and do not share any common ground, agonism is an us/them relation where the conflicting parties, even if they admit that there is no rational solution to their disagreement, still recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. They are 'opponents' and not enemies.⁵

It is indeed possible to consider rave's utopian conception as an "us" belonging to the antagonist paradigm, as illustrated by the clandestinity inherent to the movement, where devotion to the idea of a pure community is also bred by the violent police repressions that began targeting the gatherings from the mid 90s. The unconditional acceptance of everyone inside of the group also relies on the identification of a hostile outside contributing to stabilizing the identity of the "us." In this regard, critic Simon Reynolds rightly speaks of the

beginnings of rave and the birth of acid house as a "secession from normality."

"Even if conflicting, opponents perceive themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a symbolic space inside of which the conflict takes place,"

Chantal Mouffe also explains. This place is not the warehouse anymore, nor any temporary gathering space that would as such guarantee the common. The shared symbolic space is an action: dancing. It is now dancing only that guarantees the shared ground of a possible alliance between the present bodies. Little does it matter if the dancers dance together or not; what prevails is the physical exhaustion induced by this artificial night that lasts three days non-stop, where everything is made to make people forget to leave—someone tagged "don't forget to go home" on the wall near the entrance.

Dancing, or even the mere staying awake and roaming the alleys of the club that also comprise silent and withdrawn spaces and do not induce dancing but rather a state of self-oblivion. Exhaustion is an essential quality because it reminds dissimilar individuals that they share a common vulnerability, the same one Judith Butler identified in recent street movements. According to her, the preliminary condition of our political and social existence is not so much chosen identification anymore, but rather the vulnerability felt as soon as one leaves home and enters any public space. Starting from her

observation of scholars' and activists' "renewed interest in the form and effect of public assemblies" since "the emergence of mass numbers of people in Tahrir Square in the winter months of 2010," her book Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly delineates a new ethics of cohabitation while duly recording the end of utopias.

As such, it is both a way of avoiding the neoliberal individualization as well as an essential, preliminary step—and a silent one that we'll get back to—to an ulterior wording of collective slogans. "Embodied actions of various kinds signify in ways that are, strictly speaking, neither discursive nor prediscursive. In other words, forms of assembly already signify prior to, and apart from, any particular demand they make. Silent gatherings, including vigils or funerals, often signify in excess of any particular written or vocalized account of what they are about."9

Exhaustion, the base of a temporary assembly of bodies

When applying the word "performativity" to assemblies, Butler displaces the concept twice. From its original linguistic origin, it glides towards silent or moving forms; from its application to individual performances, it opens up to include collective gatherings.

So this movement or stillness, this parking of my body in the middle of another's action, is neither my act nor yours, but

something that happens by virtue of the relation between us, arising from that relation, equivocating between the I and the we, seeking at once to preserve and disseminate the generative value of that equivocation, an active and deliberately sustained relation, a collaboration distinct from hallucinatory merging or confusion 10

If we quote her extensively here, it is because one would have to look hard to find a better summary of the shift from the utopia of a communitarian fusion to the temporary, antagonistic alliances. What Judith Butler also implicitly describes, her main diagnosis is how street movements made visible the changes that occurred in how the subject related itself to the multitude. The great utopias of the 1990s are no more, neither is identification to a preexisting collective. She thus joins a certain number of political theories formulated in the last years. Among those, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri already wrote in 2006 the following lines about the "common," which enables the multitude to "communicate and act together": "the common does not refer to traditional notions of either the community or the public. [...] The common [...] is what configures the mobile and flexible substance of the multitude and social life depends on the common."11

In a club where everything is made to make us forget the existence of daylight, where windows are masked and photographs forbidden, the idea of expense and of wasting of physical resources is essential. One of the reasons for the breach with the rave paradigm is a socio-economic one as well: today, it is not possible to "live for the weekend" as the ravers did, whose life was given rhythm by going out at the end of the week and coming down from Ecstasy in the middle of the week. Going to Berghain, preparing oneself to stay there more than a normal biological rhythm would allow, is already placing oneself outside of the system.

Just as the bodies that leave home and gather in the streets, it is in itself an act of passive resistance to the status quo that does not need any slogans or claims. The free time, famously identified by Karl Marx as that of the restoring of labor power, is enthusiastically wasted partying; and the club-goer knows perfectly that he is breaching the first rule of neoliberalism: the constant availability of the individual, who has become his own small business and must develop all his resources all the time.

For example, one must only think of Jonathan Crary's latest book, 24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep to understand that the working week is not five days long any more, but seven. Therefore, the Berghain dancer does not try to escape reality: he is perfectly conscious that he is sacrificing his position as a good citizen in the global capitalist system, and that the experience he is living in this secluded place will inevitably rub off on the rest of his praxis. If, as the media love to repeat,

Easyjet techno-tourists are poured into Berlin each weekend, the agonistic space offered by Berghain's four walls has become a cosmopolitan reflection of global neoliberalism. At this point, we also have to remember the initial context of the club, deeply rooted in post-war Berlin.

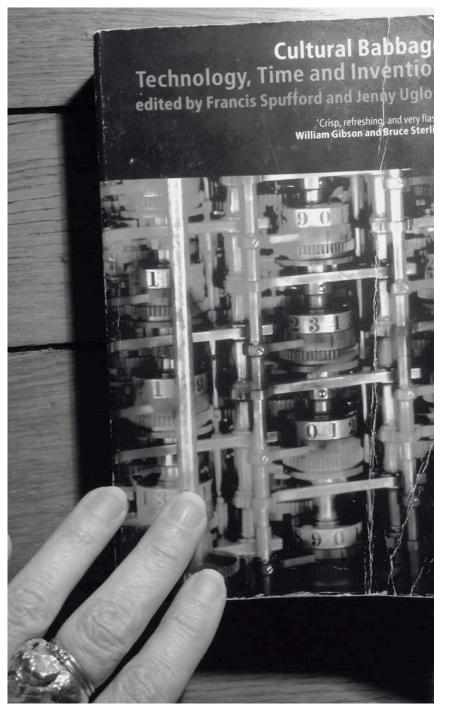
There as well, the economic context was of great importance: during two decades, the historical poverty of the city as well as the sky-high unemployment rates lay the ground for the marathon partying mode. For most people, there was no reason to wake up on Monday mornings anyway; and for most clubs, therefore, also no reason to give any special thought to closing hours.

Nowadays, if Sunday is considered by insiders as the best day to go out, it is because a nocturnal intelligentsia that despises daytime rules comes to show off there. Going out, and doing so excessively, is a way of showing one's disdain of the great Capital. The ephemeral community that comes together and goes apart again each night, each weekend has maybe not much more in common than participating in a refusal that words itself by dancing out of the productive self's boundaries. It should be all the more acknowledged that clubbing tourism has become a global phenomenon, of which Berghain is the best symbol. When they take their plane back home on Tuesday morning, their hoodie wrapped around their ears, dragging their cabin-sized bag behind

them, those tired souls take with them the seeds of the refusal of neoliberalist individualism. While waiting for them to grow, we'll keep on dancing.

Notes

- I The term lieu-événement is a title by Michel Lussault in his book Hyper-Lieux. Les nouvelles géographies de la mondialisation (Paris: Seuil, 2017), p. 122: "Ce qui m'intéresse ici, c'est la construction d'un lieu, fût-il momentané, à partir d'un événement qui en constitue l'impulsion initiale."
 - 2 Michaël Fœssel, La Nuit. Vivre sans témoins, Paris : éditions Autrement, 2017 3 Ibid., 142
- 4 Quotes from the article "Berliner Club Berghain: Was, Sie schicken Menschen weg?", Süddeutsche Zeitung, August 11th, 2014. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/berliner-techno-club-berghain-was-sie-schicken-menschenweg-1.2082312-2/. Accessed: 29 October, 2017
- 5 Chantal Mouffe, L'Illusion du consensus (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 2016 (2005)), 35
- 6 Simon Reynolds, Generation Ecstasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave Culture (New York, Routledge: 1998), p. 66: "The energy liberated by Ecstasy felt revolutionary but it wasn't directed against the social 'stasis quo.' Acieed was more like a secession from normality, a subculture based on what Antonio Melechi characterizes as collective disappearance."
 - 7 Chantal Mouffe, Ibid.
- 8 Judith Butler, Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly, (London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 1
 - 9 Ibid., 8
 - 10 Ibid., 9
- 11 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire (London: Penguin Books, 2006 (2005)), 212



Gravity

Anne Juren

In the 2013 science fiction film Gravity, two astronauts try to return to Earth after the mid-orbit destruction of their spacecraft leaves them stranded in space. Hollywood star Sandra Bullock plays the main character Dr. Ryan Stone, a medical engineer on her first space mission supported by veteran astronaut Matt Kowalski, played by George Clooney. Although Gravity is often referred to as a science fiction film in the media, the filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón sees the film rather as "a drama of a woman in space"—a lost woman, left to herself, facing isolation and, in the end, the unfolding of catastrophic events.

When I saw Gravity in 3D two years ago, I was struck by the recurring image of Dr. Stone lost in space, extending her arm, grasping to reach out for anything as an ultimate act of survival. Trapped in an astronaut's suit, the image of the character's body lost in the void is eventually reduced to her hand, which performs its primary function of grasping for something to hold on to. The absence of gravity and counterweight limits the

available bodily movements which could ensure survival. Determined by the vector of the current movement and limited by the body's physical restriction, there is no choice but to stretch out the arm to its extreme and reach out again towards something or someone to hold onto. There is no turning back, no turning the other way, no reversibility to this action.

In his book The Potent Self, Moshé Feldenkrais uses the term "reversibility" to refer to the capacity to slow down or speed up a movement, to stop a movement at any point and turn in the opposite direction, with minimum hesitation or preparation. The possibility of reversing an action opens up a set of choices for any moment. Feldenkrais considers this quality of preparedness to move anywhere as the ultimate goal, representing the highest level of physical organization. Reversibility, in this sense, implies that if we can go back to where we came from, we can also move in any other direction. To be aware of several choices for movement at any moment in time, also necessitates the evaluation of each possible alternative, and, in turn, the modification of one's action according to any possible consequence.

The Feldenkrais Method prescribes certain body patterns; nevertheless the way of performing the patterns remains open. What is implied in the possibility of variations? On the one hand, it surely opens ways of doing and promises an ever-expanding sense of agency. Here,

I'm less interested in the efficiency of movement as such or a sense of ease in the awareness one should have when performing a certain set of movements. Instead of using variations, I would like to propose the term orientation. In her book, Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others, Sara Ahmed addresses the notion of orientation as one where the bodily, the spatial and the social are entangled. Projected into the void and facing chaos, the character Dr. Stone is not only subject to new conditions, she is also inventing new agencies. In a situation of survival, however, chained to a sequence of catastrophic events, she faces narrowing choices governed by circumstance, propelled forward by any movement, hoping to find a grip. Thrown into a space of broken forms, how can the individual contemplate different options without becoming psychotic, when any slight variation can lead to death?

Watching the film again, I started to imagine a parallel narrative in the form of a Feldenkrais lesson. The movie unfolds along an alternation between objective and subjective perspectives, the warm face of the Earth and the depths of dark space, the safe order of technology and the chaos and unpredictability of its field of debris. It evokes aspects used in the Feldenkrais Method: the idea that humanity evolved through movements which are based on gravity and support.

Gravity opens with the exploration of space and ends with an allegory of the dawn of mankind. After her

crash landing, Dr. Stone fights her way out of the water, crawls past a frog, grabs the soil and slowly regains the capacity to stand upright and walk. In the director's words,

She's in these murky waters almost like an amniotic fluid or a primordial soup in which you see amphibians swimming. She crawls out of the water, not unlike early creatures in evolution. And then she goes on all fours. And after going on all fours, she's a bit curved until she is completely erect. It was the evolution of life in one, quick shot.¹

My relation to the Feldenkrais Method is both as a therapist and a practitioner. But over the past few years, I have been expanding this relation through a larger research that includes poetic, fantastical, speculative and imaginative dimensions and unfolding it into a Fantasmical Anatomy as real as a piece of bone. This text extends this investigation. Here, I will read the film through Moshé Feldenkrais's Awareness Through Movement lessons and vice versa, I will trace the film inside these lessons. The lessons, which are called "Fish swimming," "Reptiles," "Continuation and return," and "Walking and crawling," follow human evolution from its most primitive stage to the body's most elaborate function, walking.

The film and these lessons address a certain idea of human evolution in which the body and the mind

follow a development and trajectory—from the womb of the mother to the erect walking body, from dependency to independency, from the immature to the mature. In this sense, they both emphasize the idea that human evolution follows a progression. What interests me is less the uni-directional movement of evolution but rather the loss of gravity as such and how this loss disturbs and affects us. I want to look at the moment in which from loss can emerge another form of gravity both as real event and as potential for a new set of relations. Gravity is not lost per se, since it exists, however removing the notion of gravity from the Feldenkrais Method (which is one of its fundamental parameters) proposes a radical displacement and an impossibility in the action itself. At the same time, it's an occasion to open and transform what Feldenkrais proposes into a new fictional reality.

What happens when the sense of ground and the sense of orientation are lost? What if Dr. Stone lets go of the gravitational paradigm, if she lets go of looking for freedom within the conditions given to her? What if when she loses connection to these conditions, instead of trying to recover them, she embraces the new condition she finds herself in, not as a lack or loss anymore but for itself? Could qualities of ungrounded-ness be thought of as emancipatory? What is the risk, what is the price, of detaching from gravity, from the narratives of progress, from the very possibility to exercise orientation?

The Feldenkrais lessons aim to create an awareness for body functions. They define specific body relations so as to revisit basic aspects of any given movement by proposing variations for the possibilities of performing it. While the instructor speaks, the participants follow only the voice of the teacher. Participants are not shown what to do, rather they listen to instructions. The body is addressed in such a way that the most habitual movements such as lying, walking, sitting, grasping things with the hand or putting food in the mouth become foreign and alienated. In order to extend an arm to the side, for instance, the focus will be directed to the hip joint, the feet, the neck or the ribs.

The possibilities to perform the movements are sometimes rather obscure or so unusual that one might think that it would be impossible to continue a movement as instructed. While training in the Feldenkrais Method for several years, I often experienced a complete blindness towards my bodily movement, not knowing how to respond to a certain command. While these moments are not necessarily relevant, they can be quite interesting as they address not so much the physical capacity of a certain movement but rather its possibility. Even if the instructions appear simple and clear, or the sequence of movements seem manageable, or if they follow a predictable function, at times, the body would not know how to perform, and end up in a state of suspension, "trapped in the suit."

I am interested in this moment of suspension as it could propose a constant deviation and a new set of relations. A movement becomes scattered in many directions with the body fragmenting itself constantly. At that moment the body is spaced out, "in the blind." Operating a spacecraft, the term "in the blind" indicates that one is transmitting without being able to receive a response. After the orbital debris cascade knocks out the communication satellites in Gravity and destroys the spaceship entirely, the two survivors lose contact with ground control. For the rest of the movie, Kowalski transmits in the blind in the hope that someone listens and responds to Dr. Stone's scream flung into space—"They can't hear us," and, "We don't know, therefore we keep talking."

After being hit by orbital debris, Dr. Stone has to urgently detach herself from a broken part of the spaceship. Her body is catapulted away when she succeeds in getting loose and ends up spinning endlessly into the black void of space, forfeiting any connection. Her spinning body appears lost in the total emptiness of space. Set against the huge face of the earth, the tiny white revolving speck amplifies a sense of void and absolute distress. The gravity—la gravité—the seriousness of the situation, is present in this image. A point of no-return, the camera moves closer until the focus penetrates her helmet, into an absolute subjective sensation of reality. The view from the helmet—the view of space, the view of planet earth, breath misting up the glass. Everything

is limited and constrained. Her gaze is now obfuscated by the fogged-up glass while the oval visor blocks the view to the side. The head locked into position, movement is reduced to a claustrophobic span of only a few centimeters.

At this moment, I imagine that Dr. Stone—instead of being rescued miraculously by Kowalski and embarking on an epic and impossible adventure to return to Earth, to the Promised Land—drifts a bit more. Instead of performing a woman lost in space, enclosed in a bubble, tackling her personal traumas and psychological despair while nevertheless dealing heroically with impossible situations, I imagine that she will continue to float. In the delirium of this endless "derive," with a dead pan voice she will continue to talk to us in the blind. We listen to her talking to us and to herself. As we start following her instructions, the voice says:

To begin, lie down

No lying on the floor here No moving backward No looking back No back and forth No feedback No back No return No repetition No superlative
No stability
No reversibility
No support
No one direction
No perspective
No stories
No gravity

There is no surface for us to lie down. We float, trapped in our suits.

The light touch of our skin with the cold fabrics maintain the idea of a support and function as a reference surface, as an artificial floor.

The suit is us,

no mouth, no ears, no anus, no holes inside our bodies.

We are a flat surface,

a surface on a surface.

Sense the weight and the back of your body in contact with the floor. The weight of your skin, bones, organs, muscles and joints spreads endlessly out into the floor.

Do you sense the density of the floor under you?

And an absence of weight, a weightlessness. We are weightless.

The body does not receive the habitual afferent stimuli due to gravitation.

But our bodies still remember what weight means, the sensation of weight, an idea of weight. The weight of the body, the weight of things, the weight of the body, shifting the weight from one leg to another, the pressure on the soles of our feet and on the skeletal joint looking for balance.

This weight is present in the memory, in the sensation, in its verbalization, in its meaning, in its set of relations.

It's a different kind of weight not acted upon by gravity.

Draw a line through the middle of yourself. It is like drawing a simple picture of the body, the concise form of your body, in a continuous line. From the spine to your head. From sacrum to the crown of your head.

What is its length? What is its direction?

We are obsessed by the search for forms. We look for a middle. So we draw lines through the middle of ourselves.

Starting from the top of the head, through the middle of the forehead, through the nose, the middle of the mouth, through the throat, the middle of the chest, through the navel, the middle of the pelvis, going downward in between the legs. With open eyes, we carefully follow the lines as they traverse the different centers of our bodies. We follow the lines with open eyes as far we can until they turn less distinct. The lines pass through space, continue their way, independently from our ability to follow, continuing their paths in all directions to infinity.

Let go. Lie on the back. Rest a moment. Now localize the shoulders and the edges of the shoulders in the line of the arms.

We extend one arm. Measuring the length of this arm is impossible as the hand seems so far away from us. We want to localize the edge of the shoulder in the line of the arm. The point of articulation in the shoulder joint is so uncertain that the image of our upper chest deforms itself until it has an indistinguishable shape.

We see the hand inside a big white glove looking at us from far away. Its face looks familiar but we can't recognize it. It looks at us, face-to-face, ready to talk.

Localize the legs in the hip joints, in the place where the heads of the hip joints are found. Pay attention to the four lines of the body. It is like a drawing by a child, a simple picture of the body, the concise form of the body. ³

Our legs are far away from our perception and disappear inside the suit. We are not even sure if they are still there. It could be possible that they already detached themselves from the rest of the body, cut off and slowly drifting away from the joints. We renew the image of the line, without meaning, an abstract line, fine, thin and light. We think of both legs as they

drift apart from the pelvis, from behind the pelvis, from the hip joint. We think of the thin, clear lines of the legs. Not on the legs, not on their sensation, not on their weight, not on their thickness, but as if the legs are both merely lines, thin strings.

Lying on the floor, observe a moment of silence.

We observe a minute of silence.

In a slow, very slow movement, roll to the left.

What left? When "left"? There are multi-directions here?

We feel the sensation in our hand which is left from writing. The key pocket is left. The dominance of one side of the body from the other, a familiar sensation in one hand and the remaining warmth of the sensation indicates a left that we can follow. We are left-handed.

The whole picture goes to the "left" until a nearly indistinguishable movement appears and the shift of the "right" occurs, splitting our cocoon like an envelope.

Our four limbs are in the air at once.

Continue to roll on to the left very slowly. The movement is absolutely unimportant. What is important is that when doing the movement it remains possible to see the whole image of the lines, this concise image in its entirety. At which places do these lines break down?

We want to localize the points of junction, the point of bifurcation. We do the slowest movement possible, picturing these lines in relation to each other until it's possible to distinguish how they flow and what they do. This image carries no meaning, just these lines without any weight, without any substances, never following a single direction.

Lie on your stomach and place your hands on either side of the body . . . and now press intensely your arms on your body. Keep pressing the arms, let the heels fall to the sides. Close your eyes for a moment and, lift the head, only slightly from the floor. Using very light movements, lift it a few millimeters from the floor. Lift your head with movements so tiny so that it is impossible to decide if your head is lifted or not. Lift . . . slowly, slowly. Lift it so only your hair does not touch the floor. Do it so you can see horizontally in front of you.4

We allow our spine to lengthen in the direction of the head. We face the ease of starting a motion and the difficulty of stopping it in the vacuum of space. We reduce the movement doing nothing special, except being sure that we still breathe.

Leave it. Stand up and walk a bit.

Continue to walk slowly, slowly... Go slowly. When the right leg goes forward, where is the right arm? Try intentionally... go slowly. When the right leg goes, where is the right arm? Try intentionally to go so slowly that you are able to direct it.

You stand and walk. We erect ourselves and visualize this pedestrian movement.

Our arms and legs go together, forward... go together, forward. We continue to do this. We have so much time as we know that we will not reverse the movement.

As we "walk" together in different space and time, we don't talk and we don't look at each other.

We hear that there are doctors who can recognize whether a person has a heart disease or not according to the timing of the person's movement and breathing. We hear also when the breathing and the heart are well organized it is possible to see that the arms do the same thing. We are not interested anymore in the confirmation of this idea so we play with it. We imagine the sounds of your steps resonating, and their different rhythms. So we listen to (the different rhythms?) of your steps and we invent for each of them new diseases and we listen to your breathing and we invent different movements for the arms, hearts and legs.

You see, during standing, you stand on the left leg. The emphasis is on the left leg. And on the right leg—pay attention because you do not walk exactly forward. Think of which leg you want to stand on first. Which leg? Which leg holds the weight of the body and which walks?

Which leg?

We cultivate a quality of attention and think of the way we would want to walk. We do something unusual with the legs. Our torso moves forwards, our pelvis bends, one leg feels heavy, one leg floats, our arms move onward symmetrically, we cannot erect ourselves.

So do this. Allow the body to do this movement but economize your breath. Now, walk. What do you do in the pelvis, in the chest, and in the back up to the neck so as to pull the leg closer to the body on the floor? The weight on the foot. Where is the weight? On the heels? On the toes? On the middle of the foot? You see, you see, your left leg is heavier than the right leg. Observe the place you hold yourself not to lose balance. When you succeed, where is the weight? You see, it is not on the toes. If you do it on the toes, you hold the breath every time.⁵

So, we walk

We continue to walk

We continue to walk without standing with each step.

You see?

You are standing, you are not walking

You see?

It is not walking for the sake of walking or a demonstration of walking. You want to do something.

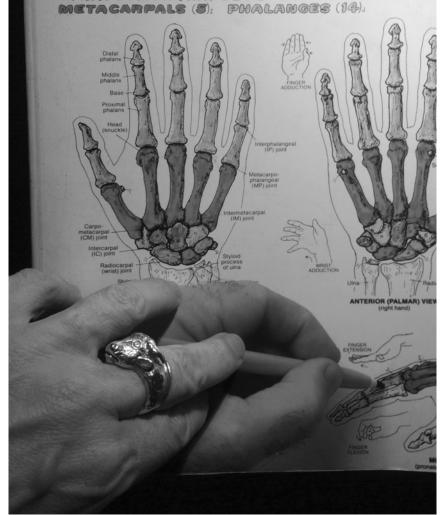
Notes

- ı Alfonso Cuarón talks about Gravity's visual metaphors in "Giant Freakin Robot," May 22, 2014.
- 2 Awareness Through Movement, Dr. Moshé Feldenkrais at Alexander Yanai, Lesson #338: Primary image.
- $_3$ Awareness Through Movement, Dr. Moshé Feldenkrais at Alexander Yanai, Lesson # $_{53}$ 8: Primary image.
- 4 Awareness Through Movement, Dr. Moshé Feldenkrais at Alexander Yanai, Lesson #60: On the stomach.
- 5 Awareness Through Movement, Dr Moshé Feldenkrais at Alexander Yanai, Lesson #501: Introduction to walking.

Wynn Kapit / Lawrence M. Elson

The ANATOMY COLORING BOOK

Carpals (8):*
Scaphoid Lunate Triquetrum Pisiform Trapezium Trapezoid Capitate Hamate



The Movement as Living Non-Body Daniel Blanga Gubbay

In her latest book,¹ Elizabeth A. Povinelli works around the concept of "geontopower," a power constructed on the division between Life and Nonlife. The starting point of Povinelli is a proposed shift of focus from the biopower to the concept of geontopower: if the former—widely analyzed in continental philosophy the last forty years—operates through the governance of life and the tactics of death, Povinelli sees the urgency of recognizing a geontopower, what she describes in a recent article as "a set of discourse, affects, and tactics used in late liberalism to maintain or shape the coming relationship of the distinction between Life and Nonlife."²

If contemporary Western philosophy has focused on biopower, as that which norms life, according to Povinelli, it is central to investigate what and who has a life, and to put into question the geontopower's construction of discourse that perpetrates the assignment of life. Even more than placing the human at the center

of a system, it is this deliber-ate pretension to decide who and what has a life, that might be seen as the most violent gesture of anthropocentrism.

In the evening of the day I started reading Povinelli, I went to see a dance performance; her invitations to blur the distinction between Life and Nonlife and to ques-tion the assigning of life still were in my mind. While my eyes were following the bodies on stage, her words suddenly reappeared, whispering a first question into my ear: can we consider the movement as what has its own life, and not as that which is expression of a life (body)?

A thousand years ago—between 1014 and 1020—Persian philosopher Ibn Sīnā (known also as Avicenna) was writing the Kitāb al-Šifā' (عافشلا باتك),3 articulating inside it the forma fluens/fluxus formae debate concerning whether motion is some-thing distinct from the body in motion; something else from the thing that is moved. The question I perceived that night, seating in the theatre, resurfaced this debate in my mind.

In it, starting from Aristotle's identifications of the movement in relation to the mover, to what is moved, or to the goal of the movement, Ibn Sīnā makes a distinction: the movement is not simply a forma fluens—a flowing form, the sum of the successive states of the body in motion, but is a fluxus formae: the form of the flux, a form in itself.

A comparison of two modern photographic practices is often used to visualize the gap. In the same years while Eadweard Muybridge was most famously decomposing movement through the chrono-photographic practice, reducing it to the sum of successive states of the body in motion (a forma fluens), French physiologist Étienne-Jules Marey was elaborating a similar but different technique, overlapping the different instants on a single image, as to melt them in letting appear the form of the movement (a fluxus formae). What one has the impression of seeing in the images of Marey is not the body in motion, but the movement itself, appearing as a form.

And yet, sitting in the theatre that night and looking at the movements of dance, I had the impression of looking for something slightly different: more than simply recognizing the movement as a form (something that might still depend on the human being), I was trying to understand its possibility of being a form of life; the possibility of recognizing it as a living non-body, a life beyond the human one.

I went back home and started writing this text, aware of its first contradiction: while trying to demonstrate the possibility of assigning a life to the movement, is this text—written by a human being for other human beings who are now reading it—leaving the human being as the one who can decide who else is alive, reenacting a form of human suprematism?⁵ For this reason I

avoid in the following pages some common expressions in philosophy (such as "assigning a life") and adopt less common others (such as "recognizing a life"), which focus on our ability to perceive something that might exist independently of the same ability.

The starting point of this text might be: can we recognize the life of the movement? And, more specifically, can dance show the life of the movement, not simply as the movement of a living body, but a living non-body in itself?

I. For an ontology of the movement, or: the real object of dance

If the movement is often seen as a property of the body in motion, the first gesture here follows Ibn Sīnā in the attempt to investigate the movement itself, looking for its existence as something separated from that body on which or through which it appears. For this reason the first gesture does not simply look at it as a form (created by the body), but rather it hypothetically investigates its possible status as an object, separated from the body, and that one can isolate in order to understand its essence.

In a lecture held in 2012 in Barcelona under the title Ontology and Choreography, Graham Harman set the possibility of this exercise. While starting by reminding how—in contrast with the common contemporary focus on process and becom-ing—Object Oriented Ontology has been a philosophy of static and motionless things (that hence supposedly cannot account for change or motion), Harman sud-denly proposes to include the movement in the OOO investigation, and yet not to see it as a quality (of other objects) but rather as an object itself. His first question is: if we were to do the exercise of thinking the movement as an object, what kind of object would it be?

The difficulties one encounters in thinking this exercise are evident, and yet they might already contain the path to the solution. Indeed, doing the exercise reveals how the difficulties we encounter lay on our experience of the movement, as it always appears through the sensible perception of a body in motion, being it a planet, a falling leaf or a dancing body. The movement appears through a body-in-motion, and it is difficult to perceive it separated from the body that allows it to be perceivable. And yet, the formulation of the difficulty suggests how the difficulty might by phenomenological more than ontological, and invites us to open a gap between the two aspects: if we cannot perceive the movement detached from its sensible appearance, can we still think a movement and recognize its existence independently from its sensible appearance?

I am sitting in the theatre, looking at the performance, where a dancer engages in a choreography, which suddenly and unex-

pectedly makes appear a series of flamenco movements. How to describe what am I looking at?

Or, in the words of Harman, as if whispered to my ears, "Do the stylized, graceful, and distorted movements simply allude to the dancer as an absent underlying force capable of generating new and unforeseen movements?" If Harman alludes here to a common vision crystallized in the Western perception of dance, of dance as expression of the self, he immediately replies to himself: "It seems to me to be wrong; the dancer seems to be less the subject than the vehicle of choreography."

The choice of the terms implies a first separation between the movement and the body, and the possibility of the body of engaging with something that exceeds the body, and that hence might also preexist its appearance on the same body. On stage, one of the dancer engages in an escobilla followed by a balanceo y vaivén: did not these movements exist before their sensible appearance on a body? Suddenly dance reclaims the existence of two possible elements: if the body-in-motion is a clearly perceivable element of dance, dance might include as well, and might be thought through, movements that exist before their appearance on a body-in-motion.

Quoting Husserl, Harman proposes to use a distinction between sensible objects and real objects: "Dance

consists not of sensual objects, but of real ones,"8 the movement in itself. In order to fully test the object status of the real objects of dance, we can try to apply on them some qualities that might be common to the idea of objects, such as their possibility of circulation.

Two other dancers enter on stage, making appear exactly the same sequence that I just saw some minutes ago.

In this direction Harman says: "I find it conceivable that in a famous ballet, we might replace one dancer's role with four or five dancers in sequence, in such a way that no one but great connoisseurs would notice."9 More than denying the im-portance of the dancer, Harman tries to emancipate further the movement from being a property of the dancing body. In doing so he seems to echo Vilém Flusser's attempt to emancipate the word from being the property of the speaker, present in a renowned passage within the book on gestures. Starting with the sentence, "Rilke says of the prophet that he spits words as Vulcan spits stones and that he does so because the words he pronounces are not his own,"10 Flusser was reminding us how not only the prophet, but we as well, do not possess our own words in the act of speaking, since these words were used by others, and preexist the activity of speaking.

Comparing Flusser's language with Harman reminds us

here how the notions of transmission and circulation are crucial to disclose the path to a non-ownership, and hence autonomy of the movement, helping its emancipation from the body.

For this reason, Harman says, "Or if we could somehow replace the dancers with inanimate objects or computer generated shapes, the essence of the original choreography would somehow still be there even if the overall effect were quite different." Harman inserts here a non-human body to accentuate the possibility of emancipating the movement from being a property of the dancing body. From expression to circu-lation; from property to use. The movement is not the movement of a body (where the of is a belonging), but is a movement by a body. It is not the movement of an object, finally becoming the movement as an object, a real one.

Movements are real objects, separated from the sensible objects through which they appear. Dance is made of the encounter between real objects (the movements) and sensible ones (the bodies) on which or through which they appear. And if so far we thought dance as movement of the body, we can now think it as movement of the movements among different bodies.

This is the first form of circulation of the movement: the movement moves.

This is the beginning of its life.

2. Ghosts

I am back at my desk. While I am sitting, writing this text, I sud-denly lift my left arm, tracing an improvised trajectory in the air.

Suddenly the use of circulation to demonstrate the movement as the real object of dance seems to exclude improvised movements that apparently do not preexist their sensible appearance. Does the improvised movement of my arm risk destroying the previous chapter, the movement as real object, and the same life of the movement?

If the exercise seems at first more complex here, it is because we are in a situation where the distinction between real object and sensual object disappear. I improvised a trajectory: is this movement manifesting the life of the movement, and is it nothing but the life of this body producing it?

To reply to this question, I propose to take a step backward, from the movement to its possibility. I lifted my arm in an improvised trajectory. This movement might be seen as a property of the body, because it was among the possibilities of my body to move. And yet a question arises: how come, and why do I take for granted that the possibility of movement, is a property that belongs to the body, and not to the movement?

In 1425 Domenico da Piacenza—choreographer under the Estense court in Ferra-ra—writes what is usually considered the first treaties on dance in the European tra-dition, titled De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi/De la arte di ballare et danzare.¹²

In a passage of this book, while investigating the relation between the movement and the body, Domenico coins the term fantasmata (ghost) to indicate a suspension between a movement and the following one. According to Domenico, this ephemeral stillness of the body—something that might recall a single fragment of Muy-bridge—has the ability to call back in an instant the previous movements made by the body, but invites us at the same time to perceive a pure contingency, namely the possibility of this suspension to become any following step among innumberable possibilities.

If the fantasmata is a strong image of contingency and potentiality, Domenico renounces to raise a question on the owner of this potentiality, and automatically assigns it to the body¹³. According to him, in the fantasmata, the body manifests the possibility of moving; it has and owns the movement. Yet, seeing the fantasmata as symptom of a specific time and agenda allows us to hypothesize it differently.

I quoted Harman earlier making reference to a Western humanist idea of dance as expression of the self, and it is important to remind that with Domenico we are at the origin of humanism, within which De arte saltandi reflects a non-physical-mechanical conception of movement, in coherence with the humanistic idea of art, as spirit translated into action with vitality. What does it mean to accompany the fantasmata outside the spirit of its time?

According to Domenico, the interruption is what invites us to perceive the possibil-ity of the body to become any following step among numberless possibilities. However, what we perceive in the instant of suspension of movement of the fantasmata, is it not exactly the possibility of the movement to appear? Are we not in front of a moment of contingency of the movement, that announces its possible future; an in-stant that makes us perceive the past, the suspension and the multiple evolutions of the movement—in one word its life?

If we emancipate the movement from the body, it is now time to emancipate the "possibility of movement" from the body. Just like the movement is not movement of a body, but is a movement by a body, similarly the "possibility of movement" is not the possibility of a body (where the of is a belonging), but is a possibility of the movement to be moved by a body.

I lift my left arm again, tracing an improvised movement in the air, where each in-stant of the movement holds the possibility of the following one.

I just typed this sentence and I lift my gaze. Someone, here in front of me where I am writing—who maybe was looking at me before, or maybe not—gives now birth to exactly the same movement I impro-vised before.

This gesture leaves me speechless.

Am I in front of the same life? Is it a new one?

And what about someone who is not yet born and who, in one hundred years will accidentally produce exactly the same movement: will it be, for the movement, the same life? Will it be a new one?

Suddenly, this movement in front of me makes an image in my mind appear. One hundred years ago, while compiling his atlas of Pathosformel to investigate the reappearance of similar forms in different moments of history and in different cul-tures, Aby Warburg coined the term nachleben—posthumous life—to speak about a ghostly life of forms that would invisibly cross the distance of centuries and cultures to erupt in different contexts. Perceiving a casual appearance of the same movement raises the question: do movements, once they come to life, exist as ghostly and sub-terranean lives that, once born, will maybe only die at the end of time, the day the last human or non-human body will bring them to their sensible life?

If the fact of recognizing a life of the movement raises immediately the question "where does the life start, and when does it evaporate?" the nachleben suggests the continuity of life beneath its sensual appearance: the life of the movement is invisible until it is moved by a body, and yet this does not mean it does not exist, and that its life is not a continuous one. A single life lived by many bodies; a ghostly life during which it can lie for days or centuries before voluntarily or accidentally reappearing through another body.

The experience of perceiving a casual reappearance of the same movement, inverts the idea I had of circulation of the movement. Its possible fortuity makes it clear that it is not a circulation of knowledge among different bodies: it is not a circulation of the movement among the bodies, but rather a circulation of bodies inside the life of a movement. Dance is the moment in which the bodies occupy the movement, which appears to us as a life lived by others. In this sense, we can say that dance does not coincide with the life of the movement, but rather it simply visualizes the life of the movements.

We are in front of a second inversion of terms that redefines the relation between the body and the movement. If often the movement has been conceived as an element that helps visualize the life of the body—"She

moves! She is still alive!"—suddenly it is the body that helps visualize the life of the movement, something that exists beyond the body.

This is the power of dance. Through dance the movement might appear no longer as the movements of a living body, but a living non-body, a non-corporeal and yet rec-ognizable life.

This is when dance gives the possibility to exceed the anthropocentric perception of life.

3. Papatūānuku

In a recent article titled In Human: Parasites, Posthumanism, Papatūānuku, Emilie Rākete, a student based in Tāmaki Makaurau, in New Zealand, and coordinator of several Māori organizations, investigates the perception of life beyond the human being, something that might be important here in order to understand the conse-quences of discovering a life to the movement. Rākete starts by acknowledging the rigid division erected in Western ecology between the human being and nature, re-minding how "under liberal individualism, a dialectic is formed between self and environment."¹⁴

Hence, to overcome the division means to explore and inhabit the collapsed border between the self and the environment. This has to be done, according to Rākete, through a double movement: on the one side, dragging the human being as part of nature in ecological concerns, and no longer standing in front of it, breaking hence the subject-object structure at the core of the Western idea of ecology.

On the other she proposes to explore the acknowledgment of agency to non-human entities, questioning the anthropocentric assumption behind a Western definition of politics. Influenced by Jane Bennett's concept of political ecology, Rākete writes, "Bennett argues that 'agency' and 'political action' are not functions of a body which must necessarily [sic] be a human one to enact them, but that political action occurs regardless of human input—that inhuman forces interacting with one another, inhu-man forces interacting with humans, and humans interacting with humans are not fundamentally dissimilar actions." ¹⁵

Rākete's definition suddenly resonates in the image of dance, with the suspicion that her words might describe the movement, as inhuman forces interacting with humans. The suspicion gives body to a sentence: once we see the life of the movement, what kind of agency does this form of life have?

While dancing, we are transported by the movement and, at each instant, by its pos-sibility of movements. Our body gives birth to the movement, and travels at the same time inside and on it, like a ship transported by the sea. For this reason, Flusser specifies that, in the act of speaking, not only one does not possess the words, but rather she is possessed by them, and their ability to guide the movements (of the mouth). Similarly, while dancing, the movement is not simply moved by the body, but moves the body, too. The arms are guided by something invisible that ex-ceeds the body, that attracts it, manifesting the possibility of non-human elements to have an agency. I am in front of a ballet where humans are interacting with humans, while inhuman forces are interacting with humans and maybe these "are not funda-mentally dissimilar forces."

Yet in front of the movement, I suddenly perceive the possibility of a second agency.

I am back at my first night, sitting inside the theater, looking at dance, and suddenly feeling touched by a specific movement. Its unexpected rhythm and evolution affects me beyond the possibility of comprehen-sion. Its delicate phrasing seduces me, making me long for its reap-pearance, be it on the same body or on another one.

I might be affected by the movement, more than by the body, discovering the possi-bility of agency of an immaterial element; or even more, something invisible that ap-pears through its agency: the movement moves the body and moves us.

If the fantasmata was the moment in which I understood the possibility of assigning a potentiality to the non-human, this life appears now with its full agency: all the movements that touched me and impressed me; the movements previously described in this text that actively suggested in their appearance links and connections in this reflection; the movement that makes me long for its reappearance, discovering my-self seduced by it, sometimes more than by the body who carries it. This is where dance invites us to rethink to whom a (political) agency can be assigned, questioning the anthropocentric assumption behind a Western definition of politics. This is where the movement announces its potentiality and reminds us of its agency, refus-ing to be a form, to stand in front of us as a form of life.

And yet, as soon as my fingers type this sentence, a last question emerges: are we in front of a completely autonomous life?

I emancipated the movement from the body, recognizing it as a real object that exists independently of its sensible appearance. Yet can we imagine the movement to be in-sensitive to its sensible appearance, autonomous from it? Is the sensible appearance of the movement not part of the life of the movement?

The movement is something else from a body in motion, and yet the body is part of the life of the movement. The movement is not simply my movement, and yet I have the impression to enter its life, in the same way that it enters mine. Furthermore, sometimes I have the impression that I do not enter its life in a neutral way, but am involuntarily interacting with it.

I am back at my desk. The person in front of me gives now birth to the same movement I improvised before, imperceptibly deviating it towards the end and transforming it.

Am I in front of the same life? Is it a new one? Is it an old life that slightly deviates after an unexpected encounter (with the body), like all lives do?

Suddenly I have the impression that the life of the movements is not an autonomous one: if the body depends on the movement, its life depends on the encounters with the bodies. We do not engage in a passive way with the movement, but we deviate its life, interrupt it, contribute in transforming it. All of a sudden, we are not inde-pendent entities, but interdependent ones.

This is a further and last inversion of circulation that appears in the life of the movement. What I am experiencing through dance is not simply a circulation of the movements among bodies and throughout time, nor a circulation of bodies inside the same movement. Dancing might be a circulation of lives in other lives: a

circulation of movements in human lives, and a circulation of human lives in the life of the movement.

A series of encounters between human and non-human lives that modify the trajecto-ries of life.

I start dancing, starting by lifting my arm. I lose my independence, to experience an interdependence; a moment that I am sharing with another life, a non-human one.

In this sense dancing is an invitation to rethink our life as an interconnection of lives beyond the body-movement relation, and might exceed its territory to help under-standing this interdependence as a way to overcome anthropocentrism.

Speaking about the limit between Life and Nonlife imposed by biopolitics, Povinelli invites us to blur duality and focus on the porosity and the indispensable interde-pendence that exists. Our life depends on oxygen, water, and light, on vegetable lives that we invite continuously into our life, and whose life depends on ours. This porosity is the space that Rākete sees in the Papatūānuku, the land in the Māori tra-dition: we are parasite of a space that parasites in us, becoming a sphere cohabited by different lives.

Maybe this sphere describes what is created through dance: we parasitize the movement, and are parasitized

by it. Hence, thinking a post-anthropocentric dance does not mean to remove the body, but rather to recognize the movement beyond the body, as something autonomous that dances with the body: a space that brings together human and non-human life, where we see the cohabitation of a living body and a living non-body; two lives dancing together, and eventually opening a space beyond anthropocentricity.

This is where dance appears political beyond its content (and beyond being instrumental to speak about something), but rather in its ability to disclose a territory—that has deeply political implications—where we see the exer-cise of sharing the worlds with others. I am in front of a ballet where humans are in-teracting with humans, while inhuman forces are interacting with humans, and may-be these "are not fundamentally dissimilar forces."

In the conference in Barcelona, Graham Harman concluded his lecture pronouncing the words: "I become dance." ¹⁶

This dance becomes a space that does not belong to me, nor is it alien to me. It is a space where I make experience of a post-anthropocentric cohabitation of lives.

For this reason we might eventually say that maybe we'll never dance alone. We'll always dance with the movement.

Notes

- I Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Geontologies: A Requiem to Late Liberalism, Duke University Press, 2016.
- 2 Elizabeth A. Povinelli, Geontologies: The Figures and the Tactics, eflux, Journal #78, December, 2016.
- 3 Abū Alī ibn Sīnām, Kitāb al-Šifāʾ (جافتش الباتك, The Book of Healing). Critical editions of the Arabic text have been published in Cairo, 1952–83, originally under the supervision of I. Madkour.
 - 4 Ruggero Pierantoni, Forma Fluens, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1999.
- 5 cfr. Will Kymlicka, Human Rights without Human Supremacism, (forthcoming) Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 2017.
- 6 Graham Harman, Ontology and Choreography, text presented at the conference Choreography as Expanded Practice. Fundació Antoni Tàpies. Barcelona, Spain. March 29-71. 2012.
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- 10 Vilém Flusser, Gestures, (tr. Nancy Ann Roth), University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
 - 11 Graham Harman, op. cit.
- 12 Domenico da Piacenza. De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi/De la arte di ballare et danzare, 1425 Bibliothèque Nationale Paris, f. Ital 972.
- 13 In more recent years Giorgio Agamben brings back the image in his book on the Nymph, still describing this interruption as the moment in which we perceive the body as what has the potentiality of the movement.
 - 14 Emilie Rākete, In Human: Parasites, Posthumanism, Papatūanuku, 2016, p.10
 - 15 Ibid., p. 9.
 - 16 Graham Harman, op. cit.

Dickens,
Flaubert,
Joyce,
Proust,
and others

VLADIMIR JABOKO\

Author of Lolita

ECTURES ON LITERATURE

"A collection of sparkling spoken essays."

Not-Knowing: Mobility As a State of Unrest

Alice Chauchat

Movement is always there. It is a flow you can tap into, and the taps are many: you play some music and dance. You stand with your eyes closed and you observe every postural adjustment, as breath and weight inflect the alignment of your bones in Steve Paxton's Small Dance. Still with your eyes closed, you attend and respond in movement to the spontaneous impulses that arise from your inner self in Mary Whitehouse, Janet Adler and others' Authentic Movement—or else, you let another person's words turn your bones into sea sponges with Joan Skinner's Releasing TechniqueTM. These are but a few of the many taps dancers have devised to access the undetermined flow of movement, and each of them determines some properties of the movement they enable: articulate, expressive, effortless....

Is movement an effect of physical forces acting upon you, or is it an effect of language? Is it an expression of your interiority? Does it reveal the impact of exterior forces? Be they mechanical, psychosomatic or poetical,

each invites a quite different understanding and use of your self, thus revealing a different understanding of what a self might be at all. Each emphasizes a different understanding of movement's nature, and thus a different understanding of what a mover is. Each formalized practice reveals its own ideology and practicing it consistently might inflect how you conceive of yourself. It might transform your subjectivity.

Many contemporary dance and movement trainings emphasize the dancer's emancipation from her ingrained physical patterns. Education and habitual use of the body are understood to pre-determine and limit one's movement capacity,² and techniques are devised to gain freedom from these predeterminations. As techniques, they aim for improvement: overcoming limitations, gaining agency, to be able to willfully choose which capacity to use in each moment. Dancer and teacher Chrysa Parkinson speaks about "being able to navigate some patterns."³

In this text, I would like to spend a moment with movement practices that affirm uncertainty as a possible motor for movement and that approach not-knowing as a physical sensation. Such practices go against dancers' desires for immediacy and unimpaired ease in their relation to movement. Instead, they promote hesitation and search for possibilities to simultaneously immerse oneself and hold back. The dances I will present are generated by scores which trigger processes of un-doing in the dancer. They foster an unstable, processual, possibly dispossessed or alienated subjectivity. They reflect a desire to invent alternatives to a modern idea of the subject—self-contained, coherent and autonomous. On the other hand, I must observe that such a subjectivity is also typical of a contemporary condition in which ever more flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness is demanded of individuals at the expense of social bonds. Contrary to the solitude of isolated workers in constant competition, the dance practices I look at are also social practices. By distinguishing the dancer from the dance, they allow for experimentation with relational qualities within "solo" practice. By being practiced together, they are chances to observe which ways of being with each other, which social conditions permit each individual to take the risk of undoing her sense of self, without dissolving. Taking these contradictory readings into consideration, I want to probe the role such dances give to alterity and contingency, and to the states of doubt and precariousness they foster, in order to consider how our movement researches might also be chances to research the value systems and the demands of precariousness today.

Dancing is... / obstruction

Stockholm-based dancers and choreographers Zoë Poluch and Stina Nyberg developed a practice beginning in 2011 called Dancing is.... It consists of dancing for a pre-determined period of time, keeping in mind that "dancing is neither training, performing, nor choreographing." These negations are materialized on pieces of paper on the floor. After this period of dancing, each writes a definition, starting with the words: "Dancing is...." The definition is based on their immediate experience, and accepted as temporary. Participants then gather in smaller groups to compose a common proposition for what dancing may be, based on everyone's drafts. Another round follows, in which the provisory definition is practiced.

When I first practiced this score, as music started playing, everyone in the room seemed to agree on dancing as in a party: energetic movements followed the beat; sensual loops of repetitive and mostly simple movement sequences established themselves as the main common vocabulary. Yet these conventional moves were constantly being obstructed by the three barred words: "training," "performing" and "choreographing." I found myself watching my own activity, evaluating and redirecting it constantly. How can I make sure I am not training? What does training mean? Maybe training means exercising in order to improve a skill, in which

case one should make sure not to try too hard to execute a movement very well, or at least not to repeat it so as to avoid the possibility of progress. What does performing mean? Maybe performing means exercising one's awareness of how one's own activity may be perceived, which is a difficult thing not to do, when committed to perceiving one's own activity as precisely as possible. Can one focus on one's own dance while ignoring its possible perception for an outside viewer? How wide is the gap between these two perspectives? What does choreographing mean? Is this the activity of making decisions on the composition of movement? Does choreographing begin when we make compositional decisions according to other parameters than immediate satisfaction?

The task demands that you simultaneously dive into the flow of dance, and observe this flow so as to divert it from certain paths. One does often dance in situations of training, performing and choreographing. But what is dance, when it is none of these? Three simple obstructions produce a state of unrest as they force the dancer to distinguish dance from habitually related activities. They instigate active doubt and experimentation, activating a process that can be compared to F. M. Alexander's inhibition (cf. The Use of the Self, 1932), whereby habitual behaviors are willfully suspended in order to allow for other pathways to be found out. The "findings," though formulated in affirmative mode, are

meant to remain provisional and subjective, and attention is kept mobile, in a state of disquiet.

Dance of companionship / dis-identification

The dance of companionship is a practice I've been developing, dancing and guiding people through since 2014. It is also an improvisational practice, framed by simple propositions for companionship (between dancer and dance, sensation and dance, form and dance...) and poetic images that inform possible qualities of relationship (such as that between a nurse in night watch and a sleeping patient, between toddlers engaged in parallel play, or between silent hikers). Named after the eighteenth and nineteenth century employment of lady's companions, the dance is an exercise in attending to an improvised dance, without identifying with it. The basic premise is to dance in order to keep oneself company and to keep the dance company. Observing the companionship between dance and the dancer's sensations (tactile, kinetic, visual, auditory), between dance and the dancer's thoughts, between dance and the movement's formal qualities, the score gradually undoes the coherence between dance and every element one knows as being part of dance, or part of the experience of dancing. It opens a series of questions: if dance is not what I perceive, not the way I move, not what I imagine with my body, then what is dance? This process

increases the dancer's attention to the various impressions which constitute her activity, at the same time as it establishes distance between these and the dance. As she focuses with ever more detail on her experience, dance—the companion of that experience—continuously moves away as that which exceeds the dancer's own doings. Dance is a horizon and a companion; a partner that remains unknown, whose unknowability obliges and displaces.

Similar to Dancing is . . . , Dance of companionship invites a double movement of immersion and detachment from the dancing that is happening. Where the previous example showed a dancer observing her own dancing in order to try to understand what that might be, here her attention is called upon her relation to the dancing that is happening. As a metaphor for the dancer's relation to a dance that actively employs her skills of attentiveness, responsiveness and distance, the lady's companion figure points to the dancer's labour as one of attention and perception, entering a relational mode that hosts not-knowing and blind approximation as necessary efforts. Such relation to dance is a precarious one, which needs to remain so for the dance to exist. It implies a separation from the dance, a gap never to be bridged. Again, usually known elements such as timing, weight and alignment are named as distinct from "the dance." Positing a distance between dance and what is

often perceived as one of its constitutive elements (and which, as dancers, we're trained to attend to) means disjointing our perceptions from the dance. Obstructing the analogy between active perception and dance calls for a heightened attention to perception, and at the same time, a loss of intimacy with the dance. The more I know what I'm doing, the less I know what the dance is. The posited relationship in return disjoints all perceptions. These are but symptoms of the dance and of my engagement with it. As the dance's identity recedes into the unknown, all sub-events I attend to must continue floating, entangled in changing relationships to that vanishing point.

Interlude / wondering

"Wonder is the motivating force behind mobility in all its dimensions."

In An Ethics of Sexual Difference, Luce Irigaray elaborates on Descartes' notion of admiration, or wonder. As the only passion that does not involve judgement, actually as the passion characterized by the suspension of judgement, wonder arises in the encounter with an other—object, person, etc.—whose otherness opens up the admirer's identity. Resisting existing systems of categorization and evaluation that would confirm one's modes of relating to the world—"before and after acts of opposition" 5

—the admirable thing summons a movement towards it, an attraction that does not have a goal yet. As long as this movement remains undetermined, as long as it isn't resolved in a gesture of understanding or appropriation, as long as grasping or theft is suspended, admirer and admiree can move infinitely, sustaining between them a magnetic field that consists of directionless mobility.

Dancing is... and Dance of companionship each ask of the dancer to suspend what they think they know about dance, in order to enter a reflexive mode of embodiment, giving dance a body, giving her body to the dance while entertaining the possibility to never quite know it. Attending to her own experience, paying attention to the nature of her activity, the dancer is engaged in a process of distinction: analyzing what's happening, and comparing it with conceptions that precede it. Yet the activity itself demands that the dancer engages her whole capacity to sense, feel and think in action—diving in and dissecting, directing movement and following movement. Both practices start from the call to dance, as if this was a given that anyone would know how to do. Someone says "dance," and the dancer is set into motion. What the injunction contains is an infinite set of ways that have been passed before.

In the schism between knowing (tapping into movement as available) and not knowing (dis-identifying dance and dis-identifying from dance, deliberately not

acting as though one knew or merged with it), a space opens. As they resist measurement, proximity and distance enter a dynamic interplay.

Dancing is then an approximation process: attending as closely as possible, without ever closing the gap between one's attention and the object of attention so that the dancer's work might be strictly described as attention, sustained through time. Moreover, as much as the dancer moves away from any stable identification, she also moves away from a posture of knowing, or mastering the dance, instead ensuring the possibility for the dance to emerge from her perceptive unrest.

In the face of uncertainty / speculation

In the first of his lecture series on the work of Deborah Hay last year,⁶ dancer and choreographer Laurent Pichaud began by mentioning the position of a dancer who doesn't know what the dance means. He presented this situation as one of loss (of mastery) as much as an acceleration of the dancer's responsibility, a situation that creates the obligation to invest dances with one's own creativity rather than with the intention to understand or to "get" them. Interpretation (which in French means performance as much as reading) becomes a site of fabulation and speculation—fabulation, when the meanings you create exceed logics or likelihood; spec-

ulation, when you draw consequences from uncertain notions. Divested of the possibility to "know for sure," the dancer enters a mobile territory. Such territory offers no stable coordinates, but rather a set of horizons to move towards—a magnetic field with multiple and varying poles. It is revealing that Pichaud would address the suspension of comprehension as an introduction to Hay's work.

Hay's choreographies are composed of verbal instructions and perceptive riddles meant to bring the dancer's attention into a state of embodied doubt and speculation. Offered as tools to work with on the score, these riddles in the form of what-if questions are like a user's guide to the instructions. Hay describes them as: "1) unanswerable, 2) impossible to truly comprehend and, at the same time, 3) poignantly immediate."8 These striking impossibilities have a clear function, which she calls the un-choreographing process, or the effort to "uproot behavior that gathers experimentally and/or experientially,"9 opening the dancer's perception to more possibilities in each moment of dancing. This opening process actually opens a gap, the questions suspend usual comprehensions. They loosen prehension as a mental and sensorial relationship (of holding and stabilization), bringing the dancer into a state of admiration where the only possible approach is indeed approximation: moving "closer" to a mysterious task, without certainty (as to its true meaning) or assessable exactitude. As a counterexample of what she would expect from the dancer's performance, Hay describes a "singularly coherent choreographed body." Giving oneself over to the demands of the score, letting her attention be manipulated to the point of dis-identification, the dancer should instead appear as a constantly re-forming entity, unstable and in process. 10

Hay's tools, as well as the diffractive procedures of Dance of companionship or the obstruction of Dancing is..., are calls for a sustained and multiplied exercise in the perception of the dance: speculating on possibilities which would exceed one's accumulated experience, or opening up space for an unmeasured excess within one's own grasp of the dance as it is unravelling. In all three cases, "excess" points to the impossibility of identifying the dance, placing it on an ever-receding horizon, while the dancer's effort to approach it keep her in movement. These practices demand commitment and discipline, remaining in the present, not anticipating: loosening the grasp of past and future demands (in the form of habitual and compositional tendencies), resisting from framing or from reducing what is hardly distinguishable to something with hard contours. They ask that the dancer let dance exceed the choreographic frame.

Teachback / undoing—learning and teaching in the dark

I now want to present a situation that has aimed at undoing the stability of the teacher/author, in resonance with the aesthetics of precariousness such dances lay out. Hosted by Jennifer Lacey at ImPulsTanz Vienna International Dance Festival between 2009 and 2016, TTT (re-named Teachback from 2013 on, when I joined Lacey in holding that space), was "originally conceived as a place where artists who find themselves teaching could meet and explore the creative context of class and their continuing evolving relationship to the roles of student and teacher within the context of contemporary dance study and creation." Each summer, Lacey convoked about ten peers for a week in order to "focus on teaching as an artistic practice and a form of research, rather than the passing on of preexisting knowledge."12 Research, in those terms, implied refraining from using our favorite tools, letting go of the methods we had learnt and devised, and groping together so that other ways of understanding dance and teaching might emerge. It meant asking naively: (how) is dancing a form of knowing? And how is this produced? Should it be passed on, explained, infused through contagion....? The participants' sensibilities and concerns gave prominence in the research process to intuitive, indirect and elusive modes of action.

A correlate of the TTT/Teachback program has been undermining the performance of authoritative postures the position of pedagogue might entail. When the teacher arrives and says honestly: "I don't know" in an artistic context, learning as the accumulation of predetermined information is excluded, for there really is nothing waiting to be found out. Neither teacher nor student knows what should be learnt, or if something will be learnt at all. We can only commit and embrace together something that is proposed as a chance to do so. The teacher's role, like the artist's, is to make up situations around a gap, not to fill it with prescriptions.¹³

weak method / a practice of precariousness

TTT/Teachback has been a site of exploration for the resonance between art making and teaching practices. As a host, Lacey brought in her own poetics, and these have colored most of what happened in that frame. Her work, whether as an art-maker or teacher, recurrently hovers on the borders of presence and definition. For example, as the start of a workshop we led together this summer, 14 she proposed that we read aloud some texts whilst the participants do what they do, such as lying down on top of each other, giving attention to their and each other's bodies in the form of massage and other similar activities they were already engaged in.

The situation should continue as long as they listen,

and should be over once everyone finds themselves doing something else. The task thus seemed rather clear, yet was full of holes for all parties engaged: which texts should we read? How do they make sure to find themselves doing something else? We'd all need to make decisions, yet how these were made was left open. Such a score is quite typical of Lacey's work. From a clearly described yet excessively open structure to the material reality of its performance, the many provisory and contingent choices that give it flesh necessarily exceed the execution of a task. The structure is there to support and protect the possibility of investing in presence and action of a most fleeting sort. The gaps in the enunciation are calls for intuitive responses, and for investigating the liminal spaces between "something" and "nothing," or to allow what is hardly ever considered to be given full attention.

The complexity of Lacey's choreographic procedures is opaque, and their relation to an audience's (or students') aesthetic response is mostly indirect (these are certainly qualities she shares with Hay). Her commitment to the preservation of mystery in art can be seen as a cultivation of admiration, in Irigaray's terms: wonder for what is not known, without immediately trying to place it in a manageable place and as active resistance to reification. Toward the end of the 2014 session, in a collective attempt at naming the type of procedures we

had been fabricating in the Teachback context, the name "weak method" was conceived. Jennifer embraced the term and taught the following year a workshop under the same title. The formula is an oxymoron. Whereas method promises a certain efficiency, an orderly set of procedures, weakness retracts from the promise. Maybe the method's efficiency is one of sabotage (negative efficiency), one that impairs the evaluation of progress or achievement. Claiming the authority of methodology, it forges a space for the elusive to be valued. Far from relinquishing precision, it engages transversal modes of thought, across language, intuition and sensation. It can't be explained or reproduced but it can be transmitted by activating it together. It is a culture, not a technique. It is social practice engaging unstable subjects.

...an endless fall into the void? / un-holding together

The examples I proposed here embrace dance as a practice of attention, of commitment and of dis-identification, one that articulates a multiplied awareness and responsiveness to the event, in a constant motion away from individual stability: a practice of precarious subjectivity. Rather than fortifying the dancer and/or the dance, they lay out an aesthetics of uncertainty, favoring the fleeting, the obtuse, the uncertain, the unresolved, and as much as I love these, I wonder which conditions can keep precariousness from turning into

disaster. When Hay writes about her work requiring a "catastrophic loss" of learnt behavior, she does not exaggerate. There is a violence in dismantling one's own patterns; these carry value systems around which we construct our selves, conceptual anchors and physical supports. Which scaffolding can we build to replace them? Should we replace them? And if not, what do we need to be able to dance?

Lacey's "weak method," as noted by a participant in her workshop, "relies on intimacy and trust." It also relies on a suspension of disbelief, an engagement with the poetry of her instructions, by which participants enter role play without needing to negotiate a strict consensus on the play's outline. The understanding that everyone involved shares in the insecurity allows for it to lose its weight. Without a master who would detain a fixed knowledge and who would be in charge of passing it on, all can let go (even if only for a moment) of the desire for mastery. Together and side by side, we experiment with engaging in the undetermined, maintaining it as such.

The grounding figure for Dance of companionship, the lady's companion, is literally precarious, i.e.: "depending on the will or pleasure of another." This position was mostly occupied in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England by destitute women of the aristoc-

racy, who would be hired by wealthier ones to live with them and follow them in their whereabouts. The lady's companion's living depended on someone else's benevolence, which would be given if the relationship between them was both close and distant enough so as to permit a shared privacy.

By their very nature, these practices create the forms of togetherness that they necessitate. Performing, or attending to the performance of these scores, means giving attention to the unstable, the weak and the restless. As studio practices, they are semi-public: a space in which everyone performs, the studio excludes the "public" as separate audience. It is a space for encounter and common endeavor; individuals who do not necessarily share anything else other than a particular activity, who produce and inhabit together certain conditions determined within the modalities of art. As a space of art it is also a sheltered space, one that makes it possible to experiment with artificial set-ups in order to find out which ones may sustain vulnerability without being harvested for a stronger entity's good.

Each practice is like a temporary place where we can experiment with ways of living together in doubt, precariously and without verification. Where the habitual need for a stable center, for a coherent and strong identity, can be replaced with mobile attention in a context

where we also train trust, care and solidarity. Where fantasies of centered-ness, grounded-ness and interiority can be replaced with the pleasures of multi-lateral dependency, entanglement and responsibility towards more than we can identify. Where we learn to embrace the strange and other in ourselves, in each other, and in places that do not have a name.

Notes

- In the examples above, mechanical forces are gravity and skeletal support, psychosomatic forces are the sensorial/affective/imaginative processes happening in the dancer, and poetic force is the impact of linguistic images on the dancer's use of her body.
- 2 cf. Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, Skinner Releasing TechniqueTM, etc.
- 3 Parkinson, Chrysa. Interview by Bethany Atkinson-Quinton and Jana Perkovic. Audiostage, April 30, 2016.
- 4 Luce Irigaray, An Ethics of Sexual Difference (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 63.
 - 5 Ibid., 77.
- 6 "Performer la recherche : 5 séances sur Deborah Hay," Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, 2017.
- 7 Deborah Hay, "How do I recognize my choreography?" (2007): deborahhay.
 - 8 Ibid
 - 9 Ibid.
- 10 Such a description resonates strongly with Gilbert Simondon's theory of individuation, which proposes that the individual is a meta-stable entity, an ongoing process of coming into being through the destabilizations brought about by the relations it is part of.
- 11 Jennifer Lacey, Invitation Letter (2011): http://www.jardindeurope.eu/index.php?id=60
 - 12 Jennifer Lacey & Alice Chauchat, Invitation Letter (2013): http://www.

lifelongburning.eu/projects/events/e/teachback-vienna-2013.html

- 13 During a class I gave in summer 2014, a participant asked: "Can we learn something without authority, and without knowing what we want to learn?" The question remains open.
- 14 "Amish Cinema" Workshop, ImPulsTanz Vienna International Dance Festival, 2017.
 - 15 Definition of "precarious" in Merriam-Webster dictionary.

THE COMPLETE STORIES OF LEONORA CARRINGTON

Introduction by Kathryn Davis

"This definitive collection of Carrington's short fiction is a treasure and a to the world. A stunning achievement." —JEFF VANDERMEER

Vibration Spasm Reactivation Franco Bifo Berardi

Vibrational chaosmose

The concept of chaosmose, that we find in the last book of Felix Guattari, may be explained in terms of a continuous interplay between cosmic respiration and ritournelles of singularity. The structure that we can identify by the concept of "power" means an order that is enforced by the stiffening of the vibrational action of singularities. In the long run stiffening and accelerating are leading to a spasm. We live in the age of chaosmic spasm.We know what a spasm is: a painful intensification of the rhythm of a muscle, and of the organism as a whole. We may speak of brain spasm, when we refer to the painful perception of an artificial acceleration of the rhythm of our cognitive activity, of our mental reaction to the accelerating In-fosphere. The spasm is chaosmic in as much as it is inviting the organism to re-modulate its vibration, and to re-establish an harmonic order by way of re-singularization.

Music is the vibrational search for a possible conspira-

tion beyond the limits of the dominant order. But now, in the hellish century that has been prepared by thirty years of neoliberal competition and unbridled intensification of the rhythm of productivity, the sound of the modern order has collapsed, and in the digital sphere sound has evolved into noise: the public discourse is a tangle of inaudible voices.

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.¹

Sound and fury: this is history in Shakespeare. An interpretation is impossible because human history has no meaning, it's only sound and fury. The meaning of the word "history" implies a certain modulation in the perception and projection of time. Historical perception is the effect of mental organization of time inside a teleological prospect. The historical perception shapes time as an all encompassing dimension that obliges individuals to unify their temporality according to a uniformed meter and to a teleological frame. In Bergson, time is defined from the point of view of our consciousness of duration. Time is the objectivation of breathing: singular respiration is framed in the co-respiration that we

name society. Society is the dimension in which singular durations are rearranged by a shared timeframe. Consciousness is located in time, but time is located in consciousness, as it can only be perceived and projected by consciousness. Time means duration of the streaming consciousness, projection of the dimension in which consciousness flows. The stream of consciousness. however, is not homogeneous: on the contrary, it is perceived and projected according to different rhythms, according to singular ritournelles, and eventually codified in a regular way. In the industrial age, when the dominant rhythm was over imposed onto the spontaneous vociferation of social subjects, power could be described as a code aligning different tempo-ralities, as all encompassing rhythm framing and entangling the singularity of ritournelles.

Political sovereignty was the sound of law that silenced the noise proceeding from the social environment.

Now, conversely, the construction of power is based on the boundless intensification of noise: social signification is no more exchange and decoding of signifiers, but saturation of listening, neural hyper-stimulation.

While political order used to be the effect of the voice proclaiming law amid the silence of the crowd, contemporary post-political power is a statistical function that emerges from the noise of the crowd. Referring to the swarm-like behavior of the networked culture, Byung-

Chul Han summarizes the transformation that has happened in the relation between power and information:

According to Carl Schmitt, sovereignty is a matter of deciding when a state of exception holds. This doctrine may be translated into acoustic terms. Sovereignty means being able to produce absolute quiet—eliminating all noise and making all others fall silent in a single stroke. Schmitt's life did not coincide with the era of digital networks.²

Actually in our age of digital networked communication, power does no more correspond to sovereignty, and is no more based on silencing the surrounding environment. On the contrary, it compels people to express themselves, it incites people to rise their voices up to the point of white noise. In the words of Han, shitstorm is the prevailing form of social communication:³ Shitstorms occur for many reasons. They arise in a culture where respect is lacking and indiscretion prevails. The shitstorm represents an authentic phenomenon of digital communication. And finally: Following the digital revolution, we need to reformulate Schmitt's words on sovereignty yet again: Sovereign is he who commands the shitstorms of the Net.⁴ [sic]

This is a good explanation of the ascent of the Emperor of Chaos to the highest place of world power: the presidency of the United States of America. Modern power was based on the force to impose one's own voice and to silence others: "Without the loudspeaker, we would never have conquered Germany," wrote Hitler in 1938 in the Manual of German Radio. Now power emerges from the storm of inaudible voices. Power is no longer eavesdropping and censoring. On the contrary it stimulates expres-sion, and draws rules of control from the statistical elaboration of data emerging from the noise of the world. Social sound is turned into white noise and the white noise is social order.

Music harmony chaos

Music has played an ambiguous role in the formation of power, as Jacques Attali shows in his 1977 book Noise. All music can be defined as noise given form according to a code (in other words, according to rules of arrangement and laws of succession, in a limited space, a space of sounds) that is theoretically knowable by the listener. Listening to music is to receive a message. Nevertheless, music cannot be equated with a language."

Quite unlike the words of a language—which refer to a signified—music, though it has a precise operationality, never has a stable reference to a code of the linguistic type. It is not 'a myth coded in sounds instead of words,' but rather a 'language without meaning.'5

Music is shaping time, and therefore shaping soul, and does it in different manners with different outcomes. The process of signification of music is based on the shaping of the listeners. Music is deploying in time, nevertheless also the contrary is true: music is the weaver of time, as time is a projection of ritournelles. Time is the grid in which uncountable ritournelles enchain and interweave. Rhythm is the mental elaboration of time, it is the common code that links together time perception and time projection.

The way in which music elaborated the concept of harmony and laid the foundation for social representation is fundamental and premonitory [...] Music, from the beginning transected by two conceptions of harmony, one linked to nature, the other to science, was the first field within which the scientific determination of the concept would prevail; political economy would be its final victory.⁶

According to Attali, harmony is the operator of a compromise between natural forms of noise. In the conflictual space of social life, harmony presents itself as a code that gives meaning to noise.

Harmony is in a way the representation of an absolute relation between well-being and order in nature. In China as in Greece, harmony implies a system of measurement, in other words, a sys-tem for the scientific, quantified representation of nature. The scale is the incarnation of the harmony between heaven and earth, the isomorphism of all representations: the bridge between the order of the Gods (ritual) and earthly order (the simulacrum).⁷

The history of music accompanies both the establishment of an order but also the creation of lines of escape from the order. Bach imagines the post-baroque order of the world. The conceptual framework of Bach is Leibnizian: the construction of sound is monadic and recombinant. The mathematization of time, that traverses modernity as a whole, begins consciously with Bach. In the age of the bourgeoisie, music acts as a spatialization of sound. The vibration of the singularity (the voice) is captured by architectures of sound. Beethoven's symphonies are not about time, but about space: they draw hyper complex architectures of sound, castles and columns and alleys and beautiful frightening buildings of imagination. Post-romantic musicians, like Debussy, Ravel and Grieg reclaim the inmost texture of temporality: their music, (I think of L'après-midi d'un faune, and simultaneously to the poetics of Mallarmé) is modulation of time as duration, as stream of consciousness. Vanguard art in the twentieth century reveals the interruption of the relation between mind and cosmos that was previously definable as harmony: dodecaphonic music (or concrete music) reveal the increasingly chaotic feature of sound, the reduction of sound to noise.

After the late modern loss of order, regularity comes back as code, while intensity comes back as silence. I think of the loop music of Philip Glass, as an example of the internalization of the code and as an example of the anxious consciousness of being trapped in the code. But also I think of Erik Satie, and of John Cage when I say that silence is the only way out from white noise and from coded sound. But silence is only possible in the privileged dimension of music. We cannot find silence in social life, where the hell of white noise saturates every space, any moment, any possible interaction. Steve Goodman speaks of sonic warfare in order to describe the invasion of the acoustic sphere of society by sonic hyper-machines that besiege the acoustic attention imposing rhythm in which singularity is cancelled.⁸

Business

"Business" is the keyword of the neoliberal religion. Being busy is the aspiration of everybody in the world. This desire to be busy should be investigated—it is not obvious at all. Why do we need to be busy? What are we escaping from? Why do we feel this need of filling the void of time? Being busy implies the subjection of the singular rhythm of breathing to the uniformed measure of techno-social interaction. When we are busy, the singular ritournelle is engrained in the trans-individual concatenation, and respiration is commanded by the

code (economic measure, cadence of work . . .). Once we have entered the train of organized concatenation we lose the autonomy of our vibrational time. We must run at the speed of the chain. In the industrial sphere the chain was submitting our muscular rhythm, and we were engaged in a repetitive task that did not invade the worker's mind and her mental rhythm. In the sphere of semiocapitalism our attention is taken in the whirlwind of acceleration and in the continuous intersection of multiple flows.

Autonomy may be defined in terms of relation between singular breathing and enforced synchronization of rhythms in concatenation.

Capitalism is aimed at subsuming cultures, lifestyles, modes of production into the rationality of exchange and valorization. This reduction can be read as synchronization of different existential and aesthetic ritournelles. Autonomy implies a withdrawal from this enforced synchronicity. Autonomy implies the singularization of temporality. Industrial time was subjected to the imposing harmony of the machine. Now the machine is replaced by countless streams of neural stimulation, and our time is subjected to chaos.

Contemporary culture worships business because we have grown unable to listen to the void. The new generation emerging on the scene of the world, the connective generation of humans, has learned more words from digital machines than from the mother. This change is going to provoke some effects on language cognition and meaning creation. When the word was apprehended by the singular voice of the mother, the search for meaning was conjunctive, vibratory, tentative, ambiguous and therefore open. Connective language, instead, is based on syntactic exactness, on numerical overlapping and combination. As Agamben remarks in Language and Death, voice is the point of conjunction between flesh and meaning. Voice is the flow in which meaning is shaped in its singularity: the physical singularity of the flesh of the mother, of the vocalizing sensitive sensible organism. The singularity of the voice of the mother is the access to thought as ambiguous composition of signs that slide from level to level of interpreta-tion. Voice is education to the affective modulation of language. When the affective modulation of language is cancelled by the syntactization of meaning (pattern recognition, overlapping of signifier and si-gnified), then interpretation is no more a sliding ambiguous act of bodily orientation in the forest of signs, and something collapses in the very fabric of human communication: empathy turns out to be useless, dangerous, incompatible with the semiotic model of digital combination, incompatible with the business model of time. Connective generation leads to the perception of time as uniformed cadence, and the eco-nomic code is enforced on the very generation of language.

Snowflake Generation

The embedding of code in the living body of society and the physical isolation of connective brains is producing a sort of emotional paralysis of social life, particularly of the millennial generation, which has internalized the mode of connection at the perceptual and cognitive level. The expression "Snowflake Generation" refers to the psychological fragility of those who grow up in the digital anthrop-osphere: in colleges the students are more likely to report that they have mental problems, they are seriously distressed by ideas that run contrary to their worldview, by events and news that question the ex-pectations artificially created by the advertising environment. Their self-reliance is shrinking and mental health services are overused.

Summer 2016 marked a new step in the rush towards the annihilation. A string of suicidal terrorist acts in France, in Germany, and fragmentary wars in the Middle East. A wave of migration from the Mediterranean sea, and unrelenting rejection from the European governments. The Brexit, and the transformation of Turkey into a nationalist dictatorship with Islamist undertones. The soft coup in Brazil, and last but not least the breathtaking ascent of Trump on the American scene.

Then, all of a sudden, at the high point of the summer, newspapers and television focused on the launch of Pokémon GO. The hype on Pokémon may be viewed

as an anticipation of the widespread creation of mental gated-communities: enclosed spaces of simul-world sharing, a process of techno-withdrawal from the scene of the historical world. Immersive technologies may be seen as a tool for massive denial. A privileged audience avoids mental invasion by the catastrophes looming around in the planet, and creates a virtual environment of navigable experiences. The Pokémon user will get out of his nerd-cubicle and will run after virtual insects or birds. As the real birds are disappearing and no real adventure can be pursued in the real countryside, so Nintendo is providing simulation of adventure and life.

In the disquieting Polanski film Carnage, Kate Winslet comments on her husband, an unpleasant lawyer who is ceaselessly checking and watching and touching his mobile phone: for him what is distant is always more important than what is next to him. One could not better express the effect that the digital cellular convergence has produced on the urban landscape. Distant is the information, the nervous stimulation that accelerates and intensifies up to the point of making unreachable what is near.

A sort of reformatting of the social mind is underway, and this reformatting is not only invading the interactive space of semiotic exchange. It runs deeper, invading the sphere of cognition itself: perception, memory, language, orientation in space and in time. The continuum of conjunctive experience is disrupted by the fractal

simultaneity of connectivity. The emotional sphere is involved in this evolutiona-ry process of cognitive automation: info-stimuli proliferate and the nervous system enters in a condition of permanent excitement and postponement.

According to surveys conducted by San Diego State University, Florida Atlantic University and Widener University, those born between 1990 and 1994 have the lowest grade of sexual activity in the last hundred years. In Sex by Numbers, published in 2015, David Spiegelhalter, professor at Cambridge University, argues that in the average world population, the frequency of sexual contacts have decreased from five times per month in the 1990s to four times per month in the 2000s, to three in the present decade. The data delivered by PornHub are remarkable. As for 2015, four billion hours have been spent wat-ching porn movies, and the platform has received twenty-one billion visits. Time left after so many hours of media sex is short for real sex. Time for talking lazily and caressing and playing the sensuous game is missing. In this precarious dimension, time is mostly invested in the research of salary and recognition, and nervous energy is permanently invested in social competition so little time can be spent in courtesy, in slow erotic attention, in pleasure.

A post-sexual culture and a post-sexual aesthetics are taking shape among the millennials world-wide. A young man called Ryan Hover writes in a blog: I grew up with computers and the internet, shaping my world view and relationships. I'm considered a "digital native." •

Technology often brings us together but it has also spread gen-

Technology often brings us together but it has also spread generations apart. Try calling a millennial on the phone.

Soon, future generations will be born into an AI world. Kids will form real, intimate relationships with artificial beings.

And in many cases, these replicants will be better than real people. They'll be smarter, kinder, more interesting.

Will "AI natives" seek human relationships? Will they have sex?

It's an ironic and sharp text, as Hover sees the two faces of the current evolution. The new generation of humans are having intimate relations with artificial beings, and tend to abandon the ambiguous, distressing and sometimes brutal relations with women and men. The sensibility of humans tends to narrow, as they are more and more involved in an artificial context.

As humans interact with automatons, they may forget their conjunctive finesse and their ability to detect signs of irony and of seduction. They replace vibrational sensibility with connective precision. Yes is yes; not is not. It is a self-feeding circuit. The more humans grow lonely and nervous, the more they seek the company of the less emotionally engaging androids. The more they seek the company of the less emotionally engaging androids, the more humans will grow lonely and nervous.

Sex is part of the universe of imprecision, of indetermination, a sphere that does not comply with connective perfection.

In June 2016, Wired magazine featured an article about online dating:

When sites like Match.com first came on the scene, way back in 1995, they gave singles a weird wide web of potential significant (and insignificant) others. You picked an age range, sure, and height requirements, fine, but your options expanded. Thanks to the all-inclusive power of the Internet, you were scrolling through goths and triathletes and electricians and investment bankers and chefs, and suddenly it didn't seem so crazy to start trading emails with someone who rooted for the wrong sports team or even lived across the country. These people didn't go to your college, and they didn't know your friends (or your mom). But 20 years later, that diverse pool of potential daters hasn't grown broader and deeper—it's been subdivided into stupidly specific zones. [...]

The League, for the uninitiated, is the ivy-covered country club of dating apps, designed for people who are 'too popular as it is.' There's a rigorous screening process—'We do all that dirty work for you'—that takes into account where your diplomas come from, the prestige of your titles, and, crucially, your influence on social media. Two months after the League's November 2014 launch, the wait list was 75,000 people long.

This, let's be clear, is not a good thing—and not just because

elitism is lame. Apps like the League go against the entire promise and thrill of online dating.

The League is just one of a gaggle of services that appeal to the better-heeled crowd; there's also Sparkology, the Dating Lounge, and Luxy ('Tinder, minus the poor people'—no joke). The most selective of all, Raya, is invite-only—you basically have to be a celebrity with a sizable In-stagram following to be asked. But specialization isn't just for snobs. Apps now exist for pairing people based on the right astrological sign (Align), an affinity for sci-fi (Trek Passions), similar eating habits (Veggiemate), and a love of weed (My420Mate). Having interests in common is not a bad thing—especially if, say, religious identity is important to you—but making sure eve-ry potential match has a beard (Bristlr) or is at least 6'4" (Tall People Meet) means interacting only with the segment of humanity we think we'll like. It's wrong and also ineffective, because the truth is, most of us are pretty terrible at knowing what, or who, we actually want.9

Rather than looking for the other, online daters are often looking for a mirror. Narcissism meets rejection of the unfamiliar, of the surprising.

Franzen depicts sexual imagery of the online generation as a mix of hyper-sexualization and of lack of eroticism: porn hyper-stimulation and frigidity:

The kiddies were perennially enticing and perennially unsatisfying in much the same way that coke was unsatisfying: whenever he was off it, he remembered it as fantastic and unbeatable and craved it, but as soon as he was on it again he remembered that it wasn't fantastic at all, it was sterile and empty: neuro-mechanistic, death-flavored. Nowadays especially, the young chicks were hyperactive in their screwing, hurrying through every position known to the species, doing this and that and the other, their middle snatches too unfragrant and closely shaved to even register as human body parts.¹⁰

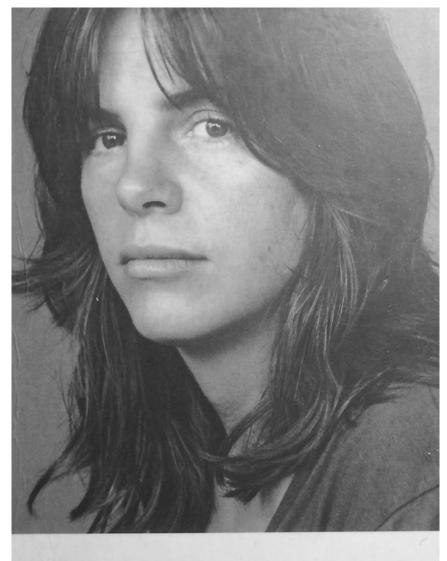
Reactivation

The reactivation of the social body is the main issue that we have to face. It's a political problem, as the political mobilization of social subjectivity will be impossible as long as the body is stiffened and separated from the networked brain. It is also a therapeutic problem, as the stiffening and loneliness of the body provokes a suffering that is manifest in the epidemics of depression and panic that loom on the horizon. It is also, and foremost, the dimension where poetry, music, and dance dwell and find their scope. Artists are the vanguard of the process of reactivation of the erotic body, of cognitive labor, of the general intellect which is the core of semiocapitalism and may lead to the emancipation from it.

Notes

- 1 William Shakespeare, Macbeth.
- 2 Byung Chul Han, In the Swarm: Digital Prospects, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 5.
 - 3 Ibid., 3.

- 4 Ibid., 6.
- 5 Jacques Attali, Noise: The Political Economy of Music (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press,1985), 25.
 - 6 Ibid., 59.
 - 7 Ibid., 6o.
 - 8 Steve Goodman, Sonic Warfare, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009).
- 9 Elise Craig, "Niche Dating Apps like the League are Icky and Bad for Love," Wired, June 7 2016.
- 10 Jonathan Franzen, Freedom (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 348.



ELSEA GIRLS FEN MYLES

I Know You've Been Hurt Solace and Semblance of Self-Care

Tamara Antonijevic and Henrike Kohpeiß

sick, sad, exhausted, sarcastic, tired, anxious, nervous, tensed, pissed, resentful, resigned, paranoid, sleepless, chronically hangover, dehydrated, out of shape, out of mind, out of patience, impatient, jealous, hysterical, mean, cynical, moody, bossy, demanding, dismissive, cramped, depressed, numb, empty, disappointed, unreliable, mistrustful, weary, uneasy, skeptical, suspicious, hurt, tearful, obsessive, unbalanced, indecisive, ironic, spaced out, undone, unrecognized, disrespectful, ruthless, lonely, out of breath, ungrounded, shaky, panicky, doubtful, unruly

Avocado

Self-care is a broad term that unifies different practices and regulations that an individual can follow in order to preserve or build its physical and mental wellbeing. It is assumed that engaging in them will result in a more stable, mindful and cheerful subjectivity. Taking care of nutrition and regular physical activity mark one of the paths that should be followed. Spiritual and esoteric

practices add techniques in order to transform negative states and feelings. Instead of spirituality, one can also engage in therapy and meet the needs of mental hygiene in this form. Self-care comes to an interesting point, when narcissism, personal and social precarity and privilege intersect and are accessorized with a broad network of products. This type of care for the self is not only a marketing construction or a lifestyle. It is present in the countries of western Europe and countries of developed capitalism, more than in regions like Eastern Europe or the Balkans. It is a response to processes that a young bohemian class of freelancing cultural workers currently deals with.

These processes are the continuous workflows of the contemporary project economy and they produce a lack: People continuously stumble from one exhausting precarious workflow into another one and another one but the fantasy that this time the separation of life and work will succeed continues, accompanied by the dream of success and naturalized by the pursuit of "what one loves to do". Typical strategies for the recreation of a work-life-balance are: learning to say no, learning to do less emotional labor and generally learning to take care of the self. But the achieved types of care easily result in strange, neurotic rituals: It is a situation in which we're trying to keep ourselves safe exactly from the conditions that we're accepting or we have to accept: conditions that are neoliberal and precarious, which originate

in social, economical and political problems and not personal issues. This is why the individual, the only self that we have, will never be able to resolve this neurotic state and this is the moment when a scented candle comes in.

Talking about the subjectivity of the contemporary cultural worker/artist, we have to stress that we talk about a specific class: a class that consists of many privileged individuals, a class that is trying to reflect on those issues and a class that sees itself as an ally to many underprivileged people, who on the other side, probably have different coping mechanisms. In order for us to be able to take care of the self by engaging in the outlined practices, no matter how precarious conditions might be, we are already deeply involved in the game of 'artistic life' – and the subjectivity that is to be assembled and saved by these practices is not just any kind of self, but that privileged, western, neoliberal, flexible, inconsistent self.

The compulsiveness of this project is mostly reflected in the fact that it is not possible to "take care of one-self" sometimes, or "a bit" – but like every practice, this one is to be maintained over the course of time and demands regularity and dedication. Self-care has to be chronic. Just as one swallow doesn't make a summer, one avocado¹ does not make a good self-carer. The word is that only regular body practice, regular monitoring of

what one consumes and when, regular bedtimes will compensate and soothe the accumulated stress in between. This is of course almost impossible to achieve and therefore the claim "you need to take care of yourself" is usually said with anticipation of a breakdown. When it's uttered, the pain has already settled in. It is not a nice thing to hear: it's a menacing claim and it's marking the impossibility of the subject to control its emotions and actions. Even if there is an idea what this practice should be, it still signifies the non-existing practice, a practice that can only be from now on. The concrete decision on how to realize this, is much more connected to what one consumes than to the process of knowing, regulating and monitoring oneself, before entering a public sphere and engaging with the community as a subject.

Another aspect of this complex is the fetishization of leisure time: We're not able to just do whatever we want when we're not working, or to be precise, when we think that we're not working. One doesn't just go and buy tea in a bio shop or have a spontaneous bubble bath – rather, one has to believe that this is how free time- me time is spent usefully, because one is actively not-working which is even better than just not working. On the one hand, self-care operates as a substitute for these states of non-working, and on the other hand, for coping mechanisms against exhaustion, depression, having to go through yet another job search, emotional, structural, social and political instability, which are the

characteristics of the cultural project economy. Consequently, the activities described above get over-charged with significance and become the only tools for general wellbeing. This categorization establishes a demand which entails that every time we're not working we have to ask ourselves: Are we doing this right...?

In the following, we first want to contextualize the tendency sketched above in its relation to late capitalism, secondly we'll ask for other notions of critique that are available to the worn out subjects that are in need of self-care and thirdly, we want to manifest and dive into the states of negativity that have produced the necessity to actively take care of the self and see what happens if we persevere in them. We will try to understand something about the functions that are adopted by self-care as a concept and a practice in the contemporary project economy.

In one word, all of the struggles that originate in precarious working conditions and produce exhaustion and anxiety find their articulations in the notion of self-care that seemingly manages these problems. Self-awareness is becoming a term that describes the ability to determine if we would profit from sleeping until eleven tomorrow which might just be a good idea. Paying our bills in time is another organizational structure that can be called self-care. Still, these actions of micromanagement are not a way of opposing structural problems on an appropriate level but, to the contrary, they create a new field of competition: Who is writing the best lists and who has the most regular body practice in order to feel less shitty?

If we meet three friends in the same week who are working on their projects and are successively growing more and more insane, depressed, stressed and keep questioning their whole existence because of the work they are doing, this is not a coincidence. All of them are very isolated in their frustration, sadness and pain. All of them feel like a failure. Still, the only tool to counter this shared state seems to be to remind each other of very basic things, which - if we're really honest - have never effectively ended a crisis alone: Why are you not going to bed before midnight? Are you sure that you don't need therapy? You should treat yourself better, etc.

Well, no one actually wants to hear another person complaining about the things that everyone knows, you idiot, because they are busy managing their own busy schedule, job applications, grants, and they are also nervous about that one project money that is always late, 'and they really counted on it'. So please, just breathe in, breathe out and take some responsibility for your moods and bad feelings.

The accumulation of material and immaterial products is re-establishing a sphere of privacy that has been given up on in the universal overlaps of life and work. If our friends - who formerly constituted this sphere - are not available for moments of relaxation because they are part of each other's projects or - even if not - will sure tell each other about their current projects when we meet, we turn to the lavender scented candle and try to forget. Together with our candles, our massages, yoga classes and our avocados, we find relief by temporarily adopting a subjectivity for which it is still possible and allowed to delve into the private. Only by entering this specific avocado-space, we can differentiate between life and work and we can decide to only come back if we need to. Work has become the self-evident condition of all other areas of life, all except the one that provides a performance of privacy by consumption.

It is an ideology of self-care, that is supposed to make us feel better by telling us what to consume in order to replace the non-existing border between life and work. Furthermore, it makes us all think that we are the problem, and we are not - at least not in the way we think we are.

Radicalness

Terre Thaemlitz notices in Nuisance:

Pessimism is fundamental to any critique. It is core to any confession of awareness that things are not working out, and facilitates our doubts in faith toward any status quo or powers

that be. Criticism is rooted in unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Yet within the ,critical fields' themselves (commercial, academic, artistic or otherwise), we must continually repress the role of pessimism. Today, any viable critique capable of ,reaching the people' (to varying degrees a demand of every media publisher and distributor, as well as academia - U.S. academia in particular) must emphasize romantic desires to ,make things better,' engaging a psychological denial of an immediate material need to simply end what exists but is unacceptable and replacing it with hypothetical notions of what could be/what should be. Despite the fact that every social critique, rebellion or act of non-conformity is anti-social to some degree, pessimism represents a kind of anti-social outlook that remains taboo even within critical circles. ²

There will always be some danger, and trying to create particularities in which dangers, annoyances and bad feelings do not exist makes no sense and will not work. Reality always contains both hopeful and strongly painful experiences that can be close together. Instead of a sharp distinction between spaces in which I, or you, or I and you can (our "chosen family") and cannot (our actual family or: the world) be, it would be important to deal with the fact that a closed space that functions on conditions that are acceptable to us will never exist. What the creation of a 'safe space' renders is that other spaces are not safe, and no matter how necessary they are, the problem is only temporarily and spatially man-

aged. They provide a relief from the unbearable, but the contradiction, that this life is not acceptable, is never resolved. A safe space is not a fixed point, but it constantly needs to be negotiated and shifted.

When Audre Lorde says "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare"³, she is not thinking about white cis males or females in yoga pants and a jar of kale smoothie, she is actually talking about her fight with cancer and her fight to survive in America as a black, lesbian feminist. She's recognizing the tension between her need to be safe and valued and the outside world. Her use of the term doesn't have anything to do with pampering yourself; it's not a luxury, on the contrary, it's a necessity. Can we hijack the term self-care from what it means now, and is it an interesting task? Is it possible to radicalize the concept of self-care in a way that leaves its problematic premises behind and acknowledges the negativity, which it acts upon?

Structurally, radical actions often suggest to move deeply into the crisis, in order to recognize the lack of options to act. Radically disrupting everything we thought could help finally forces us to search for alternatives. Theoretically, radicalness is constructed around disruption and alternative ways of existing that are 'yet to come'. It is inevitably connected to the formation of the future. But if we turn to the alternatives now, are there any available? If the issue is an economic struggle,

it is also a struggle for survival, which means that we need to provide an alternative, because simply stopping would mean death. Should we after all just get regular jobs that offer social insurance? Or should we invent communal forms of living together and cultivate sharing as a means of survival? Both seems unlikely and is actually not the point.

We think that the radicalness of a thought lies in its potential to keep things open and to withstand that there is no solution right now. It is radical to acknowledge the dimension of fucked-up-ness and the complete lack of solutions.

It should not be ignored that the notion of self-care has in some discourses enabled a reaction to that exact situation: the scarcity of alternatives and of ways to act and be fine. In that sense, the notion also renders a political problem that articulates itself in our lives and fucks us all up. Self-care was meant to prevent us from being completely destroyed by these unbearable circumstances. Radicalizing would mean to act against fucked-up subjectivities. In another sense though (a dialectical one maybe) it could also mean to find out about the structural problem that created all this mess and to develop a new idea from a perspective of being super close to the problem.

This does not mean to stop drinking tea, stop doing yoga, or quit therapy, which helps us manage our daily life. Yet, we imagine forcing ourselves to observe the functionality of each of these activities for our relationship with capitalism - and in comparison, their functionality for our relationship with our lives. We would then have to ask ourselves: What is the difference between feeling alive and feeling able to work? Can we name any?

Life Resists Death

What then is the very core of what it means to take care of the self - we don't find much concreteness. Michel Foucault's interest in the notion predominantly in the History of Sexuality volume III offers an exploration of antique practices dedicated to the self that were designed to allow for political subjects to develop. Selfcare to Foucault is a practice of tenderness towards the subject that stands in opposition to the christian exercises of confession and punishment. The tenderness and careful examinations of the body that Foucault finds among the Stoics and Epicureans, become essential in order to understand the political subject in his terms. At the same time, his research on self-care has given rise to allegations that he at the end of his life turned into a neoliberal thinker.

Foucault, the historian of the present, got very familiar with the past. He studied the lives of the Stoics and built an imaginary for their activities which allows for them to speak to us. The ancient schools manifested an understanding of the political that is not only a one-sided public activity but that takes into account the ways in which the subject produces itself as a speaking one in the first place. Taking care of the one that is supposed to speak appears as a condition of democracy and politics as such. Taking care in this context implies to create an awareness for physical needs and their satisfaction: Marc Aurel kept diaries on his health, daily consumption of foods and drinks and sleeping hours, that he shared with his teacher.

'The forms of self-care we get to witness through Foucault can easily be read as self-indulging, curious yet privileged amusement of the antique male bourgeoisie, but Foucault teaches us the political functions that these soft treatments of selves might fulfill after all: It is necessary for Greek and Roman men to know who they are as persons before they step into public discourse. Taking and holding a political position demands for inherent stability of a subject, which can only be achieved by techniques of self-care. Despite the fact that all of this makes a lot of sense in the context of the Greek and Roman ancient societies, - what qualifies Foucault as historian of the present in that respect? Does his research have validity for our discourse? The Care of the Self is best understood as an answer to the question how subjects deal with the fact that power produces them. In order not to suffer from these processes of production that can easily turn into oppression, they need to find modes of resistance. Self-care can be seen as a form of establishing life-forms that oppose the modulating force of power: Cultivating and fostering practices that actively produce and continually reproduce a certain form of the self can protect some points of attack from becoming revealed.

Being a historian of the present demands to draw a precise line of examination between the present and the past. To Foucault, this line is the connection between social structures in which power manifests itself that he had identified in his earlier work and the reaction to these structures that he found in the antique schools. His theory explains how the self as an entity that is produced by and exposed to power structures can remain a political subject that resists - and functions in the terms of politicality that were at stake in the early 80s.

Today, forty years later, we've seen a lot more and it has become evident that a history of the present that also takes into account the history of concepts must start elsewhere: Even though Foucault's sketches of power, its products and his idea of an active subject that reacts to these, might still provide a valid model of social dynamics, however his notion of the self is not necessarily transferable to our present.

Terre Thaemlitz offers, if not a hopeful, then a realistic update of Foucault. As she writes in Becoming Minority⁵, we have to understand the complexities and levels of

our own alliances with the structures of domination. In other words, we should take the responsibility for them and confront ourselves with the fact that one is not only the sufferer, but also the one who inflicts pain on others, usually the ones less aligned with the system. In this way, she insists on avoiding abstraction when it comes to identifying "the dominant hegemonic structure" — as there is no omnipresent, ontological power as such, but only 'relations of power.' Capitalism, patriarchy, categories of gender and race are maintained, regulated, and become present to us through those relations, which are fundamentally entangled with ourselves and our everyday life and work.

This shift has also been described as transition from societies of discipline to societies of control, drawing on the famous model and analysis of Foucault and the text by Gilles Deleuze. The societies of control are already sketched in Foucault's writings on self-care - describing the dynamics of internalization that cannot be fought simply by a critique on an institutional level, because they are part of the subjects, part of us, irreducibly ingrained in all of our actions as well as our thoughts. What are the consequences of that shift? It is not only the model of analysis that has to be exchanged in order for the structures of domination to be grasped appropriately. More than that, there is no model available any longer since the domination is not in us, it has become us since we are the ones that have created the neces-

sary conditions for the neoliberal system to continue. Structures of distancing ourselves and posing critique from outside have vanished and right now we don't have anything available but our very practices of labour, life and world-making to change the state of affairs. One possible and important question is, if we should try and establish new relations of distance to do that or if distancing is a critical strategy that has to remain an artifact of the 20th century – never to be actualized again. If everything is extremely close - and stays close, even becomes indistinguishable from us – what action-modes are still available? What type of reconfiguration or shift can be thought from inside?

The question of proximity and critique is touched upon by Foucault's discourse on self-care but needs to be reformulated in order to apply to the current situation. We will try to think about it by attempting to create thought from the inside for the inside. This self- referential structure of thinking is described by the philosophical concept of immanence. And immanence, as Deleuze describes in his very last text, is nothing but A Life.

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss. It is to the degree that he goes beyond the aporias of the subject and the

object that Johann Fichte, in his last philosophy, presents the transcendental field as a life, no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act — it is an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life.

The self-referential dynamics of the thought that Deleuze explores here is giving us a sensation of vertigo. In his writing, any position that was assumed dissolves into a movement that on the one hand strives towards death (as he might have while writing this text) and on the other hand produces a content sweetness, a knowledge (pure bliss) that A Life will continue to exist beyond us/him and still holds us/him. Not necessarily in a comforting way, neither in a transcendental one, but as immanence - as a thought from within for the inside. Deleuze's writing here is soft, but still too complicated and fed up with philosophical vocabulary in order not to be reduced to esotericism.

A life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects. This indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they may be on to another, but only between-times, between-moments; it doesn't just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness.⁷

Deleuze is answering the question of proximity by insisting on what is still in between. The zone, where one and the other cannot be distinguished, an area that is undetermined and should remain so. It's a theory of capacity that attempts to identify a space of freedom, where the mind is unburdened. A space that strangely appears as precious. The place where life appears as such - life without identity, life as matter - seems hopeful in Deleuze's description. It is not much more than one articulation of the neutral thought. It is a place where movement or action cannot be attached to virtue and cannot be ethically categorized.

But is this anything more than a romantic metaphysical idea? Where is that place to be found? Or searched? How is it attached to matter? How is it possible to encounter life in the described manner?

Well, it is not possible to encounter life like that. Life is not an object of encounter, A Life is a fleeting ontological description of what moves and does not stop moving.

Life is the ensemble of functions that resist death⁸ is the simple definition that vitalists use in order to define their object of study. Life cannot be realized as a principle or encountered in an action. It can merely be infinitely catalogued as all the things that do resist death.

Deleuze's proposition to define it nevertheless, is immanence or - as we described it - a thought from the inside for the inside. In order not to be seduced by

Deleuzes view on life as something that holds us yet does not comfort us, we have to ask for more: What practices can be derived from that? What can a thought from the inside for the inside do for life in late capitalism and for the complexity of surviving and still resisting the normalization of precarity?

The realm of immanence prevents the mind from jumping outside of itself in order to appropriate a form of life that seems easier to sustain. Immanence teaches that this adoption is not possible because we cannot leave ourselves behind, no matter where we jump, we will always take this wreck of a human psyche with us and will be haunted by our injuries until we acknowledge their existence. Rescuing ourselves means rescuing ourselves and not another species, body, person, personality... If we want to survive we need to look at all our existing attachments, all the things that sustain us materially and we need to look at our darkest desires that will also stay with us until we're dead. But instead for collapsing into an ideology of self- awareness at this point, we might be able to perceive all of this as a pattern, a structure, a function, a net.

What do we imagine if we imagine activities of subsistence to be pursued but in a sober, reduced manner? Is there a possibility for them to escape the involvement and complicity that have been described? A practice that focuses on the maintenance of a functional system is not as much in danger of claiming to

effectively fight the system that still envelops it — instead, it is radically singular and irreproducible (Audre's life). This is how it refuses complicity and detaches from the pathology of self-care in neoliberalism. When the self resists to be diminished - by disease, injury, indifference or attack - it is life that resists death. What we can take from this idea of immanence and the self is the awareness of different categories of life of one's own and a Life, as matter, which doesn't need to be taken care of, as it continues to exist beyond our interest, or will.

In a theoretical speculation, integrating the objective of self-care into a structure of immanence amounts to a fantasy of abstraction in which the self would be substituted by a universal force called Life:

Self-care as singularity invents new objects that might look like avocados but do not fill in the same space as they do. Self-care as singularity has no language, no discourse that stabilizes it. It only exists as immanence and is not transferable to different contexts. It is not a practice that can be shared or represented. It is the highly specific reproduction of A Life. When the self resists to be diminished - by disease, injury, indifference or attack - it is life that resists death.

Life formulates a possibility of liberating our own activity from its restrictive conditions and thereby offers a

perspective of self-care in affirmation of organic movement. Unfortunately, in a world of borders, global war and weapon trading, the availability of that perspective has to be contextualized.

To Be Dreamless

The actual livable reality is that there is a hierarchy of life, regulated through the relations and structures of power and by what Achille Mbembe calls necropolitics. Through history, it was always on the gender non-conforming people, people of color and those who identify as female to make themselves accountable for belonging to a Life, as

Fred Moten says, quoting Fanon, to be conscious of how the spaces of non-being are 'already zones of alternative being, where people have already figured out ways to live — struggling to preserve the forms of life that we have made under duress, almost as it were impossibly, and that we continue to make.¹⁰

These spaces of alternative being are not marked, or clearly shaped, on the contrary, they are in the intersections of what Thaemlitz calls interpersonal, cultural and political contradictions. It's not about resolving them, but about enduring in them.

Sima Shakhsari writes in the essay Killing me softly with your rights, Queer death and the politics of rightful killing¹¹,

quoting Mahtab, an Iranian transgender refugee, applicant in Turkey, who later committed suicide:

My life is not like a cigarette that you can smoke and then put away, as I will live and suffer in its ashes. We are (we live). The world has a forgettable mind, and I will be forgotten very quickly. I might get to Canada, or I might not. But I will never forget that all my rights were taken away from me and there are even no selected individuals who I can blame for this. From now on, I want to build my life.

Struggles like these happen continuously, in many forms and questions: who may cross the border, who may be visible, who may be part of certain institutions and who can't, who may speak, and who may represent and who may only be represented, who may allow themselves to care, and who will never care, who will have an option to not react, to withdraw, to not continuously have to fight back, who might be stopped by the police on a regular basis, and who might never show their ID to a police officer, who will wait for many hours in front of the office for migration, who might die trying to get to one, who will fear being refused by their families, or going out on the street, who will be beaten up, who gets to have a surgery to align themselves with one or the other gender, who can watch all this and not know how to respond, who may witness all this and stay indifferent and unconcerned. In the end, it's all about who may

live and who must die, in order for the hegemony to stay intact and in good shape.¹² It is to recognize that these struggles don't end, but that they persist and create durational pain, which does not lead up to a however transformational event or to a better world. These struggles don't bring insights or useful knowledge, besides that some can suffer a lot and more and even more, and that you also can suffer more, in different and innovative ways, but also in the most pointless ways. To paraphrase Thaemlitz, there is no pride and no romantic side to this.

There is an unbridgeable gap between the facticity of death and suffering as a result of global war and exploitation and the organization of a life in developed capitalism. What both of these things have in common is a certain incoherence/unpredictability and injustice of how life or capital or social security are distributed among people. It is not possible to relate to necropolitics or to self-care in a way that would solve its problems. But it is possible to be careful about the ways in which these issues are transformed into discourse and how these discourses claim to be in control of them even if their worldly counterpart remains as dark and horrible as ever.

Theodor Adorno says that suffering is objectivity that weighs upon the subject.¹³ This expression points to a confrontation with hardcore materiality that does not relent or give in but builds a surface on which certain

subjects will crash and which others will never even touch. This is as precise as it gets: imagining the substances and textures that different bodies will have to deal with during their lives. To stay exactly at this point, where pain comes in and spreads and does not soften. Where nothing offers a different or superior view on the situation.

The question is not if we should try to reclaim or challenge the notion of self-care, or to think of the lessons that yet another detour to self-realization by consuming has taught us. When it comes to maintenance of the contemporary western subjectivity, this might be changed very fast and the objective of our critique might be replaced by something even more disgusting very soon. Since radicalness cannot be identified as one singular image or practice in capitalism, withdrawal, as a means of refusing to follow established patterns of success, for example, might be part of the catalogue just as much as demonstrative suffering in a society, which is essentially aiming for expressions of happiness.

A more important task could be to think about practices that operate in the intersection of taking care of ourselves and taking care of others, maintaining the responsibility and awareness of how hard and painful and even unfulfilling caretaking might be, but also how supporting and meaningful it can be. It is less thinking about ourselves as radicals with guns, as much as

we might want to, but to recognize the resistances that are already taking place where the dominant structure doesn't want to acknowledge them.

Thaemlitz proposes another tool for coping and surviving:

Allowing oneself to be "dreamless" is critical to denaturalizing our desires for attaining things in society, since desires naturalize the social relations around those things.¹⁴

As the state of dreamlessness would be incapable of projecting into the future, western humanism, identity politics and ideas of progress would have no meaning to it.

Having arrived in this state, at least in our thought, where can we go from here?

Thaemlitz doesn't elaborate further on the notion of Dreamlessness and leaves us some space to hijack it. Dreamlessness is to be seen as a technique of sobering, a proposal of non-proposing. Dreamlessness insists on what is already there, persisting in the contradiction, remaining incomplete, broken, and sometimes even motionless. In order not to end in stillness — because it bears the danger of leaving us in content agreement with the present after all — we can only throw some of the most unruly and stirring thoughts we encountered and hope that their inherent movement will support the inherent resistance. Since what he have described is so much of

an operation that takes place within the self and the environments that comfort it, we are looking for tools that help to question these environments in unapologetic ways. And we're further looking for practices that connect the uncertainty that comes with questioning to their own sustainment – ideally, in order to maintain the lives of the individuals who exercise them in useful ways.

The poet Anne Boyer describes her experience of watching The Rivers of Fundament by Matthew Barney:

Capitalism wasn't just economics, it was a system of organizing lives, and part of this organization was the distribution of suffering, and a subset of distributing suffering was who would swear more, and where (hot yoga or the bus stop?). It organized who would make art and who would profit from it and who would suffer it, $\lceil ... \rceil$ 15

The authors of The Undercommons, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten talk about the practice of writing together:

On the one hand, intersubjectivity can only break what it purports to make; on the other hand, in claiming brokenness we make intersubjectivity disappear. So, we should write together to incomplete each other. It may not cure our brokenness, but that is only because we are incurable, or to put it another way, our cura, our care, can never be of the self, but only of that

touch, that rub, that press, that kinky tangle of our incomplete sharing. 16

The theoretician Françoise Vergès suggests to think about reparation in more complex and appropriate ways:

A politics of reparation could mean first opening our horizon - rather than a fixation on Europe, provincialising Europe and studying the formation of new centres and peripheries, of new borders and territories. Second, a politics of reparation could mean challenging the relation of dependency on Europe with its related sentiments, resentment and rage. In other words, a politics of reparation might entail renouncing what the current politics of recovery and reparation have transformed into a requirement - having the perpetrator demanding forgiveness, performing atonement, enacting guilt. There are moments when recovery and reparation are also about forsaking the demand addressed to the perpetrator. Shame him by ignoring him, by banishing him from our mental world.

Notes

I As the matter of fact, Europe needs tons: ironically, but not surprisingly, the production of this symbol of the self-care culture has resulted in deforestation in Michoacán, Mexico, draining and exploitation of local land in Petorca, Chille: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/17/chilean-villagers-claim-british-appetite-for-avocados-is-draining-region-dry

https://www.theguardian.com/life and style/2016/aug/10/avocado-illegal-defore station-mexico-pine-forests

https://www.theguardian.com/comment is free/2016/aug/12/hispters-handle-unpalatable-truth-avocado-to ast

- $_{\rm 2}$ Terre Thaemitz, Nuisance. Writings on identity jamming & digital audio production, zaglossus, 2016
 - 3 Audre Lorde, A Burst of Light and Other Essays, Dover Publications, 2017
- 4 Michel Foucault, The Care of the Self, Volume 3 of The History of Sexuality, Pantheon Books. New York 1986
- 5 Terre Thaemlitz, Transcript of Guest Lecture #6 in the Becoming Minority lecture series, Rietveld Academie of Art, Amsterdam, December 2, 2009
- 6 P.27, Gilles Deleuze, Immanence: A Life in: Pure Immanence Essays on A Life, Urzone. New York 2001
 - 7 P.29. ibid.
- 8 P.104, George Canguilhem, Knowledge of Life, Fordham University Press, New York 2008
- 9 Achile Mbembe, Necropolitics, Duke University Press, Durham/London 2003 10 Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman and Silvia Posocco, Queer Necropolitics, Routledge, London 2014
 - tt ibid
 - 12 see, Achile Mbembe: Necropolitics, Duke University Press, 2003
- 13 P.17/18, Theodor W. Adorno, Negative Dialectics, Routledge, London/ New York 2004
- 14 Terre Thaemlitz, Transcript of Guest Lecture #6 in the Becoming Minority lecture series, Rietveld Academie of Art, Amsterdam, December 2, 2009
- 15 P.153, Anne Boyer, Handbook of A Disappointed Fate, Ugly Duckling Presse, New York 2018
- 16 The New Inquiry, Conversación Los Abajocomunes, Interview with Stefano Harney/ Fred Moten, September 5, 2018, https://thenewinquiry.com/conversacion-los-abajocomunes/
- 17 Françoise Vergès, The Age of Love, Keynote Address, Michigan State University, September 2001



CHINESE EROTIC POEMS



Movement Research as a Performance Practice

Ana Vujanović with Ellen Söderhult

Although movement research is a widespread activity among contemporary Western European perform-ing arts makers and students of dance and performance, as a notion there is far from consent about which activities it signifies. For some, it is about perfecting a dancing or movement technique or style; for others, it is a continuous solitary activity through which one comes closer to their dancing selves, and yet for others, it is a study program devoted to experimentation with or by means of performers' bodies, to mention a few common understandings.

Curiously, the same goes with performance practice. Although there is no wide agreement about what or which activity the notion of practice actually signifies in the context of contemporary dance and performance, it seems there is a tacit knowledge of it. As a result, when at a laboratory-like gathering of performance makers, performers, and theorists at Matadero in Madrid a few years ago someone proposed, "Let's keep morning hours for regular practice." Nobody asked, "What exactly do you mean by that?"

Taking as a point of departure our intuition that movement research and performance practice are somehow closely related notions and activities, we want to examine their relations and relationships: similarities, affinities, proximities as well as specificities. However dispersed, porous and elusive these notions might be, they still refer to a certain set of activities, while avoiding or excluding others. Therefore, in the first step, we would like to present the postulates of performance practice proposed by Chrysa Parkinson, and see how and to what extent they address movement research.

In her 2011 self-interview, "On practice," Chrysa Parkinson discusses the phenomenon of (personal) performance practice in a very analytical manner. According to her, it is neither training nor process,² but the continuous in-between activity that is performed on a regular basis. While observing the various occurrences and appearances of practice she finds on the contemporary dance scene, Parkinson identifies three prevailing ways to use the term: 1) to designate the process of embodying and incorporating concepts, ideas, theories, topics or what she calls "active thought"3; 2) to signify a regular activity, even a habitual one; and 3) to signify tries or repeated attempts at doing something.

While juxtaposing various activities that performing artists do, Parkinson creates two conceptual couples: practice – training and practice – process. As opposed to train-

ing, it is usually not possible to specify the goal of practice, says Parkinson.⁴ Training—like in sports, hairdressing, or in the training of memory—is usually motivated by supposed results in certain skills, techniques, and abilities, i.e.: acquiring competence in the craft of hairdressing is the goal of hairdressing training. Differently from training, a performance practice can be motivated by curiosity, an open question, a wish to experiment.

For instance, a practice that comprises a dancer drawing the moments she catches on the way to studio and sending them to musicians living in the same city is definitely a much more open and open-ended activity. It might not have any particular goal and that is still totally alright. Moreover, even if that practice doesn't result in any im-provement of the dancer's drawing skills, it wouldn't be considered unsuccessful, right?

In the next step, Parkinson claims that goal is a criterion to differentiate between practice and process as well, but in this conceptual pair, the goal means the product, the performance or the piece, which is a measure of the process's success: "If you don't create a product from a process, it's a failed process." It is so, since the process means "pro-ductive process" or "poietic process" (poiesis), if you want, which is defined by and oriented to its "pro-duct." We can hardly say it is the case with practice. Not only is it very often impossible to specify its solid product, the practice—already as Greek praxis—exhausts

itself in it-self, on the way. Namely, the goal of practice is not to produce (products), it is an action that has a goal in itself, although that action may result with various results and consequences. So, instead of being pro-ductive, the practice is "pro-active." Furthermore, it seems that many artists today consciously insist on not producing performances as products through their practices. A similar reasoning can be found in Mette Ingvartsen's (self-)critical pondering of the artist's focus on production, where she asks: "How badly do you really want to make a GOOD piece, if a good piece would be the end of reflection, of searching, the finishing of a process that fixes the performance into an object?" 8

The other important aspect that Parkinson introduced in the conceptual pair process – practice is duration: "Most processes are finished once the piece is constructed. A practice can span many processes." From all that follows that, apart from not nec-essarily resulting in performance or having no specific goal whatsoever, performance practice is an artistic activity that tends to escape today's omnipresent logic of art projects. To continue this train of thought, we would remark that while doing that, escaping the logic of the art project, practice brings a sense of con-tinuity to one's artistic opus and life, otherwise compartmentalized in spatial, temporal, contextual, and personal categories. By doing so, the practice provides a framework for an artistic activity excepted from the requirements of the market and

the institutional system of production houses, venues, festivals and theatre houses. At this point we could look back at the tendency of practice not to result in performance as a product, where there is the same resisting inclination. This motivates us to think that although a person-al performance practice of a contemporary dancer, performer or performance maker on European scene(s) might not have any particular goal, the very introduction of that activity into the context of the performing arts as a regular professional activity seems to be motivated by discontent with the commodification of artistic work and products.

If we now move to the terrain of movement research, we could raise the following question: in line with Foucault's biopolitics, as well as in a neoliberal confusion between value and market value, could it be that the notion of movement research has moved into performance practice in order to avoid commodification as well as participation in an accelerating movement towards a performance society? If so, we can then speculate that both movement research and performance practice function as withdrawals of performing artists from the market, the project, the commodification, the competition with fellow artists and a mer-cantilist capitalist definition of value and success. All these processes actually signal that artists lose the control of their work, creativity and products. Moreover, by losing that control

they lose their agency in something that can be called human preindividual reality, including language, mode of production, habits, symbols, common sense, general intellect and many other generic human capacities. ¹⁰ As a response to that situation, European contemporary artists have invented numerous ways to bring that power back to themselves, and movement research and performance practice are among them. However, here might lie one of the key problems of being an artist in neoliberal societies: the problem of perpetuating and strengthening an individualistically understood self (if not consciously then as the political unconscious of making and doing art).

It is not only a problem from an abstract ethical perspective, where altruism is a better alternative to selfishness. It is a problem from a very basic, economic and eventually ordinary life perspective, where human creativity and the general intellect are under neoliberal conditions of produc-tion relegated to mere means of production. That is how we come to the situation that many bodily prac-tices are today part of the reproduction of one's labor force. Yoga, mountain climbing, extreme sports, mindfulness, pilates and crossfit are all ways not only for feeling great and having great health but also a means to increase the value of a self and by the same token one's labor force. The specificity of today's conditions is that they all work through the "could" rather than "should," underlining the shift from (ex-ternal)

discipline to (internal) control in the society that Gilles Deleuze wrote about (through Foucault.)¹¹ The neoliberal performance society needs self-realization and personal peak performances as a narrative, as a way to keep up the idea of endless social mobilization and as a way to produce profit. What is even more perverse, it puts the responsibility for a good life on the individual rather than on how society is organized, although in many cases it is a question of class and geo-politics as a class division among coun-tries, nations, and regions.

This sheds an ambivalent light on the term "movement research," since it has strong connotations to in-ternal search for essence, liberation, the authentic self and. in the last instance, a kind of dancers' self-creation. Although today, movement research has various meanings, "self-expressive improvisation" is an example of how movement research has sometimes been complicit with and part of what André Lepecki described as "western theatrical dance's constitutive narcissism." 12 Within a western dance tradition es-pecially, improvisation has been used as means for self-expression. Maybe self-expression can be consid-ered an inevitable part of dancing or choosing to dance, but the idea that there is an authentic inner self that can be expressed out directly comes from a modern Western ideology of the self. Lepecki strengthens his claim with a quote by Mark Franko: "The dancer's own person is the ultimate

and single object and praise and dispraise in dance."¹⁵ Further, Lepecki calls on "the unbearable personification of dance, defining and orienting Western theatrical dance from its beginnings to a fetishization of the dancer's body and per-sonality (his or her 'charisma' or 'aura')."¹⁴ This clearly concurs with today's individualist performance so-ciety. If, however, dance as a cultural expression is considered to reflect ideological and societal beliefs, if the belief or goal would be a state of egolessness or oneness with something bigger, it is reasonable to be-lieve the dance would express something very different. All this terminology collides with knowledge from quantum physics about reality as entangled and intra-active:

Liberalism sets up this quasi Cartesian knower who is entirely separate from the world and op-posed to a part of the ongoing production of the world. And that's how that apparatus secures its ongoing apparatusing. [...] The only epistemology valid is that which presumed a Cartesian, human knower. [...] There is nothing but configuration and reconfiguration. That means that we are never not able to reconfigure. [...] That's too humanistic, rather: We are never not part of reconfiguration.

The idea of a subject who is separate from rather than part of the ongoing production of the world has been co-opted by capitalistic interests to maximize profit. Therefore, to try to liberate oneself through looking

inwards, for an essential core is suitable for a hegemonic culture, as it is a good way of making structural problems personal and an excellent way of reinforcing the idea of the individual self as an independent be-ing with potential. This potential cannot be developed in any direction to be considered a fulfillment of the same, but only towards a hegemonic conception of successful within preexisting social and economic sys-tems. The living up to one's potential is here the potential adapted to or correlated with the equation between value and market value. Plus, the struggle for self-realization is a useful tool to keep individuals less upset with social inequality and busy with self-promotion, while keeping up business as usual structurally, politically and ideologically. Within such a narrative, inequality looks more like a consequence of individual performance, than a result of historical injustices and structural circumstances. In short, the fetishization of the body and the forms it takes can be problematized if its only direction is towards functionality in a market economy and the idea of value is dictated by and equated with market value.

We don't say that movement research and performance practices do so, but we do say that just because of the process described above, they—when observed as cultural phenomena with socio-political implications and not an "intra-artistic matter"—very often run in circles. Namely, while trying to escape the commodification

of artistic work and products, by investing into the self of the artists, these activities become new precondition of productive activity, which is already fully commodified. That is the circle. And it is not only about activities with an obvious potential to be utilitarian, such as polishing a movement qual-ity (which makes one a more virtuoso dancer), sports (which enhance physical capacities) or reading the-ory (which makes artists more informed about their field and more competent in successfully promoting their work). Even the humorous, playful, cynical and joyful practices, experiments and open (movement) research processes can become know-how in post-Fordist production based on creative and intellectual labor,16 as long as they stay disconnected from the public, the collective, or the transindividual. The notion of the transindividual may be most adequate here because it doesn't bear heavy connotation of the commune while traversing the individual and the ideal of the individual.¹⁷ Here we must stress that we are skeptical toward an individualist orientation of performance practice and movement research precisely because the specificity of post-Fordist alienation "consists in the fact that the preindividual, although it is the actual basis of social production, does not become res publica, political organism, non-representational democracy."18 ¹⁹ Namely, without becoming public, shared with others, and understood as transindividual ventures, general intellect, creativity and all these historically created

or/and biological-ly given human capacities remain latently entrapped in the individual, who is by herself, alone incapable of commanding and changing them. Therefore, artistic practices and research processes that cannot very eas-ily become the precondition of production should earn more attention from European dance and perfor-mance artists. What characterizes them in general seems to be that they take into account and then over-come the artist's individual psychological realm—the need for self-expression and self-realization, the feel-ing of being politically incapable, of not having enough space for their ideas, etc.—while striving toward (un)certain outside and in-between, where these feelings are shared and eventually manifest as social and not only individual matters. To use the old saying, these activities show again and again how much the personal is political.

Since we find them extremely important, we would like to close this article by mentioning some examples of activities oriented in that way.

In the domain of movement research we would like to recall here Alice Chauchat's proposition to under-stand dancing as the relationship at work between the dancer and the dance,²⁰ a gesture we think takes in-to consideration entanglement and intra-action and the idea of dancers taking form from a dance as well as forming it. It hints towards a redirection from an interest in the

internal and dance as self-expression, to an interest in the external and how a practice can be seen as a deand re-articulation. In a panel discussion, In a particulation and Holzinger was asked about her artistic practice and how it related to her boxing practice, and she answered by rejecting the notion of artistic practice and putting the notion of Ilife practice on the table. This relates to Chrysa Parkinson's description of influences and relationality in dance, which she gave in an interview with Moriah Evans:

Different dance techniques and different dance artists trigger you to see or feel things differently, they refine and develop your senses. People that I work with will change how I see something. They will change my sensation of force. They will change my sense of speed because of how they work or even the structure of a dance will make me feel time differently. And then when I look at other things, my perceptions have changed and . . . my sense of myself or of what I am responsible for, what I am capable of, changes, and then how I expect to be perceived by people is also changed.²²

What Chrysa Parkinson, Deborah Hay, Florentina Holzinger and others name performance practices, artistic practices, or dance practices, can fit nicely into a notion proposed by Boyan Manchev: 'transformance.'²³ Manchev explains that etymologically, the notion of performance is not only connected to "to play" and "to

act" but its first meaning is "to bring to completion, to achieve, to fulfill the form." According to Manchev, "transformance would then mean not fulfilling, executing the form, but constantly destabilizing it, stepping beyond its borders, changing the very condition of its actualization, suspending its limits in the unlimited potentiality."²⁴ The notion of potentiality is for Manchev connected to a Hegelian logic op-posed to fixation in reality. Transformance is thus introduced as a notion that refuses final products as well as the idea of fulfilling the form, where the "pre-" is replaced by a "trans-."

In a similar direction, we can re-orient performance practice, from artists' self-creation towards others, and towards the activities that take place among people, in public, in media, on the street, at cultural events, on protests, blogs and online platforms, as actions, interventions, initiatives or simply doings as citizens or people. There is something in this externalization that is politically empowering Rather than attending to the inner life of the artist, the practices such as Everybody's platform, ID_Frankfurt initiative, Nobody's Business platform, Critical Practice (Made in Yugoslavia) program, International Notice initiative, a blog that discursively articulates recent performances, or a simple reading or discussion group for instance, attend to creating public(s) and counterpublics. And this is a good point to remind the reader that in some other contexts, such as Yugoslavia for instance, the notion of artistic practice has designated something very different from the inner self of the artist; it has designated artists' public activities, what they do as artists besides making art. In other words, the expression artistic practice (umetnička praksa), as opposed to artistic creation (umetničko stvaralaštvo), spreads across—usually solitary—art-making to include all other artists' engagements on the art scene and in public. We won't go further into these cases and exam-ples here, but we want to mention that they inspire and oblige us to understand that practice, as an activi-ty of performance artists, has a potential to operate on the level that traverses individuals and to take part in creating new, transformative and collective subjectivities.

And this traversing is what gives res (publica) to the otherwise alienated preindividual. That is why the process of externalization, of going out, should gain a special value on the list of performance practices and movement research tools and methods. In the last instance, these publics seem to be the only environ-ment where new subjectivities could emerge. This is so since alienation itself is not a personal and indi-vidual matter; "it is not a loss of what is most unique and personal but a loss of connection to what is most generic and shared."²⁵ Let's please reclaim it.

Notes

I Chrysa Parkinson, "On practice," in 6 Months I Location, ed. Mette Ingvartsen (everybodys publications, 2011).; Stina Nyberg et al., "Practice Symposium / The Swedish Arts Grants Committee." Laboratoire du GESTE, 2012, accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.laboratoiredugeste.com/spip.php?article610.; Deborah Hay, My Body, the Buddhist (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2000).; Nobody's Dance, "Nobody's Business: Mission Statement," Nobody's Business, 2015, accessed October 5, 2017, https://nobodysbusiness.wordpress.com/project-description.

2 For the sake of clarity we'd emphasize that by the term 'process' Parkinson doesn't refer to a "whatever" process, like a creative process or maybe an artistic process, which may also be a speculative process, etc.; rather she specifically addresses 'the process of making performance.' It is the productive and effective phase of an artistic activity, which is commonly defined in time and space and results in performance as its end product. This is also a common way to use the term "process" in contemporary dance and performance parlance in Europe.

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3 Parkinson, "On practice," 26-27.
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6 Nobody's Dance, "Nobody's Business: Mission Statement," n.p.; Stina Nyberg et al., "Practice Symposium: PRACTICES," Program notes, Stockholm, 2012, accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.konstnarsnamnden.se/Sve/PDFer/PRACTICES%20(2).pdf

7 An exceptional and highly ambivalent case is so-called "practice-based choreography," where the practice is exactly turned into a product and becomes goal-oriented in a similar manner to other performance pro-cesses. In some cases, the performance is still considered a side-effect of an ongoing practice, while in oth-ers constructing a performance practice to commodify it directly into a performance becomes an efficient tool to respond to the extremely accelerated speed with which many artists need to produce performances in order to stay inside the project economy of art. To make up a practice is in this case rather a fast way of defining restrictions. A similar ambivalence can be found in recent programs of "sharing practice" in the form of public programs of institutions, such as festivals of practice and practice symposia. We don't has-ten to discard these cases as "commodification of practice" and will later go back to them, but we do want to draw the attention to their ambivalent status in the economy of

⁴ Ibid., 31.

⁵ Ibid.

- art-making and art-doing.
- 8 Mette Ingvartsen, "Experimental Practices," In 6 Months 1 Location, ed. Mette Ingvartsen (everybodys publi-cations, 2011), 69.
 - 9 Parkinson, "On practice," 31.
- To This is an understanding of the preindividual which we can find in Gilbert Simondon, Paolo Virno and Jason Read, and trace it back to Marx and his concept of Gattungswesen (species essence or species-being), which in humans largely refers to the pro-ductive capability.
- II Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," October 59 (1992): 3-7, accessed October 10, 2017, https://cidadeinseguranca.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/deleuze_control.pdf.
- 12 André Lepecki, "From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance's (a-personal) Political Singularity," in Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity: Current Perspectives on Politics and Communities in the Arts, ed. S. Hölscher, and G. Siegmund (Zûrich-Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013), 37.
 - 13 Ibid., 38.
 - 14 Ibid.
- 15 Emily Crandall, John McMahon, and B Aultman, "Ep.50—Karen Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway," Always Already Podcast—a critical theory podcast, 2017, 57:25.
- 16 Previously, a common term to designate the labor on which post-industrial production is based was 'im-material labor', but it turned out that the term was too imprecise, and is used less and less in critical texts.
- 17 Which comes from the same vocabulary as the preindividual, the one developed by Simondon, Virno, and Read.
- 18 Paolo Virno, and Jun Fujita Hirose, "Reading Gilbert Simondon: Transindividuality, Technical Activity and Reifica-tion," in Radical Philosophy, no. 136 (2006): 38-39.
- 19 We cannot elaborate further on alienation here; for more see Vujanović, 2017: 295-313.
- 20 Alice Chauchat, "Generative Fictions, or How Dance May Teach Us Ethics," Postdance (MDT: Stockholm, 2017).
- 21 "Pushing the boundaries, or: choreography and its expanded fields," panel discussion moderated by An-dré Lepecki with Francois Chaignaud & Cecilia Bengolea, Florentina Holzinger, and Ofelia Jarl Ortega at the POSTDANCE con-

ference in Stockholm, October 14, 2016.

- 22 Moriah Evans, "Interview with Chrysa Parkinson," Movement Research Performance Journal, no. 37 (2010): n.p.
- 23 Boyan Manchev, "Extracts from 'Transformance: The Body as Event," 2006, in Dance (Whitechapel: Docu-ments of Contemporary Art), ed. André Lepecki (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012).

24 Ibid.

25 Jason Read, "The Production of Subjectivity: From Transindividuality To The Commons," in New Formations, no. 70 (2011): 124.

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Sheridan Le Fanu In a Glass Darkly

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

Expansion of sensorial experience Sensuous attention Eroticism of near inertia Self-dispossession

How can one know in such darkness?

Vanessa Desclaux

One performer welcomes one person. The person is invited to close her eyes and lie down on a mattress placed on the floor. Around the mattress, on the floor, one can see several blankets, pillows, and different kinds of cloth, stones, and other objects. During the thirty minutes that the experience lasts, the performer weaves a non verbal narrative of space, made of the activation of the present objects and materials which will come in contact - through sound or touch - with the lying body. The person will hardly notice the performer's presence; nor will she fully recognize his or her gestures, his or her movements. Only the 'inanimate' elements in space will be experienced as being animate. A blurriness seeps into the mind around what one feels, imagine, recall, or think: a strange mixture of sleep and wakefulness where a different regime of images appears.

How can one know in such darkness? was initially conceived by Myriam Lefkowitz in the context of her residency at les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers (2013 –

2015), in collaboration with the artists Julie Laporte and Jean-Philippe Derail. It was first put to work in the framework of La Piscine, an experience that took place at the end of Myriam Lefkowitz's residency at a public swimming pool. The experience is described as a place of crossing between a health treatment and an aesthetic encounter, and consists of "a singular itinerary proposed to each spectator through the following means: a silent, eyes closed walk in and out of the pool, an audio guide in and out of the water, political therapies which aim to link the mental and the corporal space". How can one know in such darkness? initially appeared as one of the practices that were woven together through specific assemblages.

Collective and heterogeneous assemblages of practice

Myriam Lefkowitz describes her practice of dance as one that has left the studio and the stage and that attempts to connect the skills and tools learnt in the context of dance training with other tools, other skills and other practices that can be described as therapeutic, somatic, or magic. Lefkowitz's practice has the ambition to give rise to a regime of sensations that is generally not available because of the strict separation between animate bodies and inanimate objects, and between public, private and intimate spaces. Lefkowitz shares the ethical and political perspectives put forward by

e.g. Valentina Desideri — long-time collaborator of Lefkowitz in the framework of La Piscine — in her practice of reading, developed with theorist Denise Ferreira Da Silva, which summons tools as different as Tarot. poetry, Reiki, political therapy, or Astrology. Desideri and Ferreira Da Silva conceive an ethics "with/out the subject"², bringing to light the necessity to reconnect the subject to its environment and to acknowledge the complex network of dependences that the subject is embedded in. Along with choreographer Alice Chauchat, Lefkowitz also places an emphasis on dance practice as a practice of attention, a space of speculation, of invention and practice of alternatives. In her work, Lefkowitz tries to set up the conditions for the exploration of the body's faculties, questioning what could be the capacities in regard to attention and perception that we may have not yet experienced.

Contrary to the neoliberal ideology appropriating somatic practices to promote an idea of individual well-being in the service of performance and productive efficiency, Lefkowitz considers the individual body entangled in a network of relationships. She situates the possibility of emancipation within the production of a collective space of shared intimacy and expanded imagination, within which a (potentially infinite) variety of practices can be used as tools, including collective reading of theoretical texts by feminist authors, shiatsu or remote viewing.

How can one know in such darkness? makes available a relationship to eroticism detached from sexuality through an exploration of touch and hearing, isolated from sight. Reciprocity is central to this work: while the person who is lying down on the floor may ask herself: "What is touching me?", the person activating the practice, touching the lying body with various objects, may ask herself: "What comes to my hand?".

In this work both persons engaged in the relation proposed by the work experience a different form of consciousness. The person lying down, eyes closed, in a state of near inertia, on the verge of sleep, comes into contact with objects, textures, weights, heat and sounds, through principles of scarcity, slowness and duration. The body becomes a sort of resounding box; one can gradually be more aware of the body as an assemblage of skin, bones, flesh or muscles. Deprived of sight, objects are envisioned through a whole new range of parameters. Specific to the experience for the person on the floor is the blurriness in regards to what exactly touches the body: the object becomes the extension of the performer's body. Feminist theorist Sara Ahmed writes: "we are affected by "what" we come in contact with. In other words, emotions are directed to what we come into contact with: they move us "toward" and "away" from such objects. So, we might fear an object that approaches us. The approach is not simply about the arrival of an object: it is also how we turn toward that object, while

it also apprehends the object in a certain way, as being fearsome. The timing of this apprehension matters. For an object to make this impression is dependent on past histories, which surface as impressions on the skin." She continues: "orientations involve different ways of registering the proximity of object and others. Orientations shape not only how we inhabit space, but how we apprehend this world of shared inhabitance, as well as "who" or "what" we direct our energy and attention toward."

Myriam Lefkowitz attempts to propose radically different conditions within which individual subjects may come into contact with others bodies and objects, and thus orientates anew our attention, stimulating this skin that had registered a series of impressions for years without being presented with alternative experiences, other ways of being touched, ways that challenge the very contours of the body in order to solicit other, less accessible, parts.

A redistribution of roles and places

In the context of the season of exhibitions and cultural programme titled "Your hands in my shoes" (September 2016 - July 2017) at the art centre La Galerie, in Noisyle-Sec, Emilie Renard, others members of the team working at the art centre and I were trained by Myriam Lefkowitz to perform this practice. Emilie Renard and

I, co-curators of the exhibition, approached Myriam Lefkowitz with the desire to discuss with her specific concerns with the bodies of the members of the gallery team as well as the bodies of the visitors. We were looking for means to address the bodies of people inhabiting the institution everyday and the bodies of those more punctually walking through the art centre.

We wanted to address these bodies specifically and individually as bodies situated in relation to gender, race, social class, but also as a possible community to be invented. The sensorial practice conceived by Myriam Lefkowitz proposed a unique dispositif, that is a distinct methodology, repeating itself session after session. Yet this approach is founded on a relationship that is entirely redefined with every new encounter.

Myriam Lefkowitz transmitted her practice, gestures and tools to the members of the team of the art centre who wanted to learn and in turn practice this experience with visitors of the exhibition. The possibility of transmission of this practice, its sharing and handing in to practitioners other than the artist herself – particularly people who have not been trained as dancers – plays a central role in Myriam Lefkowitz's approach to her work in the field of dance. Being trained in performing this practice also meant for the members of the team — no matter their position — to acquire new skills and share a privileged relationship with the artist. In the context of this collective transmission, physical

contact was introduced in the relationships between colleagues who agreed in engaging in the project. Myriam Lefkowitz taught the members of the team a series of exercises in order to warm their bodies up, implicating an exploration of different modes of contact and touch, trying to demonstrate the possibility to move beyond the habitual limits set by the physical contours of our bodies. The collective engagement with Lefkowitz's practice, and the sharing of a similar place and role within the context of her work, meant that there was a crucial movement in regards to our different professional functions in the context of the art centre.

A form of reciprocity in relation to skill, experience and role appeared. We alternatively received and performed the work within the framework of the group. It allowed a very different space to emerge, separate from the habitual professional space and set of relationships. It helped making visible individual desires and skills that could not habitually find ways to be articulated.

Be my body for me

The practice that Myriam Lefkowitz names How can one know in such darkness? is fuelled by wonder and desire rather than stimulated by individual competence or knowledge. It is about undoing rather than doing. In that sense, and in my view, it falls under the fabulous realm of passivity, which can be defined as a mode of

being that does not let itself be appropriated by the individual subject and can only be conceived as a mode of relating: it characterizes a mode of being in the world, immersed in a complex set of relationships with bodies — subjects, objects, as well as other possible modes of existence — and exposes their difference. Passivity thus encourages us to take into consideration the gap and the movement that ceaselessly deviates us from individual entities in order to think of relations and of difference. Jean-Luc Nancy, Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Eric Michaud wrote in an introduction to the series of essays titled Hypnoses: "What is at stake, we will see, is passion, if not "the first of all passions", or passivity. But we can't, without a doubt, ever say passivity. It is not a property, passivity is improper and accidental — properly and by essence."5

This improper — we might say inappropriate — character of passivity is central here. Something crucial in Myriam Lefkowitz's approach of dance, and more broadly of her practice as an artist borrowing from various disciplines, assembling different tools, is the refusal of claiming something as her own. On the contrary, central to her approach are gestures of sharing, transmitting, passing on, which converge towards a questioning of what might be common: neither public, nor private, but a resource that can be used, and cared for, in order to be prolonged in time and space. The significance granted by Lefkowitz to this particular context of trans-

mission recalls the centrality of the practice of teaching in the work of choreographers Jennifer Lacey and Alice Chauchat, whose mutual commitment to the creation of collaborative structures such as Nobod's Business (initiated together with Eleanor Bauer and Ellen Söderhult), Teachback next to open invitations to daily practices and creation processes such as Lacey's "Les Assistantes" as contexts for sharing techniques and practices constitute fundamental points of reference in Lefkowitz's own trajectory. Friendship and companionship are central modes of relating in the work of Jennifer Lacey, Alice Chauchat or Myriam Lefkowitz.

It seems fundamental to acknowledge that the meaning of companionship goes beyond the idea of working together. In her writing, Chauchat brings forward the figure of the lady's companion, which "points to the dancer's labour as one of attention, perception, entering a relational mode that hosts not-knowing and blind approximation as necessary efforts."6 She further argues for the dancer's "unstable, processual, possibly dispossessed or alienated subjectivity." The form of dispossession that Chauchat calls upon here is self-dispossession. Judith Butler, in a conversation with Athéna Athanasiou. writes: "In a world of differentially shared sociality, if we are already 'outside ourselves', beyond ourselves, given over, bound to others, and bound by claims that emerge from outside or from deep inside ourselves; our very notion of responsibility requires this sense of

dispossession as disposition, exposure and self-othering." Self-dispossession is thus not forced upon being by others but instead appears as a crucial dimension of being in relation to others through a mode of relationality that dissents from a liberal mode of sociality based on property and sovereignty.

In the context of my own curatorial practice, the approach put forward by Myriam Lefkowitz stressed a convergence of concerns, more specifically concerning issues of property and sovereignty that are central to the definition of authorship in neo-liberal conditions, which forcefully apply in artistic contexts. Through the use of the term 'passivity' in the framework of curatorial practice, I attempt to name a regime of attention and of action that embraces the empathetic desire to engage with a specific artistic practice and allow it to affect and alter the curator's position. Curatorial passivity thus describes the disruption, displacement and dispossession of disciplined professional expectations. Engaging with the work Myriam Lefkowitz helped carrying out such displacement and disruption of curatorial practice. How can one know in such darkness? allowed us experiencing a reciprocity of receiving and performing the work; we also endorsed the position of the amateur in opposition to the position of expert or professional habitually fulfilled by the curator, and we accessed a state of consciousness that blurred the boundaries between

our animate bodies and the inanimate objects that we manipulate. Practicing How can one know in such darkness? implied a different regime of attention and of listening which taught us to tune our bodies to the situation shaped by space, objects, and other bodies, thus radically and lastingly transforming our relationship to exhibition-making.

Notes

- I Description proposed by the artist. http://www.leslaboratoires.org/en/article/activation-from-20th-to-25th-october/la-piscine
- 2 A conversation between Valentina Desideri and Denise Da Silva, September 2016 http://handreadingstudio.org/?p=359
- 3 Sara Ahmed, A queer phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others, 2006, Duke University Press, 59, Kindle for Mac
 - 4 Ibid., 62
- 5 Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, Eric Michaud, and Jean-Luc Nancy, Hypnoses, éditions Gallilée, 1984, 11
- 6 Alice Chauchat, "Not-knowing: mobility as a state of unrest », Movement Research Performance Journal #51, 2018
- 7 Judith Butler and Athéna Athanasiou, Dispossession: The Performative in the Political (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), Chapter 10, pages 3 and 4, Kindle edition for mac.

GERHARD RICHTER TEXTES

les presses du réel

Dance and Philosophy Graham Harman

The title of this piece in no way suggests that it will be able to exhaust its topic, which is worth more pages than I am allowed. Instead, it is meant to indicate the generality of the terms in which we will discuss the problem. Dance is one art form among many others; thus, we need to locate it in a wider aesthetic discussion.

A good place to start is with Immanuel Kant's Critique of Judgment, which even at a distance of more than two centuries remains unsurpassed in its influence on aesthetic theory. As far as I can recall, dance is only mentioned twice in this masterwork: once in connection with the important topic of charm, and again when Kant discusses the hybrid fusion of genres found in certain types of art. Let's begin by quoting both passages, given in a somewhat lengthy form to make sure we are aware of the context of Kant's references to dance. Any difficulty the reader might experience in following them now will be remedied by our ensuing treatment of both; this article will not be a close reading of Kant's mammoth text, but will simply use these two passages

as wood for the fireplace. In any event, the first passage runs as follows:

All forms of objects of the senses (the outer senses or, indirectly, the inner sense as well) is either shape or play; if the latter, it is either play of shapes (in space, namely, mimetic art and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time). The charm of colors or of the agreeable tone of an instrument may be added, but it is the design in the first case [i.e. the play of shapes] and the composition in the second [i.e. the play of sensations] that constitute the proper object of a pure judgment of taste; that the purity of the colors and of the tones, or for that matter their variety and contrast, seem to contribute to the beauty, does mean that, because they themselves are agreeable, they furnish us, as it were, with a supplement to, and one of the same kind as, our liking for the form. For all they do is make the form intuitable more precisely, determinately, and completely, while they also enliven the presentation by means of their charm, by arousing and sustaining the attention we direct toward the object itself.2

The second passage comes exactly 100 pages later in the original German text:

Oratory may be combined with a pictorial exhibition of its subjects and objects in a drama; poetry may be combined with music in song, and song at the same time with a pictorial (theatrical) exhibition of in an opera; the play of sensations

in a piece of music may be combined with the play of figures, [viz.] in dance, etc. Moreover, the exhibition of the sublime may, insofar as it belongs to fine art, be combined with beauty in a tragedy in verse, in a didactic poem, or in an oratorio: and in these combinations fine art is even more artistic. But whether it is also more beautiful (given how great a variety of different kinds of liking cross one another) may in some of these cases be doubted. But what is essential in all fine art is the form that is purposive for our observation and judging, rather than the matter of sensation (i.e., charm or emotion). For the pleasure we take in purposive form is also culture, and it attunes the spirit to ideas, and so makes it receptive to more such pleasure and entertainment; in the case of the matter of sensation, however, the aim is merely enjoyment, which leaves nothing behind as an idea and makes the spirit dull, the object gradually disgusting, and the mind dissatisfied with itself and moody because it is conscious that in reason's judgment its attunement is contrapurposive.3

We will take these passages one at a time, in order to see what light—if any—they shed on dance, and on aesthetics more generally. But first, it will be useful to give a brief overview of the place of aesthetics in Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO, pronounced "Triple O"), the philosophy I have developed over the years with the help of Ian Bogost, Levi R. Bryant and Timothy Morton.⁴ OOO aesthetics owes an important debt to Kant, but also departs markedly from his theory in sev-

eral ways that are important for dance and other genres of art.

1. OOO and Aesthetics

The central idea of OOO, the one from which the others all follow, is the non-relationality of real objects. By "object" I mean not just solid material entities, but anything that has a reality irreducible either downward to its pieces or upward to its appearances and effects. Consider the example of a table, which I once discussed at length in a catalog essay for the 2012 Documenta art festival.⁵ In one sense, the table needs to have parts, ranging in size from its legs and single top surface, on down to the granular patterns of its wood, and ultimately to the organic molecules of which it is composed, as well as the even smaller particles—known and still unknown—of which the wood of the table consists.

A staunch materialist might say: "No 'table' really exists. All that exists are the ultimate particles or fields or other elements from which the table is made." Indeed, this is the kind of thing that was said by the pre-Socratic thinkers of Archaic Greece, at the dawn of Western philosophy and science. None of these thinkers was satisfied with talking about mid-sized everyday objects. Instead, all tried to identify the ultimate physical roots of which everything is made: water, air, a combination of air-earth-fire-water, or indivisible atoms, depending

on which thinker we consider. The problem is that even if the table apparently needs some physical materials in order to exist, the table cannot be identified with some micro-layer of ultimate elements. Why not? Because within certain vaguely defined limits, we can replace many of the table's pieces without changing the table.

It hardly matters if this piece of furniture loses a few thousand atoms here and there, or adds bits of mud and sand to its surface over the course of time. The table is something over and above its tiny constituents. It "emerges," as philosophers say. The attempt to reduce a thing downward to its components is termed "undermining" by OOO. There are cases where undermining is very useful: throughout most of the sciences, for instance. Undermining is an essential type of human knowledge that helps us greatly, but the table is not the same thing as its underlying tiny elements.

There is another way of reducing the table, however: an upward reduction that OOO calls "overmining." Here, instead of trying to explain the table in terms of its smallest parts, we move in the opposite direction and assert that what is truly important about the table is what it does. From this standpoint, the table is a table through its various uses, from its exact positioning by an interior decorator, or by the visual impression it leaves on us. This too is an important form of knowledge about objects, one that the human race cannot do

without. Yet there is a problem here as well. If we claim that the table is nothing more than what it does, we are ignoring the fact that it might do other things at other times, including new things that it has never done before in human history, and might even do nothing at all for long stretches of history before eventually becoming an important item for someone once again. Overmining fails because the table is no more identical with its actions than with its tiny components. The table is a surplus lying beneath its various actions, since only this assumption makes sense of the indeterminate future history of every object.

Except for certain philosophers who heavily stress either the undermined or overmined versions of objects, most people are well aware that objects can be considered both in terms of their composition and in terms of their use and their effects more generally. This is the position that OOO calls "duomining." One notes that both methods of reduction are useful. For scientific purposes, we usually analyze the physical composition of things; for everyday needs we do the opposite, and treat the thing as a sum total of uses and effects. Both flanks are covered, and we seem to have exhausted the table. The problem with this assumption is that it merely compounds the errors found in undermining and overmining taken individually. The underminer missed the emergence of objects over and above their pieces, and

the overminer missed the submergence of objects under and beneath their current effects. The duominer combines both of these deficiencies simultaneously, merely distracting us from this difficulty through its facility in swinging between one extreme and the other.

This is no petty problem, and for a simple reason: every form of knowledge either undermines, overmines, or duomines. Whenever someone asks us what something is, we will respond with one of these three procedures. I have never managed to think of a single exception to this rule. But this means that every form of knowledge is an insufficient treatment of what it discusses. The solution is obviously not to abandon knowledge, since the human race would soon face extinction if it were unable to "mine" objects in one of the three ways just described. Instead, the solution is to admit that there are forms of cognition that are not forms of knowledge, that find ways to get at the reality of objects that do not involve reducing them downward, upward, or in both directions at once, but that give us some access to objects nonetheless. One of the key claims of OOO is that art is one such form of cognition, and philosophy another. Neither art nor philosophy is primarily a form of knowledge. Philosophy is not the cousin of the sciences, as is often wrongly believed, but a cousin instead of the arts. Aesthetics is first philosophy.

We can see briefly in both cases why this is so. Consider a famous painting such as Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, generally considered the first big step towards cubism. Can the painting be undermined? Yes, but only as a piece of physical matter, not as an artwork. To analyze Les Demoiselles in terms of the canvas, pigment, and framing material of which it is made would be a trivial exercise of little to no aesthetic value. The same holds if we merely recount its historical effects. Other possible receptions and histories of this painting are imaginable, and it may live to inspire future art movements in ways having little to do with its previous influences.

Les Demoiselles cannot be undermined, overmined, or duomined. What makes it a painting is its status as a third term somewhere between its components and its outward effects. While few people would try to undermine a painting, there are many attempts to overmine art, by over-situating it in art history or the Zeitgeist amidst which it was created. But the more the artwork is successful, the more it generates something that is difficult to get at through biographical or socio-historical explanations. If knowledge gives us two tables—the scientific and practical ones—art gives us a third, one that cannot be exhausted by any critical paraphrase of it. Hence the elliptical and indecisive character of all criticism, which at its best more closely resembles poetic than scientific discourse. We can make the same point even more briefly about philosophy, which in the original Greek is philosophia, or love of wisdom. In the more than thirty Platonic dialogues in which Socrates appears as the main character, there is no case in which Socrates gives us knowledge of those things whose definitions he seeks. Some attempts are better than others, but every definition—whether of Socrates or his interlocutors turns out to be provisional, not quite equal to the task at hand. Philosophy is not science; it is not a knowledge of any sort, because philosophy does not explain virtue or justice in terms of their constituents or their effects. At its best, it does not undermine, overmine, or duomine. Philosophy does not paraphrase objects, but situates them in that middle place that is inaccessible to all paraphrase. In this respect, philosophy and the arts are united. On some other occasion we could discuss what makes them different.

Now, the form of aesthetic theory that seems most consistent with what I have been saying is called formalism. This can mean different things with respect to different arts, but formalism always means—with the possible exception of architecture—that the artwork is cut off from its context. It is a self-contained unit, not to be reduced downward to individual words or streaks of paint or upwards to contextual explanations. Instead, the artwork stands in itself, and is to be considered solely on its own terms. Among other things, this means that it cannot be adequately described in conceptual terms,

which is perhaps Kant's greatest insight in the . There is no list of rules that one can follow to create important art, or even to identify it. Aesthetic judgments, as he puts it, are judgments of taste. This need not make such judgments arbitrary: Kant is adamant in his view that since all humans have the same transcendental faculty of judgment, all taste ought to agree.

The fact that it does not agree could mean several different things. Not all human taste is equally cultivated, of course. And furthermore, even the best taste can fall short on judging beauty, just as even the most intelligent philosopher—according to Kant—can never grasp the things themselves, since all humans encounter the world only in terms of finite human conditions in which all members of our species are confined as if in a prison.

Nonetheless, Kant holds that humans and artworks are not to be mixed. Art should be experienced in a state of disinterest, free of all considerations of what is agreeable and disagreeable to us personally. But more importantly, Kant thinks that beauty is not a matter of the art object anyway, but only of the faculty of judgment with which we approach it, and which is shared by all other humans. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" may be a cliché of everyday speech, but it remains an apt description of how Kant conceptualizes the beautiful. It is interesting to note that Kant's two most prominent heirs

in the formalist visual arts criticism of the twentieth century, Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried (it hardly matters that they don't much care for the word "formalism") reverse Kant's emphasis. Whereas Kant tends to subtract the object in order to emphasize the role of the human subject, Greenberg and Fried do the reverse. Greenberg is clearest on this point in his posthumously published Homemade Esthetics, where he says that Kant is wrong to focus on the faculty of human judgment, and should have focused on our actual experience of the works.⁷

In Fried's case, his turn from the subject back to the object can be seen in his disdain for all forms of theatricality in art, in which art tries too hard to provoke a reaction in the human subject.8 My point is this: Greenberg and Fried's inversion of Kant's emphasis on the human subject makes no difference to the real thrust of Kant's observation, which is that subject and object must not be mixed in the arts. This is where OOO parts company with formalism. While we agree that the artwork must be what it is, and not be rampantly confused with its components and its effects, we disagree that the way to do this is to separate subject and object cleanly from one another. One of the consequences of Kant doing this is his inability to give proper respect to an aesthetic genre like architecture, which by definition must always mix aesthetic considerations with those of human practical needs. Given that there can be no art without a beholder to approach it, the OOO position

is that aesthetics always (and not just in architecture and other especially mixed forms) involves a fusion of human and non-human. Where we agree with formalism, however, is that this fusion results in a new hybrid object that has its own form of autonomy.

More could be said about this, but we need to discuss one other piece of OOO philosophy before turning to a discussion of dance. We have seen that the artwork cannot be overmined by describing or paraphrasing its overt outward features. However skillful we are as critics of Picasso or Mozart of Shakespeare, there is always a certain "spirit of the thing" when it comes to artworks, one that we can never perfectly translate into any prose formula. Another way of putting it is that the artwork withdraws from direct access. When encountering an everyday object, we tend to think of it as no different from its sum total of properties: its "bundle of qualities," as the empiricist philosopher David Hume says. In an artwork, the situation is different. Here, the art object seems to be something altogether different from its qualities: an aesthetic substance or substrate that recedes into inaccessible depths. This is what OOO calls a "real object," one that seems to exist in its own right.

By contrast, the qualities of the artwork are by no means hidden, since otherwise it would be invisible. All of the pigment and color and visible form of Les Demoiselles is directly there before us and goes nowhere;

only the painting as a real object withdraws from any attempt to exhaust or paraphrase it. In OOO terminology, we have a tension in the artwork between the work as real object and as sensual qualities, or RO-SQ as we usually notate it.

There are actually four different object-quality tensions in OOO, but we need only consider a second one here. Along with real objects, there are also sensual objects. All of the objects we encounter in non-aesthetic situations meet this description. The table, couch, and bottle before me now seem to be there directly, not withdrawn in the least. In fact, each of these sensual objects has a real object counterpart—the withdrawn table, couch, and chair—but we only notice this under very special circumstances, of which art is among the most important. But let's consider our usual non-special circumstances. The bottle is there before me, as a sensual object.

It also has various sensual qualities that I can enumerate in as long or short a list as I wish. Even here, however, there is a tension at work: one between the sensual bottle and its sensual qualities, or SO-SQ. We know this thanks to the historically important work of phenomenology in philosophy. The most important lesson of Husserl and his successor phenomenologists is that even in the realm of sense-experience we do not just encounter objects as bundles of qualities. This is easily proven by not-

ing that we can look at everyday objects from all manner of angles and distances, their qualities constantly shifting even though we continue to regard them all along as the very same objects. This was worth mentioning because this SO-SQ tension is a very close match for how Kant defines *charm*. While art deals primarily with the RO-SQ tension in which the object withdraws into a place where no undermining or overmining is possible, the SO-SQ pair has an auxiliary function in the arts, in Kant's view and in reality. On this note, we return to our main theme, which we will be able to indicate only in outline.

2. Dance, Charm, and the Fusion of Genres

We recall the following words from the first citation from Kant: "All forms of objects of the senses (the outer senses or, indirectly, the inner sense as well) is either shape or play..." Another way to put this would be as a distinction between those arts where the object is present immediately from the start, such as painting and sculpture. One can certainly linger long over these plastic art forms, continually discovering new aspects of these works as the time ticks away. But this is quite different from arts that must unfold in sequence: one thinks of cinema, dance, music, and theater, but also of literature. Kant now adds a second distinction: "if the latter, it is either play of shapes (in space, namely,

mimetic art and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time)." Music is surely the clearest example of the "mere play of sensations," while dance is specifically –and accurately—listed as being among the play of shapes. While somewhat confusing given that "shape" was initially opposed to "play," this yields the interesting result that dance—like theater—is described by Kant as not entirely unlike painting and sculpture, albeit with the difference that theater and dance unfold their shapes in the course of time. In other words, dance and theater could be considered, in a Kantian framework, as being moving sculptures of a sort.

We move to the next portion of the passage: "The charm of colors or of the agreeable tone of an instrument may be added, but it is the design in the first case [i.e. the play of shapes] and the composition in the second [i.e. the play of sensations] that constitute the proper object of a pure judgment of taste..." The difference between design and composition is simply a restatement of the difference between arts that do not primarily unfold in time and those that do. The proper object of aesthetic judgment in dance, then, is its composition: its choreography, we could say. If OOO is right that every aesthetic object is inherently withdrawn, it is the choreography that recedes behind its sensual qualities or surface appearances. This entails further that choreography is not reducible to a specific series of movements in space,

since such a series is purely sensual and directly accessible to the viewer. The choreography that is the object of aesthetic judgment is something over and above the actual movement of the dancers. It is a certain style, a "spirit of the thing" that endures even if—within reason—a certain number of changes in detail are made to the choreography itself. If it is hard to describe exactly what this is, it is for the very good reason that choreography, like all the arts, cannot be undermined into its elements or overmined into its effects, so that the work of the critic as of the choreographer is to grapple with something that never takes on definite form in any particular performance. We might go even further and speak of the style of a choreographer over and above any of their particular ballets or other dance pieces, making each individual work only a specific instance of disincarnate individual genius, however unpopular that idea has become.

But of greater interest here is *charm*, which we mentioned above in connection with Husserl's philosophy: the tension between a *sensual* object and its sensual qualities. The primary sensual object in choreography is, of course, the dancers, and to a lesser extent whatever scenery and props may be involved. At one point Kant gives us his best examples of charm: the flickering of a flame or the sparkling of flowing waters. Since this charm merely plays on the surface of sensual experi-

ence, it does not give us the allusive experience of the hidden real that art requires. Nonetheless, as Kant says when giving us two other good examples of charm: "the purity of the colors and of the tones, or for that matter their variety and contrast, seem to contribute to the beauty [...] because they themselves are agreeable, they furnish us, as it were, with a supplement to, and one of the same kind as, our liking for the form." In the case of music, Kant speaks of the wonderful sound of a flute or violin as examples of charm, and though he gives no examples for dance, one thinks of the grace and beauty of a dancer or the allure of costume. But this is not as trivial as Kant sometimes suggests charm is, since it is not only "a supplement to" beauty, but "of the same kind as, our liking for the form."

I know of no way to interpret this properly other than in the terms of OOO. While charm is a matter of sensual delight rather than of the aesthetic object per se, it is "of the same kind" as our liking for that object. OOO explains this by pointing out that the tension in charm between the sensual object and its multitude of glittering qualities is clearly analogous to that between the hidden real object and the swarm of qualities it leaves behind, orbiting it like dust spiraling into a black hole. Kant solidifies his point by saying that the qualities of charm "make the form intuitable more precisely, determinately, and completely, while they also enliven the presentation by means of their charm, by arousing

and sustaining the attention we direct toward the object itself." In other words, the kaleidoscopic play of charms alerts us to the object that sustains them all. And while these charms seem to belong to the sensual objects in the arts (the grace of a dancer, the lovely tone of a woodwind), they also come into orbit around the hidden object itself: the choreography, in the case of dance.

So far, dance faces no real dangers in the Kantian framework. It has been treated as just another variant on principles that hold good for all of the other arts as well. But given Kant's formalistic distrust in hybrid forms, dance is still in for a small bit of censure. In his own words: "Oratory may be combined with a pictorial exhibition of its subjects and objects in a drama; poetry may be combined with music in song, and song at the same time with a pictorial (theatrical) exhibition of in an opera; the play of sensations in a piece of music may be combined with the play of figures, [viz.] in dance, etc."

Given that dance is almost always accompanied by music whereas the reverse is not true, dance is more of a hybrid form than music. "But whether it is also more beautiful (given how great a variety of different kinds of liking cross one another) may in some of these cases be doubted." Here Kant is a Greenbergian avant la letter. Perhaps Greenberg's dominant underlying theme is that beginning in the latter half of the 1800s, most of the arts found it necessary—in order to maintain levels of

quality capable of surviving comparison with past masterworks—found it necessary to focus solely on what each genre was able to offer that none others could. If Richard Wagner is the most famous example of an artist who sought the fusion of as many artistic genres as possible, then Greenberg is the anti-Wagner, and Kant along with him. If applied strictly to dance, this principle would suggest the complete removal of music from choreography, and even the removal of all story. While these steps have no doubt been attempted in dance, it is questionable whether Kant's modernist dictum against the fusion of genres is as binding as it seemed to be in the heyday of high modernism. The impurity of dance as of other genres, their careful mixture with neighboring and distant things, has much to recommend it.

Notes

- I Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, trans. W. Pluhar. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.)
 - 2 Kant, Critique of Judgment, 71-72.
 - 3 Kant, Critique of Judgment, 195-196.
- 4 Ian Bogost, Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.); Levi R. Bryant, The Democracy of Objects. (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2011.); Timothy Morton, Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality. (Ann Arbor, MI: Open Humanities Press, 2013.)
- 5 Graham Harman, "The Third Table," in The Book of Books, ed. C. Christov-Bakargiev. (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012), 540-542.
- 6 Graham Harman, "Undermining, Overmining, Duomining: A Critique," in ADD Metaphysics, ed. J. Sutela. (Aalto, Finland: Aalto University Design Research Laboratory, 2013), 40-51.
 - 7 Clement Greenberg, Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste. (Oxford:

Oxford University Press, 2000).

- 8 See the title essay in Michael Fried, Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- 9 See Graham Harman, The Quadruple Object. (Winchester, UK: Zero Books, 2011.)
- 10 The major work of this philosophical school is Edmund Husserl, Logical Investigations, 2 Vols., trans. J.N. Findlay. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.)

Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race

ARUN SALUANI

I Love Movement Research

Mårten Spångberg

Episode 1

Oh, yeah, they're gonna talk to you, and talk to you, and talk to you about individual freedom. But they see a free individual, it's gonna scare 'em.

Jack Nicholson in Easy Rider

There is something urgent about movement research today. We are already in the middle of a new chapter where movement research needs to be reconsidered in respect to the world we live in.

Crucial to our understanding of movement research is the introduction of identity politics in the beginning of the 1990s, which for better or worse catapults the body into a politics that by definition denies the possibility of authenticity, truth or presence. One could even say, identity politics aligned with a significant part of postmodern discourse (in which language is given a supreme position), so that the body as body is expunged or wiped out in favor of an understanding of the body as meaning, sign or signification. It is not a surprise

that so-called conceptual dance appeared in the middle of the 1990s and that choreography since then has often been favored over dance. It is equally no surprise that movement research had to lay low during those years when the body's mysteries were somewhat embarrassing. Release technique invaded center court with its focus on reason, cognition and mechanics—release technique as a systems theory of the body—but the price to pay, supported by identity politics (where the body and subject always is discursive) was the erasure or extradition of the body's unknowns.

In Iudith Butler's Gender Trouble, she theorizes that the body becomes a political battle ground; it also becomes individualized, dynamic and differentiated, which on the one hand, makes it subject to novel forms of both opportunities and powers, but on the other, makes it available for new kinds of economy—the financialization of the starting point of every dance, the body. The moment something can be identified and differentiated from its environment and given sustainability, it is also given value and can thus be transformed into economy or monetary exploitation. In the somewhat dubious but explosive and poignant publication The Coming Community by Agamben, we can read that today it is no longer your villa, car or yacht, but your subject that is your most important property. In short, all of us is product. What we sell is our subject and with that comes a body. In the economy that governs contemporary Western societies—differently but ubiquitously no matter class, age, race, gender, ability, etc.—you are transformed into value. It is therefore your responsibility, and yours alone, to optimize your product, your self. This is not toward a given standard or set of conventions, but instead it is up to you to invent how you are special. Identity has become more and more individualized. Today we are all individuals next to each other, but rarely a group, except of course when precarious or without a voice—which is when a set of individuals is addressed as they.

When we do our Pilates classes, when we rush through the city to our yoga this or that, gyrotonics, as much as when we see our shrink, take dance classes, meditate, engage in mindfulness or why not read tarot cards, partake in rituals, visit silent retreat or do YouTube yoga, it is important to remember that we are also optimizing our subjects and body's value, its saleability. However, as much as we can augment ourselves vis à vis consumablity we can also think of improvement in relation to different kinds of opportunities, even though it's arguable whether there can be something such as a practice that circumvents capitalism. So where does that bring movement research; what does this new brave world do to dance? More over what does it do to us as human beings, what kinds of anxieties and depressions does it result in?

It goes without saying that neoliberalism worships

a resilient human being. This is a subject that makes itself available to any thinkable or unthinkable situation. A resilient subject with a resilient body is one that through pre-emptive actions is ready to outlive the end of social welfare, tax reductions for the wealthy few, white supremacy, global warming, austerity measures, gentrification and the list never stops. The chilling part is that the more resilient we become, the more able and dynamic, the more integrated, the more specific, aware and self-sufficient we make ourselves. The more attractive we become to capitalism.

Yet, it is exactly in this world that movement research becomes even more important. Suddenly dance and dance-related practices are not just something we do because it feels so good, but it has become politically important to practice otherwise, with different motives. However resilient it makes us, we also carry with us new capacities of knowledge in respect to how we individually and together generate agency or value. Movement research has in our times a new role to play, perhaps not as political resistance, but as site where different bodies can share differently, even more importantly therefore to insist on practices and initiatives to which everybody is invited, but again who is everybody? Probably not so everybody after all?

The Italian philosopher, Franco Berardi proposes that we have entered semio-capitalism, a capitalism that has co-opted language and financialized the word. If so, meaning itself has become an economic opportunity. Resistance, whatever resistance, whatever alternative is already before it starts integrated in capitalism. What can we do? Is it all too late? Yes, in many ways, but Berardi proposes that perhaps there are forms of experience and affective environments that are not in their entirety possible to introduce into language. Forms of intimacy, physical proximity, ways of moving and being moved, forms of sensuality, bodily transfer and contact that can generate experiences that are of such character that they only can be experienced and not translated into words. Experiences to which we can only say: it's sublime but I have no idea what it is, but it does something to me. These untranslatable experiences withdraw, at least partially, from value, and moreover they propose something as remarkable as authenticity, exactly as in authentic movement or a movement that carries itself as true.

This is a curious crossroads. However much we support identity politics (how could we not); however much we back up postmodern conception of politics—such a dance or practice is neither performative nor political. It simply cannot be performative because what it does is self-referential—otherwise it would not be true, but language. It cannot be political because the starting point of politics is the maintenance of dissensus (nego-

tiation), and hence politics implies the end of truth. We can take this one step longer and conclude that such a dance is a dance that defies knowledge; it carries no information and moves beyond the sphere of epistemology. Instead it enters ontology—it is a dance that is, that doesn't know and doesn't mean anything, but has Being. Although movement research today navigates a terrain full of traps and to a large extent has been ambushed by capitalism, it has at the same time traversed the brightly lit (i.e. working light) overeducated ground of conceptual et cetera dance and sidestepped choreography and, without knowing it, insists on a "new" metaphysics of dance.

An alternative trajectory is negotiated by some prominent feminist theorists that come together around the complex notion of affect—Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, Elizabeth Povinelli, Denise Ferreira da Silva, but also writers such as Anna Tsing, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway, even though from different vantage points—to propose forms of togethering, sharing, companionship and entanglement that generate modes of experiencing differently, not least vis à vis gender, blackness and post-colonial discourses. Silvia Federici and Nina Power also link dance with domestic and care labor: how dance and movement research respond to dance as labor, particularly in relation to contemporary understandings of gender politics and its relation to the domestic, care

and social work. These are extremely important forms of thought that carry a lot of potentiality for movement research, especially concerning agency. We should also be aware that precisely because they are potential, they are highly interesting to capitalism and can be easily tweaked into something frightening and excluding.

It can also be considered that movement research today has yet a different role to play: a very different role where its autonomy is disregarded and where it functions as a mediator in order to experiment with, invent, examine and practice different forms of inhabiting space, of sharing and producing alternative forms of communities that undermine or replace established forms of power, hierarchy, patriarchy and so on. These practices can overlap with forms of activism. It is, however, important to negotiate how these kinds of mixtures tend to instrumentalize art, which might not be a problem that needs to be solved, but certainly poses new difficulties as art encounters neoliberal policies that equate art and culture because "culture" is always granted relevance for its ability to maintain and generate value.

What is movement research? Is it practice or is it art? It is indeed a recurring difficulty how to transition from practice to representation. To what extent does practice generate something that is valuable or intriguing to look at and for whom? What is lost when a practice is

brought on stage? On the one hand, these are questions that are important to work with, but it on the other hand, today, is a relevant moment to question what other forms of representation dance can gain next to being displayed for an audience who "passively" perceive or equally often consume? If choreography, since more or less ten years, has enjoyed being defined as an expanded practice, it might be time to understand dance as an expanded practice where movement research and its practices can qualify as art. Movement research practices should be granted support to the same extent as projects on stage with a premiere—dance as expanded practice where participants are regarded as audience and where practice formats are considered equally important as performances.

Episode 2 (recap)

In a world where identity is performative it becomes the responsibility of the individual to iterate identity. Every aspect of a person, every action, thought, modes of navigation and so on becomes part of a process to coagulate a seemingly continuous identity however we know that every moment implies a slight yet re-iteration of how the individual is forming relations to the world. Within a performative regime where language is groundless or have no foundation identity becomes a matter of affording and/or investing in yourself as yourself. Here

identity is not just a matter of politics, more importantly it becomes a matter of economy. Your identity is private and can be owned like any other something in the world.

Since 1990 your identity has become a commodity like any other, and it is your most important asset. As we all know what you sell is ultimately your identity. Some identities are valuable others economically uninteresting and hence packaged away or just stored in the lost and found bin. Your identity, if you are not one of those packaged away, doesn't just need maintenance, it also need protection, both digitally and in the physical world. Your identity needs surveillance.

The price to pay for an identity that is understood as performative is a paranoid world where each and everybody constantly looks after and surveilles the position of her identity. The problem is not so much if your identity gets stolen or hacked, but what is a problem is that somebody or everybody can want to appropriate your identity, attack it due some sort of power, capitalise on it for some reason or use information to tailor campaigns, trolls, commercials and that's what we know. More over you always run the risk of losing the precious identity that you have invested in with a single wrong move, any utterance can be used against you and in today's world it is fairly easy to be disqualified and dismissed. And you know, we all know, that it doesn't matter what you did or didn't there is anyway no ground to

what is right or wrong, only lobby and economy. When Nixon sold out gold standard and Derrida language in 1971. What happened is that they disqualified any form of prominent stability - one of them and important was ideology. After 1971 there is only one ideology which an ideology of lack, lack of conviction and it's nobody's fault. It can be in no other way in a world that is governed by an understanding that all value is performative and has no grounding, no origin, no reasons to not change. But as nothing in this world is fixed things are even better or worse, because without fix points how can be know or verify change. It's all floating Boss.

Ideology can perhaps be defined as "under no circumstances" or "over my dead body", no fuckin way, and this is a matter or principles, no matter what. Politics on the other hand is the very absence of permanence and instead we have negotiation, and the only thing that must not happen is that we agree, that we reach a point of grounding, of settlement or index. A definition of politics might be "under these circumstances it is necessary to..." or "in this situation it has become important to...". Ideology is stable, static, long term, grounded and heavy handed whereas politics is the exact opposite: unstable, dynamic, short term, floating and easy going. Most of all politics is performative and as long as it is it certainly has no substance, it cannot have.

A world formulated around performativity is in

many ways great but we should remember that is not only good but comes with a lot of darkness, and one of the darkest ones is called paranoia. Paranoia prompts fear, the building of walls and proprietary views of the world. In a world governed by performativity we will all tip toe acting as saturated airs of Bartleby. I rather not since whatever I do can and will be used against me. Temporarily it might be the case but in the long run, performativity disempowers.

Performativity with its relations to phenomenology and postmodern or post-structuralist thought proposes that everything in the world, in reality or within symbolic order if you like, does not "exist" in itself but we can only access its representations. Things soft or hard, physical are not "real" exist only as the sum of its relations in the world. This is our lucky day because had it been otherwise, could we have a direct relation to thing in themselves transformation would be impossible, and with that movement, time, dynamics, change. Something cannot not have relations and, however impossible, something without relations simple doesn't exist. Evidently relation doesn't mean to be friendly and engage in water cooler chats although it's a real good show, it simply means that there is the possibility for some or other cohesion, or transfer.

An interesting question is what happens to imagination in a or our performative regime. One possibility is that imagination simply vanished because the very idea of imagination is that it is ruled by totally fuzzy logics, impossible impossibilities, by non-relations, indetermination and contingency but such stuff cannot exist in our current regime as that would tear down the entire system in so much that some thing can exist without relations, at least to some degree at some point or moment. Another option is that we indeed fear imagination because it has this inscription of being unfaithful and contingent and who wants to end up contingently some where else? Scary shit and instead it seems that our current regime's capitalism plus provides us with tools that perform the illusion of imagination but the safe version, from retreat centres to computer games, from an afternoon in the spa or tarot reading, care practices (at least too many), Pilates and nameless forms of escapism, but it is never imagination. Animated Hollywood movies is perhaps a good example for how something that was created to stimulate imagination today has become so extremely saturated that there is no space for imagination left. Everything is delivered so that I don't need to feel haunted but instead consume properly and certainly don't imagine.

What is the place of art in a world that look and operates like this one? With a bit of pushing and pulling one could say that performativity undid art. In this world there is no place for art, there is no place for contempla-

tion because what art does is to open up for the possibility of losing oneself – it is a letting go of the subject and identity, and that would be deep torture for a contemporary identity. In this world art has transformed into information, efficiency and participation, when in fact what we need is contemplation, uselessness and the promise of spaces where performativity is disqualified. Art's job is not to make friends but instead to insist on the possibility of autonomy.

And as we know autonomy is another word for being a free individual.