

Post-dance, An Advocacy¹

Mårten Spångberg

Introduction

When I was little I was convinced that an advocate was a fruit. An advocate, something like an avocado only a bit less green or perhaps an apricot just a bit bigger. My dad for some reason had a friend that was referred to as The Advocate and I couldn't for the life of me get him out of the fruit stand in the town square where we lived. So when my dad met The Advocate I thought he went shopping.

To advocate for or against something would hence be something similar to peeling or un-peeling the fruit, avocado or apricot. To propose an advocacy, under these circumstances, was just beyond my imagination, but it definitely had to do with fruit salad.

Here today I've taken it upon myself to engage with the forbidden fruit with a positive appetite. My attempt is to advocate for post-dance, or rather to propose an advocacy for it, if that is even possible in the English language. It seems namely that post-dance, without

asking for it, has been granted a negative resonance. Post-dance is something bad that should have stayed hidden on some back page of our general dance history. So bear with me, because this is the first attempt, and the first moment when post-dance stands in front of the grand jury. Will I manage to get post-dance out of the fruit stand, clear it from it's alliance with the fruit salad and produce an opportunity to understand the term as something useful and for the articulation of our future dance and choreographic practices.

What we know is that dance is no longer enough. Either the term dance becomes too convoluted and can not host contemporary practices nor its relations to contemporary contexts, environments, concerns, ecology (in its wider sense), critical theory or philosophy. Alternatively, dance becomes a term so wide that it envelops anything that moves and doesn't resonate of fruit salad but simple promiscuity, which probably is a great thing, but perhaps not in the long run. In light of this, instead of some horribly approximate terminology such as dance-dance or conceptual dance that both seem contradictory, let's see if we can shed some light on the notion of post-dance.

Sometimes I experience a slightly awkward moment after dance class or rehearsals, individuals that change their sweater and without having a shower shove a deo stick into their armpits and do what one does with such

a thing. Now, deo sticks are of course great but I cannot help but to contemplate for a moment, in relation to post-dance, do you use a deo stick or any other perfume or similar in order to enhance who you are, what you smell, boosting you and your identity, or do you use it in order to cover something up, to hide, to cross something out, to vanish.

What about post-dance? Do we understand post-dance as something that's supposed to cover up, to hide that dance smells really bad because it is sweaty, old and ready for the happy hunting grounds, or does post-dance carry the capacity for dance to enhance its bouquet, its delicate scent and give it that little extra that it from time to time needs. Is post-dance perhaps a blessing that can allow the fragrance of dance to bloom in its time, with its time.

Or turn the argument around. So far post-dance has just been an empty canister but when we apply, or fill it with the right dances it is dance that makes post-dance smell so enchanting.

During the last few days here at the conference I've picked up a vibe that the post in post-dance is understood as something negative, something that restricts dance from what it can be, or amongst the less open, what dance should be. Therefore, what I attempt to propose is not an advocacy for post, but instead for dance in or through post-dance. Because in fact what we need

to do is to rescue dance from its historically anchored position, unchain it from its legacy. Learn to speak dance from a new set of circumstances, situations and environments and allow it to gain new kinds of agency that resonate with its being here and now today and into the future.

A tiny spoiler, to increase the suspense. Post-dance is in itself an advocacy for dance, however not as a means of making it innocent (so that I can go back to “normal”) but instead an advocacy that empowers dance to be an active part of its past, present and future not only as dance, art, decoration and entertainment but as an active force or intensity in our societies, in the formation of social, human, relational, political and economical realities. Post-dance in this way can be understood as the inauguration of the moment when dance in and of itself started to be an active capacity in the formation of how we wish to live together. Precisely, in and of itself, not in respect of being a dance about this or that—in the sense of a topic laid out as a narration—but in and of itself, i.e. as dance. It is to this that we need to find a path.

This path however—at least so far—is not all linear, so what follows might at times seem not even remotely connected to dance and choreography but hopefully in just about an hour things should appear a little bit more clear.

Before we embark, a small remark on the context. I have been part of the Swedish dance community for a rath-

er long time. Some twenty-five years plus. I was there when Dansens Hus opened their doors but luckily I was not there in 1986 when Pina Bausch visited Stockholm. Regardless of the number of years, nothing like this conference has ever happened here in Stockholm; a conference of this magnitude, with such an international audience. Although it comes across as a cliché, so many young and new faces.

This is something that I find extremely cool, that it is a conference, that however blurry and all over the place, it is strongly pointing towards the future of dance, a strong future for our art form. For the art form that we have devoted more or less large parts of our lives too.

When I look at the program I don't see any of those heavy names that could be here to consolidate dance and make sure we have value, because of the past. To me this is a sign of health, of *elan vital*. Dance doesn't need to hold on to its past because it looks at a promise of value to come. Post-dance is a promise, this conference is a promise, and a starting point for a great future, where dance finally can let go of its past, me included, and enjoy a new kind of future that starts with honoring the present and the dance to come rather than how it has been for so long—bowing to history and celebrating the past. But the future is big and generous, and it is with this in mind that I want to make an advocacy for post-dance, which is at the end of the day an advocacy for dance.

Let's Get Going

Perhaps it appears strange to begin an ode to dance with epistemology, but as we will see, it is precisely in respect of epistemology that post-dance operates and how it identifies a fundamental change.

Epistemology can not at all be translated to knowledge, but its root *epistēmē* can. Epistemology is hence the study of the nature of knowledge, it is the study of knowledge, or the study of the possibility of knowledge. But it is also the other way around; that some or other dynamics of knowledge are always attached to an epistemology, which is to say, how a particular dynamics of knowledge operate, situating and relating to itself and the world. A certain dynamics of knowledge knows how it operates by elaborating on its own epistemology, and an epistemology further implies an understanding of how a dynamics of knowledge elaborates an ethics, a politics, forms of inclusion and exclusion.

For something to be enabled, to be given a function in reality, to be acknowledged and subject to change, to be located etc., this something needs be inscribed in knowledge. It needs to participate in forms of knowledge and is accordingly inscribed in some or other form of epistemology.

Now, epistemology is not just a matter of reason, rationality, writing, numbers and math. Language is certainly dominant and powerful concerning epistemology but any knowledge by definition involves an epistemolo-

gy, knowingly or not, including the body, movement, dreams, intimacy, spirituality, poetry, carpentry or gardening.

All kinds of knowledge participate in the world differently, and the understanding of this participation is what we call epistemology. Science for example, in order to not mess up the universe or people's health, needs to have a very precise articulation and clear rules in respect of its epistemology, whereas artistic practices can appear to have a less rigid one. Which obviously an illusion, it is just that the premise for precision is entirely different. At the same time, it is first when something can be defined as a knowledge, a somewhat autonomous dynamics of knowledge that it also must elaborate an epistemology. It is a sign of sophistication when a set of procedures, a technique or way of doing enters a process of elaborating an epistemology, as it implies a shift away from directionality toward the possibility of self-reflection.

Next to epistemology we need to visit another term, a rather heavy and complicated one, ontology. If epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge and how in respect of this knowledge something participates in the world and formulates relations, ontology is the study of the nature of being, but it is also the study of categories of being and interrelations of entities that really exist. Everything, including immaterial things,

emotions, memories, a bit of smoke, the universe and a job interview are all things in the world and are hence carried by ontology. Some thinkers believe things have different ontology whereas others, often contemporary thinkers, consider that everything by necessity must share a flat ontology, otherwise it's simply not ontology enough.

For rather many years, ontology has been a dirty word and it is only over the last ten or so years that it has been claimed as valid again. Some thing is always inscribed in ontology in some or other way, but as we humans have access to the world through knowledge, through *epistēmē*, we cannot have access to something's ontology, something Being. Nevertheless, the study of and elaboration of ontology offers new modes of thinking and gives way to the possibility to speculate on a world without knowledge, of experiences beyond comprehension. Further, the possibility that the body in ways operate if not outside so at least on the brink of knowledge, and that sensations, affect, events, energy and so on—however when we encounter them, transform into representation, into knowledge—that the encounter is such that its nature is not epistemic or knowledge base.

In fact, however ridiculously categorical, one can divide the history of philosophy in a similar manner. Philosophy in the west with its etymology in the

Greek masters can be divided into an ontological and an epistemological period. The classical philosopher approached a problem with the question "What is...". What is this or that independently of context, perspective, time and space etc. What is, in other words, from every perspective thinkable and not for everything always, a person, a stone, a little bit of smoke, history, what is a microphone for humanity and a ping-pong ball. What is something's Being.

In the 18th century, however, something occurs, the seemingly elementary realization: how can I, we, humanity have even the slightest clue what something is, or what being or Being is for a stone or anything at all? Hume and Kant inform the world about this slight dilemma, arguing that philosophy could afford a little cheating. When philosophy asks "What is..." it is in fact asking, what is for us, or what is for consciousness, or better, what is in respect of knowledge, or the knowable. There we go, and we still live with it, the epistemological period in philosophy. Philosophy is a matter of knowledge and since knowledge doesn't have foundation, it is not a matter of what something Is but what something is, is is what power wants it to be. We can thus say that the second episode in philosophy is exclusively a matter for the mind and reason, which, for good or/and bad, excludes an endless amount of opportunities and resources.

From ontology to epistemology, perhaps—and cer-

tainly—there are possible new entry points or modes of contesting the hegemony of reason, rationale, and knowledge. If so, does that also imply a questioning or even the end of art and aesthetic appreciation as we know it? Because evidently art and aesthetics—dance, performance, choreography, live- and body art—is authorized vis-à-vis western forms of determination, reason, rationale and knowledge.

Dance Is Not Choreography, Nor Is Choreography Dance

There is a common understanding that choreography and dance is causally related, meaning that choreography is the means and dance the end. This is epitomized in the American choreographer Doris Humphrey's book *The Art of Making Dances* from 1958, in which Humphrey sets out to comprehensively lay out choreography as a craft. Here, which that title makes evident, she proposes something like: The art of making dances is called choreography and dance is made out of choreography. The art of, could certainly be understood in the sense of being detached from art and aesthetics similar to the art of cooking, the art of motorcycle maintenance, the art of love or the poker, but it seems simply as if Humphrey has mixed up art with the artisanal. Forgiveness.

Yet, the art of making dances is clearly identified as choreography, and as mentioned, it is a recursive movement thus dance is equally made out of choreography.

Choreography and dance end up defining each other like yin and yang, perfect harmony which is all good but it also implies that there can be no external input. In other words, there is and strong, causality between choreography and dance.

It is further interesting that Humphrey forgets to define what dance is, but instead it seems like choreography is the art of making dances as we know them. Or choreography is the art of making conventional dances and reversed, conventional dances are what you make with choreography as the apparatus. No wonder choreographers or dance makers for such a long time have done everything in their power to get as far away from choreography as possible.

Over the last 20 years we have, however, seen a crumbling of this causality or the marriage between choreography and dance. There were certainly dark precursors but it is first in recent times that the relation has cracked. The initiative certainly came from choreography, but lately, and especially the last five years, somehow since 2012, dance has caught up and is currently in the middle of its emancipation from choreography. I'm deliberately using *emancipation* here, emphasizing that emancipation is not the same as being enlightened or rejecting something. An emancipated person is not somebody who lives alone—that part dance has made sure of at least half a century ago—but implies the

production of a new voice, i.e. to bring a new voice into the world. This is exactly what is happening right now, if I'm correct, with dance. And the great part is that it is happening in, so to say, the wrong places, in the margins. Even better, those wrong places know what they are doing, not what it will look like or what shape it will take, but they know what they are doing.

Indeed, there is a need for not just one but two divorces. We need to divorce choreography from dance and equally dance from choreography. However, just because there is a divorce going on it doesn't say there isn't love, it is just a matter of breaking the spell and allowing choreography to be something else than the mother of dance or was it the other way around. Choreography and dance are two distinct capacities and it is time to let them shine each on their own and together.

It is common knowledge that architects fear mess and therefore compartmentalize, build houses. But if architects fear mess then what does choreography, or what do choreographers fear? They fear movement and therefore organize such. Choreography, like architecture, is a matter of domesticating or taming movement. Choreography organizes movement. In other words, choreography is a matter of structuring. It goes without saying that structuring does not necessarily imply tidy, ordinary or formal. Structuring though implies the existence of some kind of system, code or consistency.

Conventionally one would say that structures are abstract capacities, and they hence need to attach to some kind of expression to gain entry into the world, they need to plug into some form of representation. One of the possible expressions that choreography can take on to gain representation is dance but it can as well be a score or an algorithm, a text or drawing, video, film or memory, and there is certainly no necessity for choreography to take on an expression that has a direct relation to movement. Choreography is not moving at all; it is when something forms a relation to a choreographic structure that movement in some or other form emerges.

It is usual to propose that choreography is the organization of time and space, but to define choreography in such a way is problematic, because what then is choreography not? And at the same time to define choreography as the art of making dances, implies that choreography is bound to an expression and in order for such a definition to make sense the expression must either be what we have decided it to be, or be defined in respect of criteria, but then choreography can never exceed its boundaries and change. A first step is to question the and, that choreography is the organization of time and space. Choreography differentiates from architecture, which is the organization of space over time, by being defined as the organization of time over space. In other

words, architecture erects structures that coagulate space in respect of the dynamics of time, whereas choreography instead produces structures that enables times movements in respect of the stability of space.

But this is not enough, in order to close in on what choreography is, I propose a different perspective, a different form of definition that bypass the essentializing desire behind any question including "What is". Although instead of asking how choreography is—introducing a drama—our aim is to define choreography in respect of its circumstances.

It has been considered that choreography is a set of tools. That a choreographer runs around with a toolbox. Some probably do, but it appears as though a toolbox is devised for something. Humphrey in her book goes through her tools. A choreographer's toolbox seems to be causal to an expression, and it smells pretty much like that expression is, after all, dance. Therefore, it has been proposed that choreography indeed is a set of tools but that the tools are generic and hence can be applied more or less successfully to anything, both in respect of production and analyses. This implies a departure from determination in relation to expression and the choreographer can, so to say, choreograph anything.

Why is this important? Because if the choreographer's tools are not causal to dance it enables a shift from cho-

reography understood as expertise to instead latch on to competence, which proposes that the choreographer can apply for funding for projects that don't end up as a dance, on stage or not, but that the choreographer's project is defined in respect of the tools used. Hence the choreographer can apply for funding for a film however it doesn't include any dancing but is realized through choreographic competences. Or the choreographer can write a novel without having any aspiration to be recognized an author but as a choreographer whose expression happens to be literature. In fact, if the choreographer's tool box is generic, nothing says that the choreographer's expression is within the aesthetic realm; as much as the city planning office has a bunch of architects in the office, they should also have a horde of choreographers designing and analyzing flows and movements in the city.

Concerning choreography's relation to education, this requires vast rethinking, not least in respect of what research implies. It seems complex to conceive of research in dance without either considering one or other forms of application, or that it becomes negatively self-referential—research of the researchers own expression as the researchers own expression. With this in mind it is perhaps interesting to develop research profiles concerning choreography rather than dance. Moreover, research in dance, what is it that e.g. a PhD committee should evaluate and through what criteria, if

what is displayed is (personal) ability, not a proposal for a methodologically consistent inquiry.

A problem appears when addressing choreography in respect of tools, generic or not. A tool is always directional, it, so to say, knows its job and operates within realms of accomplishment or measurability. A tool is assigned a function and a function is assigned value through consciousness, or, a something that has direction can only accomplish what can be known. It can only solve problems to which there is a preferable solution. One can certainly bastardize a tool; use a screwdriver to make ice cubes or your mobile phone as a doorstop, but that doesn't release the tools from capacities that consolidate knowledge.

Tools, with some generalization, connect to technique: an ensemble of tools that are coordinated in order to facilitate something. That is to say that a technique is also directional and operates within realms of success, accomplishment and measurability. In dance, technique is still central and the dancer is often training to master a certain technique. Many might contest such a statement and argue that dance has emancipated itself from techniques. I am of the opinion that dance has rejected certain techniques but that the understanding of dance and dancing today is still deeply constructed in respect of techniques, perhaps even stronger today with the increased impact of street dance, capoeira, marshal

arts and improvisation techniques inscribed in the contemporary dance context.

Improvisation connotes motivations in the direction of non-restricted movement, a dance correlated with notions of liberty, even freedom. Now, it appears suspicious to consider that one should train under an expert's authority who has developed a technique for how to be liberated or free. To paraphrase Slavoj Žižek, what improvisation in dance is doing is to try to convince the executer that he or she is free however she knows all too well that he or she is not. It is a training in looking like or moving as though you are free.

Technology, which evidently is not causal to machines, steam engines, Tin Woodman or laptops, is a different affair. Technology is not directional but can be understood as an entanglement of possibilities which can, in a multiplicity of ways, be given direction. It has no goal, no inherent interest, but is instead, at least initially, a neutral ensemble of opportunities. If a technique has already told you what to do even before you start, a technology is a reversed opportunity. If you don't carry knowledge correlated to it, it is useless. Techniques are always prominently striated whereas technologies are striving to become smooth.

Can dance and choreography learn something from such an orientation, and instead of training the student or ourselves in techniques—with mastery as the motivation—can we consider shared practices deepening

our knowledge of how to navigate technologies. This division raises further questions, technique appears to connect with expertise, or knowing more and more about less and less, in many ways a historical model of approaching knowledge, whereas technology instead seems to connect with competence, an understanding of knowledge which has more to do with the ability to find and activate accurate knowledge for a certain situation, i.e. contemporary networked knowledge. At the same time, it is obvious that competence reverberate with neoliberal attitudes, which is perhaps not exactly desirable.

Instead of thinking choreography as a set of generic tools, that however generic has strong telos, can we consider choreography a technology, a set of opportunities that are interrelated but non-directional. If choreography is defined as the art of making dances, it can only be considered in respect of a question, "what". The moment choreography loses its causal relations and becomes a generic tool it opens up to the question "how", it becomes methodological, analytic and critical. Choreography understood as a technology initially dissolves its relation to at the same time both essence and methodology, analysis and critique, i.e. drama, but opens the door to self-inspection or reflection – and hence an autopoietic move. Choreography can then be understood as an approach, an approach to dance as much as to writing, to city planning or to life. If technique is to

be understood as the way to fulfill something, technology can be equated with a knowledge, which is not a matter of fulfillment but instead of the opportunity to question, develop, rearrange, transform e.g. fulfillment.

If we consider choreography a knowledge, a choreographer is not, any longer, only somebody who makes dances, nor a person who puts together a book or makes a film, nor a competence approaching certain—which can be many—expressions into the world, but is the opportunity to enable forms of navigation in the world. If choreography can be understood as knowledge it becomes a way of approaching and conducting life.

But Then What Is Dance?

To figure that out we have to take a step back and return to choreography. As we mentioned, choreography is an organizing capacity; it structures, and structures have sustainability. Structures enable stability and hence recognition of different kinds. Structures are capacities that makes it possible to return, to retrace, and do something again. Any structure can be recognized as a kind of semiotics, and subsequently choreography is a semiotic opportunity and it becomes evident that choreography is language, which certainly is nothing good or bad but enables only certain opportunities. What it enables is exactly that that it can enable, or what is possible, also impossible which is anyway only the obverse

of the possible. What is possible are indeed a whole lot of things, but it is nevertheless only that. Choreography remains in the realm of the possible and thus in the last instance consolidates the world, humanity, and life as we know it.

At this moment we need to make two short excursions. First, imagination. Imagination has been understood in different ways through out history but over the last 50 years, from the mid 60s, imagination has been understood as something we recognize with and through consciousness, and hence consciousness is languaged. What can be imagined, or not-imagined, remains in the realm of language—some kind of language—and therefor in the realm of the possible. One can only imagine what language allows us to imagine. One can only imagine what is possible, and not, but as we know that's again just the obverse.

A few years ago Zizek used a sentence borrowed from Frederic Jameson proposing that it today is more difficult to imagine a way out of capitalism than it is to image the apocalypse. Indeed, if, as Franco Bifo Berardi, Maurizio Lazzarato and others have proposed, capitalism has coopted language, or as Bifo has it, that we live in a semio-capitalism, it goes without saying that we cannot imagine our way out of capitalism because firstly, imagination stays within the possible, and secondly, if capitalism has coopted language then whatever we imagine is and will be a capitalist imagination. In short,

with the terminology of Deleuze, imagination is reactive, which makes possibility and choreography equally reactive and consolidatory.

And now, identity. However much Judith Butler is an unconditional super hero, identity, especially in not so scholarly contexts, and even more so identity politics cause problems.

We know from Rancière that “The essence of politics is the manifestation of dissensus, as the presence of two worlds in one.”² which implies that politics, for Rancière is something that happens within the realm of reason, and hence is language, therefore supports the possibility. Politics is the maintenance of an endless negotiation. Politics is two worlds in one and always in the realm of the possible, which means that identity, when understood as politics, consolidates as an endless negotiation, without grounds (if it was grounded it must be in one world thus not politics), simultaneously within the subject that is never one, and between the subject and the world but it is always a negotiation within the two worlds, within the realm of the possible. The problem for identity politics seen through this lens is that it ends up fastening what one can possibly be or not, which is also possible. In short identity politics is deeply anthropocentric and passive aggressive.

Choreography, imagination, and identity are structuring capacities that reinforce forms of causality and

determination that in its turn enables forms of power to stay in power.

So then what is dance?

Choreography is easy, it can be scary but at the end of the day, choreography is reliable, predictable and harmless. Dance is way more complicated and something, as we shall see, to fear. Dance is not the sister of choreography but rather its complete opposite. But how can dance be identified? Dance in the first instance, or should we say in its rawest, initial form—which is yet to gain form—is a non-organized some thing. That is, the dance that we seek to gain access to when we practice authentic movement, a dance that has taken on no organization, that has not been domesticated by any form of structure. If choreography is a structuring that needs to apply itself to an expression to gain tangibility, dance is “pure” expression that needs to latch on to some or other structure in order to gain sustainability in the world, to gain recognizability and thus be introduced into the realm of the possible. Dance in the first instance can only be experienced, but it is an experience that is pure affect and therefore situated outside the possible, or as Brian Massumi has it, “address not subjects’ cognition, but rather bodies’ irritability.”³ It is first when dance submits to a structure that it can be experienced in respect

of consciousness, captured and reflected, remembered and executed again.

We say it again, dance in its first instance is some thing and non-organized, and some thing non-organized can not have extension in time and/or space but exists only in *presence*. It has no history, no future, it doesn't have anything and certainly not identity. It is, in Agamben's terminology *whatever*—but whatever it is is this which means that the dance is given agency—or in the terminology of the French philosopher Tristan Garcia, *n'importe quoi*—no matter what, and again dance is given agency. Dance in its first instance is one, or One, and One can not be negotiated, it thus exceeds the realm of the possible. Dance is not a matter of imagination, but some thing that traverses imagination to also conspire with realms that we can not even imagine imagining.

We will return to dance as One later, but first. Dance in its initial state is not organized, it is pure expression, but in order to be located it needs organization, yet dance is not causal to choreography. There is no causality between choreography and dance nor is there between dance and choreography. And this is where we will not only support the notion of choreography as expanded practice but also dance as expanded practice. Dance does not need choreography but can, to an equal extent, structure itself vis-à-vis other opportunities; somatic organization, BMC, therapy, disco, sports, mar-

shal arts, literary structures or structures connected to manufacturing, domestic labor or quantum physics.

When choreography detaches from dance it opens up for new opportunities, to identity as a choreographer doesn't automatically make you deal with dance, it's after all a knowledge. In a similar manner, it is important for dance to liberate itself from the violence of choreography and iterate oneself as a dance-maker rather than as a choreographer, announcing that it is two different things. A dance-makers production doesn't emanate from an interest in choreography but in dance and in what ways dance can, and differently, attach to forms of structure, thus, so to say, creating different kinds of dances.

A choreographer can obviously identify all kinds of movement or not in respect of choreography, but that doesn't say that all dances are made to satisfy the choreographer's notions of complexity, composition or harmony. And who is to say that dance is in ocular art form in the first place.

An expanded understanding of dance further question what forms of representation dance can take on. Who says that a dance artist's work gains representation on stage, with a producer and receiver? Can dance as an artistic activity also take on other forms, such as dancing together, workshops, shared practices or other formats without considering them as practice that should at some point coagulate and take on a choreographic

structure, or that a workshop has any other aim than to dance together and is producing specific experiences, and that is art enough. Visual art has gone through such a deterritorialization, so that visual art is a dynamic or field that is not synonymous with a certain form of representation or say product.

For a long time, dance has been domesticated by choreography, perhaps for so long it doesn't remember how it was when "free". Today, or over the last few years, it appears that dance has, because of complex reasons, political, social, technological and philosophical, become observant to capacities inherent to it that exceeds the realm of the possible, imagination and language however not in order to become, or connect to authenticity, nature or truth but perhaps, to something much more frightening however necessary. Instead taking on the task of generating opportunities that lie beyond language and hence capable of producing irritations on the body, affects that intensify us to imagine that which we can not even imagine imagining.

Dance Is Not Performance

In order to make things even more complicated, we need to make another distinction, between dance and performance.

Some 50 years ago it was urgent to contest genre and discipline. It was politically important to voice the

importance of cross-over, inter-disciplinary and so on. Both in respect of the hegemonies within the arts but also in respect of life in general. When dancers insisted on improvisation in the 60s it was not just because it felt awesome, it was also a political critique, not necessarily in a direct or outspoken manner but in respect of the homogenization of what the body could be or do. It is no coincidence that Judson Church happened in the same decade that every other art form emancipated and insisted on liberties. But when we look at today's situation, it rather seems rare to find an artist or anybody else for that matter that is not multi-, inter-, post- something, interactive fucking everything, participatory to the whole world and so on. To produce definition is not dangerous, it is not a threat to our already constitutionally authorized liberties but perhaps even a way of contesting and figuring out what those liberties really can do for us, or what we can really not do because of them and from there on use our fantasy to short cut them.

Performance is a subject performing subjectivity. In other words, it's an identity performing identity, idealizing or disregarding, one's own or a mask. Dance is different, and there are obviously endless gradations to be considered and celebrated, but nevertheless, by understanding the differences we can also understand what it is that is experienced etc. Dance is not first of all a matter of subjectivity. Dance is a subject performing form. It is subjects or identities performing but their

responsibility is not to issue subjectivity but instead to, so to say, become vehicles for the dance, to become anonymous.

There are a few interesting consequences entangled in this consideration. First, a subject performing subjectivity or identity by definition remains in the realms of the possible, whereas there are different opportunities for a subject performing form, it appears that the subject performing form opens for the opportunity of the subject to consolidate itself as *whatever* or *n'importe quoi*, i.e. to exceed the domain of the possible and hence produce the possibility for a contingently different comprehension of the dancing subject. In respect of a subject performing subjectivity the spectator is obliged to confirm, also possibly through rejection, the subject, whereas in dance, at least the possibility is present, the spectator is not present in order to confirm or not the subject on stage but the dance's form which is not in any respect identical or even superimposed on the dancing subject. Performance maintains and strengthens agency in the subject but only in respect of already elaborated grids of power. Dance carries the opportunity to pass agency from the subject to dance itself. To dance in this respect implies the possibility to learn from dance, instead of learning how to dance or how to be one's self.

If we understand this distinction in respect of Jacques Rancière's 2004 lecture *The Emancipated Spectator*⁴ pub-

lished in 2009, we understand that performance defies the opportunity of emancipation. The spectator becomes stultified by being obliged to confirm, thus maintaining her or himself in the realm of the possible. It is obvious that the opportunity for emancipation can not be produced, but that emancipation necessitates an encounter with something exceeding the possible. Dance on the other hand carries with it the possibility of exceeding the realm of the possible precisely because the spectator, or implicated, is not there to confirm anything, or can only contingently confirm form, contingently because form exceeds the opportunity of anthropocentric epistemology. Performance might be loud, dirty, provocative and so on but its excess and abundance always remains within the realm of the possible. It is dance, however formal, that is really excessive and abundant, indeed because it carries the possibility to exceed the possible, also the possibility of abundance. Performance, however excessive, is a practice contained by probability—thus measurability—whereas dance practices contingent excess, an excess beyond the measurable, beyond reason, ration and fuck knows what.

My mother has a friend who every time we meet tells me how amazing it must be to work with dance, to be able to express yourself everyday and at work. I support her and agree, mostly not to upset my mothers and her relation, but in fact the reason to dance, for me, is exactly the opposite. If I wanted to express myself I'd

probably work with theatre, pop music, slam poetry or something similar but not dance. In fact I dance in order to be anonymous, to for a moment be on vacation from myself, from that self that I'm obliged to perform everyday all the time independently of who I am or what kinds of inscriptions I carry. Dance is indifferent to who I am, and it is in that space of dissolving subjectivities that something can become some thing, and some thing is only recognizable, as Massumi told us already, in respect of bodies' irritability.

However, we will not venture further into this rather complex landscape. Contrary to what post-structuralism, conceptual dance and a general semiotization of dance (hence we only have access to the world through consciousness and consciousness is constructed as a form of language, it goes without saying that dance inevitably is a semiotic capacity, and therefore "knows" what it means, what it communicates) suggests—that dance is something we "only" experience through "the subjects' cognition", I believe it is possible to consider dance to address a properly corporeal or embodied experience but we must take into account that this is not an experience that is in any respect helpful, therapeutic, supportive or in any other aspect sympathetic, it is namely an experience that is contingent to cognition and takes place solely on the territory of the body, the individual's body which is not your body but a generic body, or a body⁵.

Possibility and Potentiality

If something is always possible or if what can be imagined remains attached to possibility, which is to say to reality, and always located in reality vis-à-vis complex networks of relations(an if always needs a then in the same sentence.. get rid of the if?). What then is that some thing which is not something, and where? One opportunity is to make a distinction between possibility and potentiality, though here we don't mean potentiality as in, this or that person has potentiality, meaning it is investable or something that most certainly will generate revenue, but instead points toward the opposite, namely that some thing that exceeds the possibility to be harnessed by measurement, discourse, revenue, quality.

What is possible is in the world, it has already been actualized and is no longer real but exists through it's relations. Something possible is always entangled, that is, it is relationally composed and therefore never complete. Everything possible is capacitated being two and thus subject to transformation and it can occupy different positions in the world as long as they are confirmed by its relations.

On the other hand, potentiality is not in the world, is not actualized but therefore real, however the price for real is that it is absolutely void of relation, it Is. Therefore, it can only not occupy a position, can not be located and further can not under any circumstances

change. Being real, recalling Agamben and Garcia, potentiality is always *whatever* and *n'importe quoi*, simultaneously *whatever* and *no matter what*, but not necessarily strange. Potentiality is not a domain, nor is it a negative domain, it is instead a double negation, it is the negation of a non-domain, but, however mystical it might sound, that is where some things reside, just before, since forever and always, it or they actualize and transform into something.

Recalling the very beginning, we can understand that the realm of the possible overlaps, if not coincides, with epistemology, and that potentiality refers to ontology. Possibility resides in the doming of knowledge, reflection, transformation, extension whereas potentiality is the realm of Being, of matter-iality—which is not materiality and which is prominently non-relational, non-extended and non-timely. Add to that the possible, which is by definition contextual, individual, partial and general, when potentiality is at the same time singular and universal, it is by necessity one, or One, obviously completely without structure and pure expression, but again as a double negative. Just to make it clear, potentiality is void of representation but also void of non-representation.

Possibility and possibilities can be produced, just use your imagination. Potentiality on the other hand can not be produced, only the production of it's possibility to occur. There are no guarantees, concerning potenti-

ality nothing is secure, it can not be calculated, it is not a matter of probability but instead of contingency. The only thing that is necessary is that something or not will occur.

Is It New or Is It New?

And again a slight clarification. We need to make a distinction between different kinds of new. Our times celebrate everything new and simultaneously attacks the cult of the new, especially with nothing in particular except slow food or "I'm a barista". The new is it and we are all inscribed in cherishing it, not least the artist whose job, according to for example Boris Groys, is to produce "unique" statements. The new is equally valid for the Swanlake that the Royal Ballet is preparing, even for the Marina Abramovic at the Modern Museum in Stockholm, as it is for Nicki Minage's next hit.

We don't live in a culture of the new, we live in neoliberal capitalism and as we all know it's an address to the world that has only expansion in mind. The new is for all of us, but the new that neoliberalism obsesses over, at least so far, is a false new, i.e. only a better version, an upgrade, an improvement, always based on what we know. This is a new that functions within the domain of the possible, it's in Deleuze terminology, a reactive new, which means that it consolidates what is already approved. In Deleuze we find a more prominent

new, namely an active new, which is a new that is not derived from what is, from what is common, from what is known. It is a new that must emerge from potentiality, a new that doesn't belong to the domain of knowledge or the possible. This is new with a big N, but what are the consequence of the possibility of the New? In short, the reactive new perpetuates the world or perhaps makes it a little bit better or worse. The New, as it is not part of knowledge thus having no representation, poses a problem to knowledge. Knowledge can not incorporate the New, and the result is either, that the New is rejected, denied, erased or knowledge will have to change in order to be capable of assimilating The New. As the New cannot be incorporated however, knowledge can not change in respect of what it already is, that is to the better, a version, an alternative or upgrade. Instead it will have to change contingently to itself. One could also say that it is not the the New that is incorporated by knowledge but instead knowledge that is incorporated by the New.

Boris Groys has argued that the responsibility of the artist is precisely to produce the possibility for the New to occur, and continues to propose that what the artist is doing is not to make something better, to increase qualities of life etc. but instead to make something come to an end⁶. Briefly, Groys' argument distinguishes art from design, where design is a matter of improvement (reactive new), art is a matter of the emergence of the

New (active new) which evidently is “dangerous” as it arrives with the possibility of a breach, of non-calculable or contingent change. In short design is always a matter of politics, and therefor conditioned, whereas art, in respect of a lineage from Kant to Groys always is one, and unconditional.

Ten years ago Groys’ proposal would have seemed rather ridiculous, not least because it rhymes rather bad with post-structuralism, but today it seems relevant if not important to think and practice along the proposed lines. At the root of his proposal lies the potentiality for art to change the world. We can not imagine our way out of capitalism, but if arts job is to make something come to an end, it, according to Groys, must do so through the production of the possibility of something to emerge that does not belong to knowledge. What we further can understand studying Groys is that art, or rather the aesthetic experience—as we also showed earlier—isn’t an experience embedded in knowledge but on the contrary the aesthetic experience is, so to say, an ontological experience, which, further more, makes it clear that art and culture is and must remain two separate capacities. See appendix.

If design is something calculated, it means that it is a production engaged in reflection, analyses, critique, that something can be optimized, and that notions of manufacturing are implied. Art, which is not skill or ability, in order to be differentiated from design, must

engage differently, art is not analytical and critical, it is however seemingly romantic, generous and without reason. Arts job is not to be critical, the artists certainly but not art, it is not reflective but productive. Art is a speculative.

When we use the term speculation we don't mean speculation, as in the stock market, which is exactly analytical and revenue related, we mean speculation as in the production of the possibility of a contingent non-projective future. Choreography, as we have seen, is an organizing principle, which implies that it remains in the realm of the possible. Choreography is reflexive, analytical and critical which of course was one reason why it gained such prominence over dance, in the '90s—the decade when deconstruction still ruled and everything, not least because of Butler, was inscribed in meaning. There is no magic in choreography, which we indeed can see when looking back at the '90s and '00s. The magic is in dance. If dance in its first instance is non-organized, pure expression, can we perhaps consider that dance carries capacities towards speculation? Dance is a subject performing form, dissolving identity, resolving something in favor of becoming some thing. Dance in lieu of this is something that I can or not give attention; the dance is indifferent to me, the spectator (carries its own agency) yet becomes some thing, some thing to which knowledge can not attach but instead is forced to speculate with. From my point of view, dance

offers and opportunity to speculation, in that it offers the possibility for potentiality to emerge.

What are the tools we can, what are the machines one can use for speculation to possibly emerge. One option is to hope for the best, dance around with a serious face and say no more... Or is there a recursive momentum? We must, because we have no other choice, use choreography—the technology—to enable this moment to possibly happen. Although since we know that choreography is domesticating movement we now need to reverse our understanding of choreography and use it to assemble an apparatus, that gives us the opportunity for a speculative dance. We need to use choreography not to harness and domesticate dance but instead to free dance from our desire to locate it.

Coming back to improvisation for a moment. Conventionally, as we proposed, improvisation is a matter of liberating the dancer, either from something negative in society—how to be human etc.—or from the hardship of choreography—Balanchine. But what about if improvisation is not about freeing the dancer, the subject, which in ways proposes that improvised dance is not dance but performance, but instead, saving improvisation dance from becoming performance, can we estimate improvisation as a means of freeing dance from us? And the knowledge through which we can produce the possibility for this to happen is called choreography.

Our most difficult task however, and this is where

we need to rethink conceptual dance, which is always a matter of translation – and acknowledge concept dance – the assemblage of a machine that produces indetermination (both concerning the artist in the studio and the spectator in respect of a representation) – is to not desire the dance, or value it, i.e. assign value to it but to remain indifferent to it. This is an indifference that can only be obtained through an engagement with a concept. It is a difficult indifference to manage as it is far from being nonjudgmental. It is rather to also become indifferent to oneself, or to paraphrase Deleuze, it is a matter of becoming indifferent to one's own indifference.

Aesthetic Experience

It is Kant that offers solutions to how to situate art and aesthetic experience in capitalist society. In premodern societies art was not separated from craft but this became imperative when a capitalist understanding of manufacturing, expansion etc. gained moment. If in capitalist economies art was not separate from manufacturing, how could it be that a, let's say, certain painting made an impression while another one did not. If art and the experience it possibly generated was not separated from other experiences how then could one argue the value, symbolic or economical, of a certain painting, piece of music or poem. It was necessary to separate art

from craft and introduce a study of non-teleological judgment and taste. Why do you adore that and I find it indecent, and how does it happen that we seem to agree on some things and not on others, beauty etc.?

Now the problem with aesthetic experience is that it must be autonomous and contemplated without interest in order not to end up in simple manufacturing and elementary determination. The price to pay for those two criteria however is that the aesthetic experience is one, and therefor can not actively participate in a political context. Art can not actively purport a political agenda. Art, or aesthetic experience, is not something the implicated interpret, it is not something one learns from, or is enlightened by or vis-à-vis one changes opinion. The artists' dilemma since the later 19th century, is that either art is granted some kind of autonomy but then no politics, or art is politics but then it ends up being design, losing its autonomy and all of a sudden sees itself implied in modes of accomplishment or efficiency. This is obviously what is happening when neoliberal governance instrumentalizes art, not just to be in the service of the nation or to be part of social democratic decentralization, but are keen to make the experience transformative for or in the spectator, or implicated. Art's responsibility in neoliberal times, following Bojana Cvejić, doesn't much differ from the manufacturing of lifestyle, and lifestyle is way foreign to Kant's aesthetics.

Kant has been strongly discredited over the last many

years, as his aesthetic implies forms of transcendence. Evidently Kantian aesthetics was a dirty word for anybody signing up to post-structuralist agendas. Within a philosophical climate where speculation is favored, Kant's thought can be understood through a different lens. In an omnipresent capitalism we cannot not understand that arts job must be considered differently, as anything that doesn't necessitate autonomy and disinterestedness immediately becomes supportive of or to capital, and art becomes useful. Arts defense against neoliberal policy can only be to insist on being worthless, without value, and as we know something always has value but some thing does not, and the emergence of some thing implies bringing the world or something to an end. With a slightly more positive connotation we can also read "to an end" in terms of Greek thought, where a similar gesture amounts to bringing something into existence, bringing-forth something and into the world i.e. "from" potentiality, poiesis.

Conclusion (Just Kidding)

Before we come to a conclusion, a brief reflection on what an aesthetic experience is or does. What is it that the subject experiences when having an aesthetic experience, when having an encounter with art? If art is not to be understood vis-à-vis utility or design but rather autonomy, the experience must be self-referential. I love

this piece of art because I do. The moment one starts to explain why, telos or utility becomes difficult to keep at distance. Similar to love. One loves somebody because because not for this or that reason. You don't love because somebody's money, long legs or curly hair. One loves, full stop. I love you because I love you, capiche! And if somebody asks you why, just leave.

Therefore, what I experience is experience. It is not this or that experience, what I experience is a self-referential experience. I experience experiencing. But what is that? Gilles Deleuze proposes that one experiences liveliness, or in more contemporary terms life+. Perhaps one can rather say, I experience myself as being a live, but not as my life, instead I experience myself as a life, or as we saw earlier, the experience implies to, with my own body experience a body, a generic body.

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 an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life.⁷

Through my life I experience life as such, a life. The aesthetic experience is pure experience, it is always matter-ial and since it is autonomous, what it brings can only be contingent to life. In other words, the aesthetic

experience, as Deleuze tells us, is the experience of potentiality. It is precisely here that art, artistic production and the possibility of aesthetic experience is important today, because the “outcome” or residue of the aesthetic experience is contingent to life, which means that it also can carry different in kind, ways of living together, of sharing resources, understanding property, being human.

Post-dance At The End

Anything post is something that makes every sane person suspicious. Post-modernism is dubious, post-conceptual art very, post-dramatic maybe just a mistake after all, post-porn omg very suspicious. But what does post actually propose, what does it mean? Post evidently does not simply mean after. Post-modernism is not what comes after modernism, something that shuns the past and with a patricidal gesture gets rid of legacy. No, post rather communicates when or that something has gained the ability to reflect its own existence, capacities and positions. Post-internet art is not an art that takes distance from the Internet but instead reflects the circumstances that art is confronted with when every art is reflected in, through and with the Internet.

Post is not rolling one's eye “that was so bad”, nor is it something good but now without authenticity, or the seconds season. Post instead is when something gains

knowledge about itself, it is when a set of tools, generic or not is transformed into a technology, it is when something loses its projective function and become inseparable from a context.

Post-dance is not something after dance, it is not in any respect choreography or snobbish French non-dance, it is dance and choreography that has detached from elementary forms of causality or determination, that has buried Humphrey and let go of the choreographer's toolbox, understanding that dance and choreography are forms of knowledge that can reflect themselves. As something reflects itself it also gains the opportunity or necessity to devise its own ethics and epistemology—understanding its conduct and position as knowledge in the world. Post-dance is a dance that acknowledges that times change, that dance is not the same in a crumbling welfare state, that a liberal understanding of art sucks, that collateral damage is important, that dance and art is not marginal to society but an economy as any other, that there is no dance today that doesn't resonate of the Internet, that its history is changing because dance is made available via the Internet, that dance history is written by the wrong people, that acknowledges that high and low is interchangeable, post-colonialism, performance studies, artistic research, the messy mix-up between practice and theory, Beyoncé and technology, and does it all through an emerging epistemology of dance.

More than so, post-dance signals a return of dance and dancing. Post-dance is the recognition of dance being its own capacity for experiences outside the domain of the possible as much as dance as knowledge, dance and dancing elaborating its own epistemology. Post-dance is when dance and choreography reclaim, and successfully, their autonomy and in a totally new way. Post-dance, therefore, offers dance to detach from being about something, having application—thus functioning as a vehicle for some other discourse or attitude—and instead allows dance to produce politics on its own terms, through its own discursive apparatus. Post-dance is when dance in itself becomes political. Post-dance is the moment when dance can capacitate the world not in favor of, but in and through itself.

Most of all however, Post-dance is a celebration of dance, the moment when we recognize that we can dance again, when dance emancipated itself from choreographers, and when dance acknowledged that it carries its own agency, carries potentiality into the world. Dance is something, but it is also some thing, not always already organized but it organizes itself. At that moment it also becomes something that “politicians” need to fear, that need to be feared. Post-dance is some thing that is not always identifiable, it carries its own weight, it carries its own weapons, it carries its own agenda, independently.