critical dance studies

Gabriele Klein,
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Emerging Bodies

The Performance of Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography

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Introduction

GABRIELE KLEIN, SANDRA NOETH

In Europe, dance has brought forth a multitude of new 'worlds' over the last few decades, especially in Germany against the backdrop of *Tanzplan Deutschland*[1]: dance houses, dance centers, dance forums, dedicated completely or in the context of other arts to dance and choreography; mobile self-organized, often temporary artist collectives, which are not limited to a certain region; new education programs at art academies and universities; academic and artistic research, not only in dance theory and as a result newly generated discourses; professional journals on dance and choreography, some of them residing in the digital realm; artistic work in dance projects at schools, in other educational and cultural institutions or in urban areas and public spaces. These examples demonstrate that contemporary dance has visibly gained importance in the fields of culture, education, art and academia in spite of its often precarious financial situation and meager lobby in educational and cultural policy. This new public attention for contemporary dance is connected to a number of changes within the dance scene: the differentiation and diversification of the European experimental dance scene and its audiences, a reflection of former historical, as well as contemporary fundamental assumptions about and categorizations of dance, new experiments with forms of collaboration, changing approaches to the concepts of practice and theory, a shift in the understanding of working and research processes.

1 *Tanzplan Deutschland* (Dance Plan Germany) was an initiative of the German Federal Cultural Foundation. From 2005 until 2010, the project acted as a catalyst for the German dance scene. Equipped with a budget of 12.5 million Euros, its goal was to provide dance in Germany. In 2006 and 2009 the German Federal Cultural Foundation hosted two Dance Congresses in Berlin and Hamburg which also came within the ambit of *Tanzplan Deutschland* (cf. Tanzkongress.de; Tanzplan-Deutschland.de).

Since the 1990s, the 'world of dance', so it seems, is (once again) in a productive crisis.

In this historical situation, all players in the dance field, be they dancer, choreographer, dance theorist, curator or scholar are faced with the challenge of handling a diversity of resources, processes, concepts, discourses and aesthetics. The concurrence of various differing frameworks of reference, discursive paradigms and institutional forms, the hybridity of dance identities and the simultaneous necessity of permanent (self)positioning create problems and paradoxes, which in turn are framed by the 'new globalized world' of post-Fordian modes of production, the globalized economy and the neo-liberal state. It is therefore no coincidence that contemporary dance is (again) directing its focus towards the processes that creating the world(s) in which we live, our 'being-in-time' – between affiliation and detachment, presence and absence, immediacy and mediation, particularity and the demand for universality, temporality and contingence. *How* are 'dance worlds' created? Is there an intrinsic logic to these 'dance worlds'? *How* can 'we' speak and write about them? And how does the knowledge of these worlds become socially effective?

In his book *Ways of Worldmaking*, Nelson Goodman succinctly states: "If attempts to answer the question 'What is art?' characteristically end in frustration and confusion perhaps – as so often in philosophy – the question is the wrong one." (Goodman 1978: 57) Goodman avoids the ontologization of the question "What is art?" by asking "When is art?". This volume of essays also seeks to answer the question of 'dance worlds' by doing more than inquiring into their properties, but by instead examining their operative logic and the strategies of their production in specific historical and cultural contexts. In doing so, questions concerning the 'nature' of 'dance worlds' fade from the spotlight in favor of an interest in how – and if – the performative production of 'dance worlds' is different from other ways of worldmaking.

The idea underlying Goodman's concept of "worldmaking" is that 'world' is not given, but a process of creation: 'world' is thus, according to the basic epistemological premise, made when actions and language bring forth meanings. Worldmaking is therefore always social, cultural, religious, framed, historically in flux and reliant on scientific and philosophical discourses and experiences. It does not only relate to one 'world' and cannot be comprehended in totality: different ways of worldmaking provoke different, interlocking worlds. World, originally a singular word, which only came into use in the plural sense end of the 16th century, here disintegrates into multifarious and yet structured concepts of world. In his symbol-theoretical approach, inspired by Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms, Goodman concludes that we live in as many worlds as

symbolic ways of worldmaking, i.e. linguistic or figuratively conveyed ways permit. However, which worlds are created with corporeal and dance-aesthetic methods? This question is not primarily directed at interpreting productions and dance pieces in the traditional academic sense, but instead seeks to focus on performative processes of the generation of meaning and, in doing so, concentrate on processes that organize the – possibly dance specific – creation of (social) meaning.

Over the course of the 20th century, dance in the modern age has addressed such relationships as fundamentally discussed in the topos of "worldmaking" – nature and culture, reality and the image, objectivity and subjectivity – in various ways. Parts of German Expressionist Dance and American Postmodern Dance at the beginning of the 20th century presumed that the way the body dealt with inner, as well as outer nature contained an incontestable certainty of being and thus regarded 'world' as given in an act of dance that was felt to be natural. Meanwhile, other dancers and choreographers – such as Oskar Schlemmer, who was active at Bauhaus – searched for formal and structural principles of constructing the body and choreography. In the 1960s, first in so-called postmodern dance and in computer animated dance, which developed in close connection with cybernetics, and also in other ways in the dance theater of the 1970s, the art of dance reflected prior aesthetic strategies of worldmaking as dance is capable of creating as a specific practice of movement and choreography and a specific way of organizing of movement, as well as arranging space and time. In doing so, new aesthetic positions of dance emerged, which interpreted the questions of accessing and creating world differently: less as phenomenally given or anthropological fixed points, but rather as subjective positions or as political-aesthetic strategies and transcultural practice. Since the 1990s, the question of "worldmaking" has gained new meaning in the face of globalization and trans-nationalization, which finds its expression in the humanities e.g. in the discussion on the concept of "global history" (cf. Foster 2009) or the establishment of *postcolonial studies* in international dance research. It has found expression in those styles, which have been written into dance history as post-structural dance or conceptual dance.

This volume is based on the assumption that dance reveals its effectivity not in the representation of existing structures and systems, but unfolds its potentiality precisely in the offering of alternatives, of utopias, developed with the help of the body and through the organization of movement. It therefore focuses on the challenges and the possibilities that lie in "ways of worldmaking" in dance. It asks how dance creates 'world' as a medium bound to the body and whether and how these processes and strategies differ from those of other arts

and sciences. A central motif that pervades the history of modernity and has been supported by the performative-theoretical approaches of the last few years is especially up for critical debate: that dance is an ephemeral, elusive medium, which creates 'world' in contrast with other media via the body and its ambiguous 'languages' and forms of expression; a world that has aspects of instantaneity. Critical involvement with the motif of the 'ephemeral' and of elusiveness is of central importance for dance research when inquiring into the 'how' of worldmaking. But it is also of epistemological urgency, considering that dance, as a medium of the body and presence, can be seen as a field of knowledge par excellence for research into how certainty about the world is created between the poles of perception, imagination, action and cognition.

The contributions inquire into how 'worlds' are made in dance. In doing so, they discuss specific worlds of production, perception and experience in dance and choreography and examine them from an interdisciplinary perspective. Against the backdrop of current theoretical approaches in the fields of social, cultural and media studies, aesthetic theory and philosophy, the specific worldmaking of dance and choreography is compared to other art forms and the research methods. In addition, forms of knowledge as practiced in the sciences are brought into relationship with those forms of knowledge, which can be found in artistic forms of working.

The subsection *social realms* brings together articles by Gabriele Klein, Randy Martin and Bojana Kunst. These are complemented by a conversation with the artist group LIGNA.

Gabriele Klein discusses various forms of worldmaking in dance and choreography. She focuses on the relationship of politics and aesthetics in contemporary dance and its historical genesis, as she inquires into the political and social significance of dance and the articulation of the political in artistic processes, dance aesthetics and discourses.

Randy Martin describes how dance moves between the poles of intervening practice and a conceptual definition of the future and how multiple notions and forms of the political become visible in dance. He defines the dance ensemble as a form of ideal community, the dance performance as a place in which artists and audience assemble, thus making it also, much like a political demonstration, ephemeral.

Bojana Kunst's contribution focuses on the organization of movement and work in the 20th century. Her argument is that due to changing production conditions, dance formulated concepts of freedom and future, which, because of the way that movement engages time and space, not only allowed an aesthetic,

but also the social and political potential of transgression to become recognizable.

In the performative audio play *Der Neue Mensch* (*The New Human*), which was performed during the Dance Congress 2009, the artist group LIGNA employed movement instructions and multiple shifts of perspective and roles. In a conversation with Sandra Noeth, they describe the choreographic processes involved in producing a collective body by questioning the relationship of audience and action, as well as the construction of subjectivity and community through the body.

The subsection *hybrid spheres* contains essays by Susan Leigh Foster, Sabine Sörgel and Anette Rein, which all discuss the construction of identity. They are framed by an interview with German theater director Monika Gintersdorfer.

Susan Leigh Foster analyses the presence and representation of the category gender in intercultural collaboration from a postcolonial perspective. Her text is an imagined and staged dialogue with French choreographer Jérôme Bel, in which she critically reflects his artistic work with the traditional Khon dancer Pichet Klunchun regarding individual and collective processes of identity formation.

The postcolonial gaze also plays a role in Sabine Sörgel's essay, in which she shows how dancing bodies produce spaces of identity and imagined communities, in which transnational politics are negotiated. Based on the example of Congolese choreographer Faustin Linyekula she traces the ambivalence of contemporary dance, which is political, while simultaneously attempting to evade political exploitation and representation.

Anette Rein writes about 'world' as cultural memory. Based on her research into Balinese dances, she demonstrates the challenges faced by museums as places of collective memory in the collection and preservation of tangible/intangible dance cultures. By identifying the special ephemeral quality of dance, she formulates a perspective, which aims at introducing new terms of action for museums, but also at redefining their educational mandate.

Monika Gintersdorfer speaks in a conversation with Gabriele Klein about her experiences working as a theater director with dance and choreography. Based on the series *Logobi*, she reflects on the conditions and possibilities of intercultural artistic work and gives a detailed account of her collaborations with dancers from the Ivory Coast. According to Gintersdorfer, political work and artistic work cannot be separated from one another.

Gabriele Brandstetter, Julie Townsend, Knut Hickethier and Michael Diers address the particularities of dance in the subsection *art worlds* by reflecting them in the context of other art forms.

Gabriele Brandstetter discusses the ambivalent relationship of dance and *Schrift* (writing as a material trace, i.e. text), dancing and writing (as an action) and emphasizes the similarities between these two media of worldmaking. Manifestations, materiality and signature are the perspectives under which Brandstetter argues convergence and resistance in dancing and writing, both of which she regards as movement phenomena.

Julie Townsend focuses on desire and concentrates on the production of desire in the body and in texts, based on examples from the so-called literature of the *coulisses* and the figure of the *danseuse* in the 19th century.

As moving images, respectively pictorial movements, dance and film are movement phenomena, which create worlds in different ways. Knut Hickethier examines the relationship between dance and film by discussing theoretical and analytical strategies and concepts of creating, visualizing, repeating and recording movement in film based on selected dance scenes from popular mainstream films.

The relationship of dance, music and the filmic image are the main focus of Michael Diers' essay. Here, Michelangelo Antonioni's film *Blow Up*, which not only concisely captures the mood of the 1960s, but is also a contemplation on the nature of the image itself, here serves as an object of research for questions of media differentiation.

The subsection *digital worlds – processing bodies* gathers contributions by Frédéric Bevilacqua, Norbert Schnell and Sarah Fdili Alaoui, Stephen Turk and Norah Zuniga Shaw. By looking at various artistic-digital projects, they inquire into the medial quality of dance based on various processes of notation, digitalization and storage.

Frédéric Bevilacqua, Norbert Schnell and Sarah Fdili Alaoui work at IRCAM (Institute for Research and Coordination Acoustic/Music, Paris) at the interface of movement and music. Their research on *Gesture Capturing* aims towards a paradigm shift. Their work goes beyond mere experimentation with technology and digital interactive systems in dance to instead pursue more fundamental issues concerning the description, notation and transmission of gestures and movement.

Stephen Turk focuses on the relationship of choreography and architecture and its rendering in digital space. He presents and reflects the research project *Synchronous Objects*, which translates the choreography of William Forsysthe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* into digital space. With recourse to concepts and figures of thought such as environment, entanglement and the frame, he draws attention both to the 'architectonic affinity' of choreography as well as to the

performativity of architecture, to which he ascribes dynamic potential for the perception and the occupation of choreographic space.

Norah Zuniga Shaw's research takes as its starting point the interface of dance and digital media. Based on the project *Synchronous Object for One Flat Thing*, reproduced, she analyzes in her interdisciplinary theory and practice the relationship of movement and media and the translation of one medium into another. Using these processes of transmission and translation as examples, she demonstrates the potential of dance knowledge for dancers and dance researchers alike, but also for theorists of other disciplines.

Working principles is the broad title of the last subsection with contributions by Sabine Gehm and Katharina von Wilcke, Gesa Ziemer and Sandra Noeth, all dedicated to the discussion of curatorial, artistic and dramaturgic working processes.

Sabine Gehm and Katharina von Wilcke inquire with Elisabeth Nehring into suitable formats for an artistic and academic occupation with dance. Based on their experiences with the Dance Congress 2009 in Hamburg, they describe curatorial strategies for developing topics and formats that facilitate a 'dance congress world' as a temporary choreographic construct.

Gesa Ziemer focuses on the situational potential of artistic working processes in dance and performance art in her discussion of complicity as a specific form of collaboration. By differentiating it from other social and organizational models such as teamwork, the forming of alliances, networking or friendship, she inquires into the creation of collectivity and collaboration in the context of instable and temporary 'dance worlds'.

Finally, Sandra Noeth's essay addresses current attempts at redefining dramaturgy in the context of contemporary choreography as a place for negotiating coexistence and community. In this sense, dramaturgy also gives room to discuss the body's capacity for action and questions choreography's mechanisms of effect as critical practice.

This volume took its beginning at the international conference supported by the German Research Foundation on the subject of *Performing Reality. 'Making Worlds' in Dance and Choreography*. It took place in November 2009 at the International Kulturfabrik Kampnagel in Hamburg in cooperation with the Dance Congress 2009, which was attended by ca. 3000 people. The organizers of the Dance Congress and thus also cooperating partners of the conference were the Federal Cultural Foundation, together with the Department for Culture of the City of Hamburg, Internationale Kulturfabrik Kampnagel and K3 – Centre for Choreography Hamburg/Tanzplan Hamburg. The cooperation sought to facilitate encounters between different fields of science and art, theory and practice, aca-

demic and artistic research and encourage the transfer of knowledge between them. The topics introduced in the lectures at the conference found their continuation in various artistic and practical formats (panel discussions, lecture demonstrations, workshops, open spaces) during the Congress.

An edited volume is a collaborative process and a joint effort. We would therefore like to sincerely thank all who had a part in it: first of all the contributors, who we thank for allowing us to use their essays and their excellent and collegial cooperation. We thank ehrliche arbeit/Elena Polzer for the translation of the German texts into English, as well as proofreading the English texts. Our thanks also go to Lejla Mehanović for her dedicated, editorial assistance and the design of the layout and to Gitta Barthel, who also proofread the manuscripts. To Jennifer Niediek, we are indebted for the professional and helpful support on behalf of the publishing house.

Last but not least, our thanks go to all colleagues, who helped to prepare and organize the international conference and the Dance Congress 2009. We thank the German Research Foundation for its financial support of the conference and the Department of Human Movement Studies at the University of Hamburg for its generous support of this publication.

Hamburg, June 2011

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SOCIAL REALMS

Dancing Politics: Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography

GABRIELE KLEIN

I.

Dance is a world in itself – this is a central figure of discourse since the beginning of the 20th century, i.e. the period in which modern industrial society was established.[1]

As a world of the body and the senses, of movement and feelings, as a world of metaphors, for which words fail us, dance in the modern age, according to the modern dance discourse, constitutes an alternate world, namely a world beyond language and rationality. In the 20th century, dance, regardless of what kind, whether artistic dance, popular dance, religious ritual or therapeutic setting, represented a contrast to rationality, mechanization, technology and geometry. It was seen as an alternative realm to industrial work (cf. Klein 1992). Dance in the modern age drew its aesthetic legitimacy and its social justification for existence from this pattern of discourse, which allotted dance the social position of 'Outsider' and defined it as the 'Other'. Dance was considered an expression of feelings and understood as honest, authentic, organic or holistic: and this pattern of discourse formed the basis for asserting its subversive power and socio-critical and emancipatory potential, from which dance has derived and still derives its avant-garde claims as well as its educational mandate.

1 The text is a revised version of the opening lecture held at the Dance Congress Germany by the author on November 6, 2009 at the International Cultural Factory Kampnagel in Hamburg, Germany.

However, this self-perception of dance has met with little response from the political field. Quite the contrary: dance was – and this is still the case with many politicians – and is considered non-political. Conservatives have appreciated this fact, as for example, the Bavarian state parliamentarian, who justified the lifting of a war-time ban on dancing in the period of the 'Red Revolution' in Munich in November 1918 with the words: "People should dance rather than demonstrate." (Eichstedt/Polster 1985: 44) The leftist wing, on the other hand, has bemoaned mindless dancing: Theodor W. Adorno, for example, believed himself to behold "the coordinated battalions of mechanical collectivity" (Adorno 1941: 312) in the dance craze. The student movement as well sought to stir up society and set new social structures in motion, but this largely remained a metaphor. Ultimately, it meant that people should take to the streets, instead of dancing their heart out, mindlessly and half-naked, caught up in the simultaneously occurring boisterous disco trend of the 1970s – or later in the 1990s, the techno craze. To the same effect as Adorno, the social-democratic oriented German daily newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* described the discos in the 1970s as "uniform centers of enforced conformity" and after the Berlin Love Parade in 1996, the liberal German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* wrote:

"We see hundreds of thousands of people semi-naked, laughing, while coercing their bodies to produce seemingly epileptic movements ('dancing'). Is this a mass of invalids meeting in the city for a demonstration of happy madness? The answer is short and sweet: yes." (Klein 1999: 18)

II.

In the 1960s, the pattern of discourse that assumed dance and politics to be opposites began to be challenged parallel to the social transformations and political movements of the age. This occurred on two levels: on the level of general developments in society and on the level of forms of thought.

The rapid social, political and economic changes since the 1960s produced a society, which today has been diagnosed and labeled as the media society, information society or knowledge society, as globalized, post-colonial or neoliberal. In this new world, societal and political contexts have themselves also changed; they have liquefied, their boundaries dissolved. As Richard Sennett vividly demonstrates in his book *Flesh and Stone* (cf. Sennett 1994), the metaphor of 'flow' first manifested itself in the end of the 19th century in, what were at that time, new concepts of the modern and mobile city, the flow of traffic

and arterial roads. It also manifested itself in concepts of physiology, such as blood circulation and neural pathways. In the 20th century, this found its expression in a specific understanding of the organization of the body, e.g. as an energetic body and society or as an (auto)mobile society. Movement, dynamics, flow – these terms form the kinetic basis of the modern age. It has often been neglected in theories of modernity, but Randy Martin and André Lepecki have shown that this is extremely important for the discussion of dance and politics (cf. Lepecki 2006; Martin 1998). The modern topos of endless movement marks the topographic fantasy and the colonial principle of modernity: the positing of movement as an ontological principle and its abstraction from specific cultures, bodies and lifestyles. The modern fantasy of endless movement also carries within it the notion of a colonialization of space, of subjects and bodies. The fact that this movement may not be interrupted by catastrophes, suffering and personal tragedy, that these should be considered natural catastrophes and fate, also points to the "kinetic reality of the modern age as mobilization" (Sloterdijk 1989: 27) as Peter Sloterdjik calls it. From this perspective, suffering, death and lamentation, the central topics of German Expressionist Dance in the 1920s, can be interpreted as resistance, as exposing the subsurface history of modernity.

With the advent of the globalized society, this basic kinetic principle of modernity was staged as a "spectacle of innocence" (cf. Lepecki 2006): the free movement of data-streams, the unlimited flow of capital, new waves of migration, the fall of political walls and symbolic borders permitted the emergence of a philosophical idea of openness. With it the spotlight of aesthetic discourse fell on contingency, a term that in sociology addresses the principle openness of possible life forms, and on potentiality, a concept in philosophy intended to overcome the dualism of possibility and reality. However, from a pragmatic point of view, it was the promising set phrase 'everything is possible', which became the ideology of a society that had lost its political perspective on the future and had pilloried the fundamental possibility of a political utopia with the fall of the Berlin wall and the disbanding of confrontational social systems. On the other hand, this society also began to suffer amnesia and a loss of history as part of its growing medialization.

The concept of limitless opportunities in the here and now became more than just the motto of a neo-liberal, so-called free world market, with the devastating consequences of its uncontrolled financial markets. It also transformed into the paradigm of a governmental politics of self-sufficiency that – whether in healthcare, education or pension systems, even in public funding for the arts – increasingly shifted responsibility onto the individual and made self care and self-formation of one's own optionalized body its credo.

The so-called "liberation of people from traditional obligations" (cf. Beck 1992), sociology's unpleasant description of this process since the 1980s, also provoked the fiction of the limitless possibilities available to organize the conditions of one's own life. The figure of the 'global player' appeared as a fictional role model on the horizon of a society based on the imaginary circulation of money. Behind this figure lies a subject type, which is 'kinetic', following an endless, self-motivated desire for unlimited movement. It is a type of subject that colonizes, because in subtle ways, it is defined as male, heterosexual and white.

This type of subject is not just a type of global economic activity. Even a group quite important to the globalized economy, the so-called creative class, represent distinct areas of competence that matter to the *modus operandi* of the 'global player' – creativity, virtuosity and intellectualism (cf. Virno 2004). Artists are its main representatives – albeit under precarious living conditions and the 'new poverty'. And so the new societal model of the flexible, geographically unattached and vagabond kinetic self-recursive subject has found its prototype in the 'freelance dancer'. The dancer: unattached, nomadic, an eternal migrant passing by.

In this historic moment, dance steps forth from its long confinement in the shadows and becomes the main focus of societal, philosophical and educational interest. It has become a symbol of a globalized and medialized society, which has promoted the ephemeral, fluid, momentary and placeless as its guiding metaphor. But the ephemeral, which was until recently always a characteristic feature of dance as an alternative corporeal world that made it distinguishable from a modern society that valued calculated reason, has become a fundamental societal problem in a globalized society. This is because ephemerality and liquidity here not only mean boundless movement and infinite possibilities, but also a fundamental change in the topology of social perception: social security, the welfare state, sedentism, social integration and a mutual sense of responsibility have disappeared in favor of a lack of obligations, loss of emotional ties, nomadic lifestyles and social disintegration. How can dance – given this social topos of 'ephemerality' – be critical and political?

III.

At the same time as these societal changes are hollowing out the basis of the welfare state (and its grande dames – social democracy and the trade union movement – along with it) and the so-called creative class is appointed a pioneering

role in future society after the end of the welfare state, the foundations of modern thinking are also radically being called into question: born forward by French philosophy, post-structuralism has attacked the binary logic of modern thought in particular. The image, language, writing and art have become the focus of many philosophical discussions attempting to define one or several of these semantic systems as a binding framework for humanity's understanding of reality or rather as the foundation for "ways of worldmaking" (cf. Goodman 1978) in Western culture – as Nelson Goodman would formulate it.

Largely unnoticed by philosophy and aesthetic theory, post-structuralist thought left its traces in the aesthetic practice of contemporary dance. The dancer's own medium, the body, was intensely scrutinized, new movement techniques invented, expanded or modified. Body techniques such as Alexander Technique or BMC, movement techniques such as contact improvisation and various Asian martial arts were mixed with new (post)modern dance techniques (e.g. Cunningham, Limón) and the deconstruction of classical vocabulary (e.g. by Forsythe) broadened not only the technical basics of dance, but also its aesthetic approach. *Tanztheater* ('dance theater') used everyday gestures to bridge the realms of art and everyday life. The narrative disappeared in favor of fragmented montage-like choreography: the linearity of narration literally broke apart into 'dance pieces'. Contemporary dance questioned and defeated existing concepts concerning the nature of movement in breaks, stills, stumbles and falls. Not movement as flow, but interruption, not presence (as in the omnipresent media landscape), but rather absence (cf. Siegmund 2006) now became the focus of attention. Choreography increasingly became a matter of dramaturgy; whereas the once close link between dance and choreography gradually loosened. Choreography as an arrangement of movement, as work and as notation was in itself challenged and the previous dualisms of composition and improvisation, work and process were called into question. This development occurred analog to the rise of various new paradigms in the cultural sciences: whereas, in the 'linguistic turn', dance was considered text and choreography an order of language, after the 'performative turn' and its critique of representation, concepts such as liveness, presence/absence, instantaneousness, authenticity, identity or authorship took center stage in contemporary choreography. Whether in philosophical-theoretical references or in forms of aesthetic criticism or even in the presentation of illness, marginalization or ugliness, all these pieces addressed the un-portrayable, non-treatable, invisible in the portrayal of physical existence, physical 'truth' and physical difference.

Post-structuralist thinking did not only influence dance and choreographic practice. Although only rarely applied to dance, it also instituted a reversal in the

discourse surrounding the art of dance in modernity by calling into question Adorno's dictum of the autonomy of art – in part underpinned by a glorification of carnival or the search for hybrid forms of art and everyday life, art and pop – and furthermore challenging the respective 'specificity' of the arts, but also by gradually relieving dance of avant-garde aspirations. Thanks to post-structural thought, a paradox was thus revealed in the relationship between politics and dance, which is typical for modernity making it difficult for some to provide answers to questions concerning the political dimensions of dance and for others making these questions itself seem redundant. In other cases still, this paradox leads to the opinion that an affinity of dance and politics may even be damaging for dance itself. So what really constitutes this paradox?

IV.

According to the considerations of French philosopher Jacques Rancière (cf. Rancière 2006), it is a paradox that is deeply ingrained in the modern age: on the one hand, there is the emphasis on the freedom and autonomy of art, as well as the specific natures of the individual arts (in the case of dance as a physical art, transient art, etc.) and on the other, the aspiration of the avant-garde to play its part in the fulfillment of the principles of modernity.

This paradox is based on two antagonistic positions. First, we have a position that postulates the autonomy of dance and identifies it as pure art. According to this position, dance has special powers, because it produces poetry via abstract language liberated from the everyday functions of the body. Accordingly, dance in the modern age is comparable to pure movement, which is free from any analogy to language, as well as from any form of representation. Its relationship with the societal modern age is detached and analogical. Depending on the respective historic tide of events, this dance aesthetic is either considered sober and free of magic or radical and revolutionary. A prominent example of this dance aesthetic is the work of Merce Cunningham.

The other position is one that defines dance as a way of life and sees its task as that of fulfilling the claims of modernity to equality, self-fulfillment and emancipation. This position can be traced back e.g. to Friedrich Schiller's concept of the "aesthetic education of man". It can be found in the philosophy behind expressionist dance, in the importance that was ascribed to dance theatre in the past and the importance that is ascribed to dance today in current debates about cultural education. Dance is therein a specific physical-sensual way of accessing worlds and by providing people with this specific form of 'aesthetic

education', they are given the chance to live in a free and equal political community based on self-development. The societal modern age is thus faced with the challenge to implement the 'anthropogeny of humanity' in and through sensual forms and practices. Art – and especially dance as a corporeal art – is considered societal avant-garde and the ideal media capable of fulfilling this task.

Both positions provoke various aesthetic paradigms. The first position, which maintains the relative autonomy of dance and sees the revolutionary and emancipatory potential of dance in precisely this aspect, avoids associating dance with societal work, improving the world or the reintegration of alienated life. Adorno succintly formulated the paradox inherent in this position: "Insofar as a social function may be predicated of works of art, it is the function of having no function." (Adorno 1997: 336)

The other position, which seeks to bridge dance and life, inevitably has to depart from the concept of aesthetic experience – generally defined as a sensual experience distinct from everyday experience – in order to overcome the presumed difference between art and life. Instead its aim is to create forms of aesthetic experience everywhere: in art and politics, in sports and commerce, in work and leisure. It defines dance not as an alternative world, but as a meta-world that strives to do what politics – here meaning political institutional work – claims to do, but only indirectly realizes through laws and regulations, if at all: to change specific lifestyles. The paradox of this position consists in the fact that it ultimately makes art superfluous, namely when art merges with politics. How can this paradox of dance and politics as inscribed in modernity be resolved?

V.

One line of thought is not to understand dance and politics as two separate worlds, as autopoetic systems with their own rules, norms and values, but, in keeping with the words of philosopher Jacques Rancière, to see them as two forms of "dividing the sensual". Accordingly, dance and politics are interwoven strategies of a "politics of the kinaesthetic" and a "kinaesthetic policy". Politics is thus less to be understood as a form of power or institutional strategy and dance not as a field subsidized by politics or as a purely aesthetic practice. Instead, the political is here formulated normatively and focuses on only one aspect: political activity, which according to Rancière is "whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only

place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was only heard as noise." (Rancière 1991: 30)

Analog to linking the concept of the political to specific practices, aesthetics is therefore not simply art theory and the aesthetic not just a form of perception. Instead, the aesthetic is inscribed in political practice – precisely because these practices with their norms, rules and habits already determine sensual perception by socially positioning people, allocating social and political space for them to maneuver in and thus framing social perception. Exactly therein also lies the political dimension of the physical-sensual, of movement perception, in other words, the dimension of "kinaesthetic politics": a concept of political activity as the sensual practice of making cultural and social codes visible and shifting them – in such a way that they contradict the "police order" as Rancière calls it.

VI.

From this perspective, the relationship of dance and politics does not allow itself to be reduced to representative, interventionist or documentary aspects. In other words: the simple fact that there is and should be a lobby for dance, the fact that dance should become a fix element of cultural and educational policy and that dance must be documented better as knowledge culture, is self-evident. Intervention into the "police order" of the fabric of artistic, cultural and educational policy is an important and indispensable step.[2] However, political activity as a concrete-sensual practice, as a "politics of the aesthetic" is then only just beginning.

If cultural and educational politics are political intervention, then the "politics of the kinaesthetic" has consisted and consists of micro-politics in how "the practices and forms of the visibility of *dance* itself intervene in the division and rearrangement of the sensual" (Rancière 2006: 8).

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2 On this level, *Tanzplan Deutschland* (Dance Plan Germany), an initiative of the German Federal Cultural Foundation, has attempted the exceptional, shown courage and achieved something extraordinary and unique. Tanzplan Deutschland provided the framework for the potentiality of political practice. It has changed the topology of how contemporary dance is perceived: Hamburg – with K3, the Centre for Choreography and improved support for contemporary dance from the cultural authorities and other institutions in Hamburg in cooperation with Performance Studies University of Hamburg – is a good example of this.

From this perspective dance is not political per se, because it is a physical-sensual medium. For the same reason, it is also not non-political per se. It is rather, as I argue, political when the aesthetic practice grates against the reigning order, norms, habits and conventions – and not only grates against them, but also changes them.

So-called conceptual dance, as it emerged in Europe in the 1990s, mainly sought these micropolitics within the artistic process – and here also saw itself as an experiment with the social. There are traditions underlying this work – in Germany, too; we need only to think back on Gerhard Bohner's attempts at collective work (in Darmstadt) at the end of the 1960s. Contrary to the theories of many recent academic dance publications, contemporary dance, as an artistic practice, did not simply become political in the 1990s by focusing on collectives, on collaborations, on networks. These forms were neither new nor are they 'a field of experimentation' with the social, a 'model' of a reality to come. They are social, but as such not political per se. In my understanding, they are political when they attack the societal division of the sensual, i.e. transform norms and conventions, namely those that are always also distinctive and which include and exclude. And they are political when they produce a critical difference to the "kinaesthetic reality of the modern age" (Sloterdijk 1989: 25), but this also occurs via a critical theory and practice of gender, of the body (the dancing body and body concepts), of class and of post-colonial politics. And finally, they are political when they exist not only as functional networks, but also develop a sense of community: a feeling that does not declare community to be the goal, but assumes it as a precondition for the practices themselves. Politics as a concrete sensuous activity requires the creation of collective identities – and therefore these cannot be created solely through transient and non-binding networks and politics, however important these may be for dance.

VII.

Consensus is a favorite catchword of present-day politicians on the left, as well as the right, or better said: all those coming from right or left, who want to occupy the centre. But politics, as political theorists from Carl Schmitt to Karl Marx, i.e. right as well as left, agree, is created out of difference. It emerges where sensual perception and experience rub up against the traditional order. Many social movements – women's lib, the peace movement, gay and black rights – have proved this in practice. Because the political activity of these social movements – and this, too, is little noted by political theory – were and are

above all grounded in corporeal practices. Activists chaining themselves to radioactive containers, African-American women remaining seated on a bus, homosexual couples kissing in public, but also the choreo(graphic) politics of demonstrations, sit-ins or smart mobs – these and many other examples in the recent history show that political practices can change the order and perception of these "police orders" when above all expressed in the form of corporeal activity. Dance can be a medium for training corporeal perception. But – as Randy Martin (cf. Martin 1998) has shown: Dance is much more. Dance is a key area of the political and by questioning central categories, such as rhythm, force, space, time, energy, dynamics and flow, it sheds light on the kinetic foundations of modern society.

Seen from this perspective, the customary separation of dance from other areas of society, but above all the demarcations within the dance field itself – for example between dance as art, dance studies and dance education – are irrelevant. The political dissent of dance does not consist of the fact that artists, politicians, academics or teachers are so terribly different as to misunderstand one another and to (have to) distance themselves or their thoughts from one another. Instead it always occurs where the concrete practice of dance is confronted with an order that wishes to codify. This is an experience equally shared by academics, dance teachers and choreographers – although in different cultures, as well as in different ways in the context of hegemonic cultural policy.

To conclude: dance as politics is dissent, understood in the ancient Greek sense as *agon*, as an intellectual and sensual competition over the specific sensual conditions and possibilities of dance in the future.

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Between Intervention and Utopia: Dance Politics

RANDY MARTIN

SOCIALIST ENSEMBLES

Myriad are the intersections that locate dance in the realm of the political. The conceptions of who can move for what, the conventions by which people gather, the spaces made available, the training and preparation, notions of embodiment – all bear upon dance, and constitute the field of forces and constraints through which it is borne into being. Yet dance also makes its own politics, crafts its own pathways and agency in the world, moves us toward what we imagine to be possible and desirable. Dance tangibly if momentarily materializes bodies assembled on their own behalf, a social ensemble made by its own means towards its immediate ends. It gathers its public then disperses them suddenly, leaving a sensible residue of what has been and what can only be desired, namely the will to create more. An offering of what we can have together now, a promise manifest immediately of what we might be, dance sets in motion is and ought, it moves into the world pressing our surround to be otherwise, while it figures a taste of what world we might have if it were left to our own creative designs. Against the facile dismissal of political aspirations as forever insufficient to what they face, dance offers a surfeit of possibility, it makes legible the very means by which action is joined, measures taken, steps carried through. An ensemble that manufactures a social body that releases its own excess, that orients practical accomplishment toward itself, this expansive sense of the social that exists in and for itself, grounds a socialism that issues from the loins and beads of sweat made in movement together.

While dance is no one thing as much as it is all around, it is hardly sufficient to the world it would seek to render onto our public stages. Rather than in-

sist that all stay in line, keep in step, for politics, it must be insisted, dance is good to think with. To the expectation that a solitary performance make all the difference, can be the change it wants to see in the world, admittedly dance and protest share a certain predicament (cf. Foster 2003). Both organize ephemerality, stage disappearance, leave a sense of lack (if only more had been done to get people to come, if only some more, a few, a few hundred, the event would have made its mark). All the work of planning, rehearsing, propagandizing, arranging the space, coordinating the moment, meeting and meeting again, vanishes within moments of its consummation in the live act of inhabiting the appointed space. When the curtain closes, the march is done, the crowd disperses – where do all those people go? What do they bring with them of that fragile collectivity? How is the prowess of possibility traced when the ensemble in its unique condition of ensemble has been undone? What might give that glorious critical presence a longer run? The organizers, presenters, performers all know that their fate lies near, that the show cannot go on forever, that there will be a return. Surely the experience will have delivered its change, which now morphs into the fractured bodies and quotidian pathways still bristling with the achievement of the newly departed performance, but unsure of how to recognize its durable impression. A critique, a news notice passes judgment. It was good or bad, successful or not. But these cards of evaluation are stacked against the deck of this lone event.

Perhaps in both performance and protest, the lack lies not in what was put on display, but in how to notice the ways that an assemblage invited to take a different course, to move otherwise, now lives on. The movement for change and the changeful movement are most commonly viewed through the lens of arrest, the critical act of judgment fixes what it looks at, creates a theater for theory by stripping out the very motion that would take the event beyond itself. This regard of critical evaluation is tempted to freeze motion and fix the present, unmoor the ongoing movement that makes history from its animating ideas, in short to provoke a crisis of seeing that it ascribes to the thing it sees. To this sense that what we create is forever insufficient to what needs doing – a disposition that joins activism and art-making that compels further creativity but also dismisses the efficacy of what has been made – we need a corrective. To think, to see, to sense from within dance, is to take motion not stasis as our posture of evaluation.

To privilege dance analytically, as a critical method, invites thought from within its own conditions of movement, from the means through which bodies are assembled and not by the terms through which their impact is brought to an end. To find ourselves in dance is to locate our repertories of engagement as already in motion. And these self-making bodies move variously, interdependently, multiply. Even in unison, difference is legible. Choreography discloses mul-

tiplicity under an artistic signature. What seems to issue from one body rests upon the coordinated and interdependent effort of so many and occasions a self-expansive sociality. Dance is an ensemble of ensembles, an accomplishment of its own surplus that bequeaths a fateful remainder, an unabsorbable promise to all in attendance.

MOBILIZATION

In conventional politics, to characterize something as a dance is to see it as evasive, afield of authenticity, swirling around its object, somehow caught out of time unable to affect the progress it seeks. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this figurative invocation of dance suggests, "to lead**,** rarely give (a person) a dance; fig. to lead (him) in a wearying, perplexing, or disappointing course; to cause him to undergo exertion or worry with no adequate result" (cf. OED.com). A casual scan across the digital horizon would yield such phrases as "The Reconciliation Dance" (on politics and crime); "Wild Finance: Where Money and Politics Dance" (on the financial bailout); "The Dance of the Apologists" (on the persistence of racism in response to Obama's election) (cf. Google.com, December 2, 2009). Dance, in these examples, is a prelude to real decisions taken, more, it is a distraction side-stepping what really needs to get done if only a more muscular encounter could plant antagonists firmly before one another. The political stage is already set, its props familiar, the characteristics, motives, and methods of its dramatis personae already known. The actors take their places, ready to make history once the music stops and the distracting dance comes to an end.

Despite this script for heroic narrative, the agency therein, is thoroughly diminished. Actions unfold in a time and space that have been preordained, the parameters of difference, the staging of conflict, the drama of decision already determined by conditions fixed in advance. For dance to exert its politics, it must be demetaphorized, reliteralized, its body must be entered and effects felt as conditions of perception. Lived from within, dance is not locked in time and space, not an apostle at the Cartesian altar, but an apostate of containment. Dance allows it achievements to appear to precede it, its compelling capacity to inhabit time and space, to make of these its art, rests upon its own artifice, its internal devices for generating the very environment in which it takes place.

The shift in perspective from movement to mobilization names this salient distinction. It forces our attention on how space and time are accomplished, on how agency (the forces that bear a critical idea) and history (the material embo-

diment of possibility) are intertwined. By this reckoning within the terms of dance, choreography and performance constitute precisely this fragile dialectic between political becoming and being, a desire for difference and a capacity for realization. Choreographic agency proceeds from training and conception to rehearsal and staging to enunciate the occasion by which we gather ourselves, while performance is a moment of realization whereby the immediate public, the unstable audience (cf. Blau 1990) constitutes the reception through which further mediation, efficacy and impact will transpire.

The double temporality by which the dance moves towards its performative ends and the public is assembled out of its own diffuse corporality marks this fleeting co-production of a tangible space and time. This ongoing mobilization, is made legible in performance but also seemingly brought to an end by it, the critical presence thereby assembled passes from history as a constitutive to its own historical trace of the event past. That the dance unleashes its physicality as a practical capacity to assemble, also speaks to the movements elsewhere, the mediations, or social-corporal media through which a danced idea percolates through the world. The dance of politics is not a prelude to its becoming reality, but rather, a realization of its operations, its play of script and inscription, the images that form on its bodily materializations. Yet the conventional language for politics is all about stop and go, failure and success, loss and gain. Steps are recorded without the movement that would allow us to see what made it possible for these measures to be taken, what other forces still move in our midst, what multiplicities were unleashed when the ultimate decree was rendered. Without mobilization, politics is only crisis, an arrest of its own conditions of possibility without hope of how these might be superceded. The omnipotent theoretical gaze fixes what it regards, deprives its object of the motion internal to thought, brings what it sees into crisis. Mobilization is the perspective of that which is already in motion, that whose turning point invariably turns into something else, which provides its means to continue past arrested conditions. Thinking through dance, keeps its object in sight as it continues to move with what animates reflection, the incessant assembly and dissolution of what and how we move. To address how movement may sidestep its compulsions, affect its own counterpoints, drive itself into unacknowledged registers, even surpass its own initiatives and impulses, dance delivers amplitude of understanding.

SOCIAL KINESTHETIC

Dance is an art that is not one. Neither singular in where it comes from nor fixed in where its goes, it can be found anywhere, at any time. Too often regulated by definition, boundaries policed by formal preference, it is more generatively understood and put to work through its operations, methods and effects. It is no less possible to imagine a language of dance's critical techniques than to catalog its esthetic registers and to classify preferences for what gets to be called (and who is allowed to hail) that moveable feast devoured as dance. A few gestures toward that critical analytic grammar can be offered, but certainly dance will not be exhausted through such exercises. Dance is at once a vast and immeasurable inventory of concepts and practices. But it is also a promissory note by which we can give value to movement in our midst. Such a gambit requires a constant shuttling between abstract and concrete, elaborate flights and sticky encumbrances. Dance will be invoked and inscribed in exercising and discharging this double duty.

Past and present share a moment in dance, as reconstructions display as much about movement that once was as it does about steps that have never left us. Dance gathers what is temporally durable and ephemeral, the deep knowledge of how bodies are mutually enabling and how pregnant each moment can be. The body is a movable archeology, it layers the long duree of bipedalism, the composite of what is mediated from elsewhere and what presses flesh-to-flesh, the hammered rhythms of urban density and global migrations, the restless appropriations, the ceaseless citations, the unauthored innovations. Dancing articulates this time of times, it crafts a passageway for difference to converge – albeit fragilely, momentarily. While dance traverses a multiple temporality, its spatial arrays are no less complex. Moving together anywhere encumbers a debt to others elsewhere. Performance is but one currency of repayment. Theft is but one instance of damage, but permission to give what has already been taken typically proves elusive. Dance bears all the traces of where people have been forced to move and where they have forced movement, of how the body has been shackled and what might constitute its emancipation, of ways around its detractors and novel applications of its cooperation.

If dance's specificity is a reflexive mobilization, an assemblage of how we move together to disclose where we might get to, a material inscription of the time and space that assembles social bodies making their world, its idioms, methods, occasions, and effects cannot be readily regulated by aesthetic fiat. Restricted to the genealogy of the western proscenium, the concert stage, dance is as a consequence considered a minor art form. But as a minority discourse, a condensation of the unspoken and unthought repertory of embodied practice,

dance is a crucial analytic method that makes legible a larger sweep of how we move together. Of course in the expanded field of cultural and corporal practice, there is plenty of dance to go around, and few steps need to be taken to run into it. While dance can be affiliated with its global manifestations and articulated with popular and professional body techniques like sport, its principles of operation and affinity, its means of appropriation and innovation, suggest a broader corporal mapping of society as ongoing movement. Yet before there is movement, enunciation or inscription, there needs to be some shared sensibility, some array of physical pressures and agglutinations that orient and dispose what may get produced as bodily practice and what might get concatenated in dance practices. This predicate of movement, this disposition to assemble, adhere, pass through, align and locomote, the physical grounds and motional loam of a particular social and historical conjuncture, can be called a social kinesthetic.

Hence, it is not enough to say that the lineaments of embodied practice have a history, it is also important to ascertain the ways in which they make history. As such, social kinesthetics emerge and recede in relation to other societal formations, constitutions of population, aggregations of collective capacity and wealth. The combined histories of capitalist development and underdevelopment, the colonial trick of civilizational subjugation, the imperial displacements of periphery to metropole, the great sorting of population by race, the gendered differentiation of space into public and private, the normalization of libidinal economies into straight and queer, the rendering of nature into a salvageable and manageable environment, the parsing of belief into reason and faith, the cleavage of knowledge by metrics of expertise – compel the world to be wrought in terms of a global body, a mighty and unrealized corporal humanity. Efficiency, rationalization, integration, individuation, universalism, progress, freedom, enlightenment, modernization are the watchwords of this grand social kinesthetic.

But just as these forces are marshaled to make the body, a body, the human body cohere at the center of its universe, consummating the value of the upright, the balanced, the gyroscopic momentum freeing and gravity defying energies of transcendence as a centering kinesthetic calling all to get in line, much more was slipping out and away, reorienting itself and redirecting its flows. The vivid and manifold movements of decolonization would voice themselves in a thousand chants that collide and collude in an irrepressible polyrhythm. The contest between the forces that center and decenter bodies in movement is no less resolved than that between colonization and decolonization as such. The efforts to liberate nations from the stronghold of their colonial formation, which led in the 1950s to the declaration of a third world, one out of alignment with the polarizing grip of Cold War geo-politics are still being played out in what is now more commonly

referred to as the global south (cf. Ahmad 1992). And just as the networked movements of the 1960s would render political whole realms of endeavor once consigned to the unactionable grounds of unconscious desire, the private, the spaces of reproduction, consumption and domesticity, new technologies of enclosure, control, data-mining and intellectual property, commodification of affect and traffic in bodily material would devise all manner of capture media.

In the friction between social kinesthetics, in the myriad combinations of movement, bodily practices emerge that craft disparate principles of congregation, alignment, affiliation, routes of passage and historical locomotion. While the decolonization of the mind yields vast archives of writing, voicing, critique, that of the body produces manifold repertories of motional expression, bodily stylistics, physical resonance (cf. Wa Thiongo 1986). More than a struggle of control and refusal, of domination and resistance, of appropriation and escape, the politics and practices that issue from a given social kinesthetic make tangible the resources of mobilization, the aesthetics of difference, the mediations of social ensembles, the deepening techniques of mutuality that forge their ways in the world. Hence decolonization breaches that seal that had governed movement verticality, much dance emerges in the break and in turn, the physicalization of movement breaks open what is taken to be dancing. Certainly, one instance of this break is referred to as the postmodern, a valorization of the pedestrian over the exalted, of ensemble composition and improvisation over a possessive choreographic authority, of a participative community over a proscenium-divided audience, of a spatial diffusion of where dance might occur against a hierarchy of specialized theatrical venues.

No doubt, the break or periodization scheme is easy to overstate, as those artists clustered as modern where the contemporaries of those designated as postmodern, and the larger narrative of succession through formal innovation so fundamental to the ethos of modernism was carried forward. Yet if we widen our critical optic beyond esthetic evaluation and stylistic innovation, the genealogies that lead from Judson Church to contact improvisation, to the urban dance scenes of San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, Boston, New York, as well as Montreal, Paris, Berlin, Havana, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Tokyo, a different principle of association will hove into view – one already hinted at when the fable of an originary location for an avant-garde is subject to greater scrutiny (cf. Burt 2006). At issue here are not some ultimate bragging rights as to where it all began, but a re-valuation of how movement moves, of diasporic dispersions of style, of a certain corporal globalization.

The decentered social kinesthetic sets many practices into global circulation, and by so doing spreads a different means by which mobilization takes place.

Capoeira, for example, which shares with contact improvisation the reorientation of upward alignment, spends a century under construction in Brazil before becoming part of an international attention to traveling movement practices (cf. Browning 1995; Lewis 1992). Break-dance too elaborates upon the released hips of black popular dance, incorporates call-and-response forms grounded in practices such as the ring-shout, and inverts the cosmology of up and down, front and back (cf. Gottschild 2003; Banes 1979; Stuckey 1987). Boarding culture, from its appropriation of a centuries-old Hawaiian practice in the desuburbanized beachfront of Los Angeles, and translation from surfing ocean waves to skating the edges of empty swimming pools, to shattering the pristine moguls of ski slopes, is branded as extreme (sport) even as it continues its street routes (cf. Borden 2001).

While these practices span diverse geographies and populations, and evoke disparate performance protocols and ensemble ethos, they also share dimensions of lateral affiliation, an expansive valorization of quotidian spaces, a commitment to flying low when high flying mobility has visited such ruin, and perhaps above all, an engagement with the production of risk as a promise of self-appreciation and unexpected gain (cf. Feher 2009). Surely these practices share the ambiguous legacy of appropriation and commercialization, of sponsors and celebrity, but it is safe to say that none are exhausted by these conventions of market culture. While individual risks may be captured as exemplary, the expanded capacities for what bodies do together, for what ground they break, for the desires they unleash, the debts they place in circulation, and the demands they place upon one another in a sustainable sociality, all point to a more ambitious realization of this potential for moving otherwise. The social kinesthetic is the loam from which emerges this ceaseless stream of possibility.

RISK

An inventory of the movement capacities unleashed by the decentered social kinesthetic of decolonization lends itself to a veritable visceral exuberance. By the 1980s, dance typed as experimental, to say nothing of sport labeled extreme, would be celebrated for its embrace and elaboration of risk (cf. McNamee 2007). There is certainly dance that courts danger, that demands sustained exertion, relishes speed, and subjects bodies to an edgy precarity, foregrounding risk also pursued the arts of surprise, violation of expectation, trespass of norm that might more readily place established cultural norms in danger of being disturbed. Risk in this regard, fueled dance's gift economy. By enjoining participants to rely so

highly upon one another for making and sustaining art, the cultural discount of free labor (cf. Ross 2000) crafted an intimacy of social engagement that made the immediacy of an idealized community an offering for what could be conceived as society. But this affirmative conception of risk, the generous grasp of what could be ventured to make the most of creative excesses, quickly met its evil twin.

The dance world was under assault by a series of forces that also fell under the rubric of risk. Certainly there was acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), which made its epidemiological debut identified as Gay Related Complex by the government body for public health, the Centers For Disease Control (cf. Altman 1986). That risky dance was in many ways queer to normal habits of movement, that it distressed notions of monogamous non-touching intimacy, that it rendered movement itself promiscuous, unbounded, voracious, seemed a condition destined to draw dance into the victimology by which the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) was initially called to account. The anxiety that some category of subject carries baleful qualities that can quickly infect others with the purported failure of being is known as a moral panic (cf. Hall et al. 1978). The notion of a racially encoded crime wave is modeled on one such instance of contagion. Queer sexuality certainly qualifies as well. Art that produces a state of risk not readily reabsorbed into standard metrics of worth would also stand for an unbearable risk. No doubt such reasoning was in evidence when four of eighty-thousand grants conferred by the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States were deemed indecent to some imagined community's standards of propriety (cf. Yudice 2003). And yet to stop the spread of such bad risk, the Endowment itself would need to be defunded. At stake, of course, were not huge sums – or even monies commensurate with the expansive impact of the arts in question, let alone sufficient to either arrest or enable an arts economy. Rather, the excessive attention given to public funding of the arts stood in for the question of what the social body itself might be entitled to as a condition of its further development.

Within this constellation, dance met its own public controversy in the form of the accusation of victim art that critic Arlene Croce directed at choreographer Bill T. Jones. The manifest claim was that a work entitled *Still/Here*, placed dying bodies onstage and transgressed the line between life and artistic representation, and justified a criticism based on a refusal of the critic to actually view the piece. Underneath lay an accusation that Jones had deigned to speak back to the critic from his privileged place onstage. By so doing, he usurped her role, making criticism itself a victim of dance's newfound powers of representation (cf. Croce 1994; Martin 1996). This displacement of expertise, the loss of the spe-

cialist's authority, already anticipated in dance's own decolonizing pedestrian turn, was now directed at the object over which it once claimed mastery. Clearly, dance was not alone in this predicament of seeing its very expansion or democratization, its expanded access and energized publics, now turning back on its ability to govern its own practices, reception, and valuation. In this, dance shared a circumstance with the larger condition known as the postmodern (cf. Lyotard 1984). But what was then viewed as an undermining of the sweeping narrative by which all peoples would be given a history, now in the context of what came to be called the culture wars, looks more like a skepticism toward the authority of specialized knowledge, the very petit recit whose decentring triumph the postmodern was said to celebrate.

Dance – at least as referenced here – stood at the crossroads of a much larger conjuncture. Its exploration of risk looked as though it might have been drowned in the din of something called the risk society (cf. Beck 1992). Its expanded valorization of movement seemed to suffer the same menacing disorientation as the more general mistrust of expertise. Its commitment to the experimental, the speculative, the detour from security, came face to face with a generalized logic of accountability, hyper-productivity driven investment, and loss of a social compact dedicated to securing the domestic population (cf. Klein 1997; Power 1997; Harvey 2005). This is not to say that the traps known as neoliberalism, neoconservatism, globalization, privatization, deregulation, re-engineering, shock therapy, and the like where lying in wait to take up dance's every move. Rather, it is to remember that what we take as a ruling notion has its roots elsewhere and lives with the likes of which it cannot abide and that suggest what else is already available.

Yet by dismantling what once had been a material commitment to security on the basis of citizenship was now shifting from a public good to a presumably private initiative. A basic cleavage became legible, a sorting of population between those who could bear risk, who can manage it for their own pecuniary and existential gain, and those who failed to meet the demands of these various metrics, those who passed into this failed state would be termed the at risk. The line between the risk capable and the at-risk could be crossed at any time, as the recent subprime meltdown in the United States made abundantly clear. Removing the means of security from a population treats them as an enemy within, one best dealt with through the framework of war. A series of such domestic wars ensued, signaled by a study commissioned in 1983 by then President Ronald Reagan to eliminate the department of education and pave the way for private and religious primary and secondary schooling where public education with its reliance on progressive tax revenues, once stood. The report, *A Nation At Risk* analogized

low tests scores of students when compared to those in other countries as a threat to national security tantamount to a condition of war (National Commission on Excellence in Education). A war metaphor was also central to the *No Child Left Behind Legislation* implemented two decades later under George W. Bush, which treated kids as casualties who would be rescued by raising their test scores. This war on education, was joined by a war on crime, drugs, welfare, culture and the arts, each designed to evacuate local autonomy in the name of nationally enforced remedial measures. The notion that some small portion of the population might detonate a failure for the rest also became the basis for the preemptive logic of the war on terror (cf. Martin 2007).

The future was not for the waiting, but needed to be anticipated and acted upon in the present. As such, the affirmative management of risk, the realization of excessive gain through a speculative venture, shared a temporal sensibility with the negative condition of risk. The focus of economic policy shifted from maximizing growth to minimizing inflation, from planning for the future through public investments to controlling monetary flows through interest-rate adjustments. The presumption that lay behind the policy shift was that few would undertake financial risks if their gains would be eroded through inflation, and indeed the double-digit inflation of the seventies left stock market participation to but one in ten U.S. households. By the time of the Internet bubble in the late 1990s, more than half of households held some kind of financial portfolio (cf. Martin 2007). Unlike savings, or earlier logics of home ownership based on the adage, "buy-and-hold" liquidity, the ability to set money into motion became the order of the day (cf. Bryan/Rafferty 2006). The failure of the risk management models to maintain liquidity was the proximate cause of the financial meltdown that erupted in 2007. The shock and awe promised by the brilliant formulae quickly turned to disappointment and disbelief. Over and over again we heard incredulity toward the inability of financial knowledge to control its domain. "They were the smartest guys in the room. How could they have so completely misunderstood what they were doing?" (cf. McLean/Elkind 2003) If this faith in small numbers and a few brilliant minds turned out to be misplaced, if the obscure ideas rehearsed in small rooms proved incapable of delivering on there promise of risk, might there be some other quarter for risk making to which we might want to again direct our attentions. Perhaps the standard polarity of smart minds and dumb bodies would need to be reversed if risk would again seem to be a gambit worth undertaking.

UTOPIA AND INTERVENTION

The regime of risk just described was not simply an ideology, a mode of cognition, or a way of knowing – though surely it was all these things. The appeal of risk was to a new kind of being, one that eschewed security for self-appreciation, unexpected gain – above all risk would be subject to somatization, embodied, borne peripatetically. The vendors of risk management when asked how to ascertain whether an investment portfolio had an appropriate load for the individual in question would typically reply, "can you sleep at night". Risk thus became a kind of dream, a delivery from the future to the present. But this rush of what was to come into the realm of what now is offers a very different time sense than the conventional formulation of modernist utopia as a space from elsewhere in a time still to come. The dreamscape that claimed a life of hard work and labor would lead to emancipation from work in the form of retirement and a better life to the generations to come was capital's utopia that rested on an allochronic sense of time, one securely set-off from the present. If the protocols of risk reconfigure time, they also reconstitute spatial sensibilities. While the old forms of consumer credit and debt dating to the days of Henry Ford assuming life-long employment in a firm or occupation, a career, and a stable home where one could repair from the exhausting demands of the work-day, the drive to flexibility usurped continuous employment and the home joined other forms of consumer credit as a liquid asset to be bundled with other debts, such as mortgages and securities (cf. Allon 2008). Lost were the anchoring relations of work and home to location, community, neighborhood as a spatial heartland. Drawing together debts from disparate sources and far-flung locations, slicing these financial assets according to their risk attributes, rendering local experience a function of widely dispersed affiliations and associations, a vertiginous series of effects was in evidence in both the subprime meltdown and the war on terror. Intervention – the sense of being able to act anywhere without proximate cause – shifted from a realm of necessity to one of discretion, from a fixed space to a spatial fix.

At this point, the production of time and space, the embodiment of risk, the tangible offering of what can be and what is – all of which form such potent aspects of the present moment – find an immediate and coherent articulation in dance. Understandably, dance that is considered both experimental and speculative draws upon some of the very metrics of risk association with the expansion of rampant managerialism and burgeoning financial investment. The movement in question would share a social kinesthetic whose political effects it could not fully master. Dance work in these newly blossoming urban scenes would be flexible in ways that managerial humanism with its focus on quality circles, teams,

and other intimate ensembles would come to celebrate (cf. Gordon/Newfield 1996). The pick-up company could be taken as a kind of prototype for the self-managed, project-based, occasion-generated collaboration that was a celebrated feature of the new managerial approaches to conventional organizations (cf. de Monthoux 2004). But if dance would join other artistic profiles as the poster-children for a gentrifying, neo-liberal fantasy of economic renewal dubbed the creative class, dancers would also get caught, resist, and redirect the naïve bait-and-switch promises of these schemes. Here the formalism of risk management mirrors the esthetically-empty paeans of the creative class; to wit, gather artists in de-industrialized and blighted urban cores, add cafes, bars, theaters, mix and stir (cf. Pasquinelli 2008). The facile measures used to justify such programs definitively lacked a utopian aspect. Nor did they see in aggregations of artists' squats, collectives, self-organization and auto-production an intervention that might challenge the assimilation, appropriation and cooptation of artistic energies (cf. Sholette/Thompson 2004).

Surely, resolving dance's utopian energies and interventionist capacities into a single esthetic, a unitary organizational form, or a typical mode of dissemination would be equally problematic as the esthetic indifference common to much policy discussion in the arts. Symptomatic here is the rise of community-based arts as a funding rubric that would replace critical operations with promised delivery of social services in the name of authentic non-specialist ties (cf. Kwon 2002; Kester 2004). For dance, the move to community in this respect, whether popular-front inspired works of the 1930s, or the turn to the pedestrian associated with the postmodern, the professionalization of dance education and dance therapy, all represented multiple possibilities for affiliation that preceded the constitution of community-based work as a funding rubric that could soften the threatening aspects of work considered avant-garde. Croce's invocation of victim art slyly performs an esthetic essentialism for what she takes to be the literal transcription of real dying bodies into the protected sanctuary of artistic representation. Here, the irony of the criticism (lost to the critic) for this particular dance was that far from a spectacle of night-of-the-living-dead shuffling, *Still/Here* exhibited an excessive exuberance for dance in the face of death, an extensive inventory of dance styles, pyrotechnic abilities that precisely assembled a power to keep going when confronted with the threat to arrest movement and silence consideration of the work it should be permitted to do.

That dance has a capacity to stage such a close and productive encounter between what are often treated as discreet and incompatible temperaments, the vision of what could be and the move into what is, needs to be taken as testimony to how critical attentions could be effectively organized. In one way the break in

the visual arts between utopian and interventionist dispositions is redolent of the periodizing associations of the modern and postmodern as such (cf. Jameson 1984). Accordingly, the utopian belongs to an older avant-gardist metaphysic by which the artist, freed by their very marginality from society, offers a vision of the future that those ground by numbing normalizations cannot perceive. The interventionist sensibility would thereby provide a needed corrective, wherein artistic initiatives would issue from the pragmatic ground, take the long march through institutions as its canvas or medium, install, occupy, parody, reappropriate in order to demonstrate that direct action is possible and can, even if momentarily, disclose what the world can be (cf. Rossiter 2006). Notice that this last aspect, the coercive, corrective function's association with the tragic form is quickly turned comedic in a way that suggests something no less utopian, namely the cry that the world can be different and the confidence to state what this difference might entail. The art work does not substitute for the social service, but provides a spatial portrait and a temporal proxy, a momentary timeshift that seizes the imagined future.

Certainly there is exciting dance work that shares an interventionist sensibility. It is in-your-face, or in-the-streets, or extensively-online, or amidst-a-demonstration, or none-or-all of these things (cf. Gere 2004; Chatterjee 2004; Albright 1997). That is to say, dance is both caught up in a range of esthetic and political currents of which it cannot claim authorship, and a meshing ground where ensembles, mobilizations, kinesthetics, affiliations and associations can be composed and mixed. Dance does inscribe visions of how we can move together. It does array and concentrate forces and differences in manners both demonstrable and sustainable. It does report on what a very few can accomplish together, that can be passed on and enable passing, open passages. It can recalibrate time, detail its shifts, manufacture its assemblies. All of this is very tangible material of which life – as we know it and might want it – could be assembled. Dance moves into a space but also makes room out of what it inhabits, invites gatherings of publics and enhances their capacities to pay attention, give audition, conduct kinesthetic effects and affects elsewhere (cf. Savigliano 1995).

Surely the complexity and scale of what makes life and what ails it can seem incomprehensible, unmovable, impermeable. Yet attention is repeatedly paid to those small rooms where such generalized harm was meted out, the meetings where decisions were made to war, to expropriate, to enclose. Dance offers a different intimacy of attention, an alternative somatization of risk, a sustainability of difference, a mutuality of debt that can also be shared, leveraged, embraced. We are living an excess that breeds so much scarcity. There is time to turn to what registers an excess in small spaces, tiny movements, unexpectedly expan-

sive reliance that begins to assemble how else we might move together and how we might continue where these fleeting yet persistent performances leave off. Therein lays dance's promise beyond any singular incarnation, to amplify its means and methods toward a social that exceeds itself, a danced socialism from each accordingly toward all that find need in realizing what they want.

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Dance and Work: The Aesthetic and Political Potential of Dance

BOJANA KUNST

MOVEMENT BURSTING ON THE DIVIDING LINE

The first film ever made captured the movements of the workers of the Lumière factory collectively surging through the factory gates upon leaving their workplace at the end of the day (1895). This same film also opened the performance *1 poor and one 0* by BADco., a Zagreb-based performance group[1]. This mass exodus from the factory not only marks the beginning of cinematic history, but also the problematic relation between cinema and labor, which is also explored in Harun Farocki's documentary and text of the same title *Arbeiter Verlassen die Fabrik* (1995). In his commentary of the documentary, Farocki states that the primary aim of the movie was to represent motion, using the mass exodus of the workers. According to Farocki, there may also have been signposts helping the workers coordinate their movements when exiting the factory. Interestingly, this invisible movement takes place along specific lines, those marking the difference between labor and leisure time, between the industrial process and the factory, on the one hand, and the private lives of the workers, on the other. The movements of the workers, their simultaneously organized and spontaneous dispersal into different directions is choreographically organized as movement and filmically framed by the line separating the enclosed industrial space from

1 BADco. is a collaborative performance collective based in Zagreb, Croatia (from 2000). The artistic core of the collective are Pravdan Devlahović, Ivana Ivković, Ana Kreitmeyer, Tomislav Medak, Goran Sergej Pristaš, Nikolina Pristaš and Zrinka Užbinec.

private life, strictly rationalized procedures and so-called flexible leisure time. This is a line dividing dull work organization from leisure, when the workers can enjoy themselves, the mass organization of work and the atomized private lives of the workers. The dispersal of the workers renders their place of work invisible: the door to the factory is closed after their departure and the space, in which labor occurs, is left in darkness. Farocki mentions, that in the history of the cinema, the insides of factories were highlighted only when somebody wanted to leave, break it down or organize a strike. It was thus only featured when it became a space of conflict and was not only a dull, repetitive space to work in (cf. Farocki 2008: 1).

The whole performance *1 poor and one 0* revolves around that dividing line, always re-entering through that door, which is marked on stage by a simple crossbar. The performers repeatedly come through the gate, copying the movements of the workers in Lumière's movie. It almost seems as if they are in a motion picture experiment by Edward Muybridge, combining many short sequences of movement to give an impression of timing. In between these scenes, they discuss work-related issues: "What happens when you get tired? What happens when you leave work behind? When is the work we devote ourselves to exhausted? What comes after work? More work? What happens when there is no more work?" In the performance, these discussions clearly refer back to historical aspects of labor in the 20th century, especially to the gradual disappearance of that aforementioned dividing line. In this sense, they add another aspect to Farocki's observations. The place of work is no longer in darkness, but dispersed all over. It is not only a constituent part of leisure time, but intrinsically connected with its creative and transformative potential. By constantly repeating the movements from the 'first ever choreographed' movie, the performance becomes a collection of fragments and memories of movements, revealing that the first movie ever made arrived through a door, which today seems to have been taken off its hinges.

The movement of the workers is captured on a doorstep, which no longer exists; today there is no longer a dividing line between the movements of bodies subject to the rational organization of work and the dispersed atomization of society. Not only is the division between work and life being erased in post-industrial society; the essential qualities of life after work (imagination, autonomy, sociality, communication) have actually turned out to be at the core of contemporary labor.

FREEDOM OF SINGULAR MOVEMENT

How is the disappearance of the dividing line between labor and leisure time related to contemporary dance and the conceptualization of movement? To answer this question, I would first like to briefly reflect on the appearance of contemporary forms of dance in the 20th century and in particular how their aesthetical and political potential is continuously being formed in a complex relationship with existing production modes. There are many issues where the organization of labor production and the conceptualization of movement converge in the history of contemporary dance (like scientific management, movement reforms, return to the natural body, etc.), however, these aspects are especially intriguing where they are intertwined with the political and aesthetical potential of dance.

It is a well-known fact that, from the beginning of the 20th century, new dance forms were experienced as something strongly connected to the potentials of the contemporary human being. Autonomous movement of the body opened new potentials of human experience and relationships, and had strong emancipatorial effects on the understanding of the future. To put it simply, the new, modern forms of dance (Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Mary Wigman, etc.) were perceived as breaking with old modes of perception. They provided the possibility of a new aesthetic experience, because of their intrinsic relationship between movement and freedom, which was presupposed in almost every attempt at movement reform. Even today, as Bojana Cvejić writes, "dance still works as a metaphor for going beyond contracts, systems, structures, as models of theorizing subjectivity, art, society, and politics" (Cvejić 2004: n.p.). According to her, this might be because "movement operates from the middle of things. Makes us step outside the pre-determination of points and positions. Expresses the potential of moving relations." (Id.) It thus seems that movement itself is intrinsically political, in the sense that it tackles relationality and the dynamics of expression, the potentiality of what it could or could not be. However, in that 'middle of things', movement also operates in the introductory image of the text, in the image where we see the workers exiting the factory. Movement is captured to disappear into the unknown future; nevertheless it came from a particular threshold, which frames the potential of moving relations in a very specific way. This potential is then developed outside the rationalized organization of labor; outside the Fordist structure of production, it is the potential of movement that springs from life without work. Alliances, relations, divisions exist outside the factory, in the space which not only becomes a political space, but also a field of autonomous aesthetic experience in which the crisis of the subject, new methods of kinaesthetic perception were developed and institutionalized through the history

of art in the 20th century. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the dance reforms of the early 20th century appeared at the same point in time as the movement of the working body was being heavily rationalized in the Fordist factory: as the organization of production was based on a scientifically researched kinaesthetic experience, which instrumentalized the movements of the body to increase the efficiency of production. The (largely female) dance pioneers (Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller, Ruth St. Denis, Mary Wigman, Valentine du Saint Point, etc.) entered the stage at a time when the organizational model of labor had become omnipresent, when all forms of false, expressive, slow, still, unexpected, wrong, clumsy, personal, lazy, ineffective, imaginative, additional movement was eliminated from physical labor. The utopian relationship between movement and freedom in the early stages of contemporary dance and dance reform was therefore associated with a notion of abstract freedom, but expressed the potential of moving relationships outside the factory door. This was the freedom of another kinaesthetic experience, which would not yield to instrumentalization or be subject to work, but discover the inner potential of the body.

One of the ways of describing this experience is the discovery of the 'natural body', which had less to do with resistance to the mechanization of contemporary life (whereby the term 'natural' wrongly implies that it is only about the difference between natural and artificial) and more with the discovery of a new universality, the natural sympathy of one body for another, as, for example, described by John Martin (cf. Martin 1990). The moving relations are no longer subordinated to dull routine and rationalization, but oscillate between the newly atomized society of capitalism and the new kinaesthetic subjects of industrialized western society.

I would like to argue that the appearance of dance reform and modern dance provided a movement and moving alternative to the kinaesthetic experience behind the factory door, which demanded the kinaesthetic sympathy of one body for another (and of course between body and machine) in order to create an efficient work process. We can even say that the feeling of modernity, contemporaneity of dancing, this disclosure of the kinaesthetic potentiality of body, was connected to the new kinaesthetic experience of leisure time, to this unknown and dynamic transversal outside work that is no longer subject to rational organization and the instrumentalization of movement. This is where we come to the core of the freedom implied in the emancipatory potential of dance. The conceptualization of movement in dance reform concerned the freedom of time without work, the discovery of the potential of leisure time, as opposed to the dull routine of movement during work. Movement expresses the potential of moving relationships within the creative time of the non-laboring subject. This can also be

connected to the emerging consuming class, where movement reveals the unexpected, imagination, privacy, chance, flexibility, and discloses its expressive power. Here, time without work also becomes time for new aesthetic experiences. Contemporary dance had to develop new techniques, which could transform this freedom into language, develop the open virtuosity of the moving body rather than that of the instrumentalized product, and unleash spontaneity of movement as an aesthetic language rather then the scientific naturalization of movement. In this sense, the political and aesthetical potential of dance in the 20th century was strongly intertwined with the exit from the factory.

MOVEMENT OF GENERALITY

From this perspective, it is also interesting how popular imagination dealt with the work processes in the factory. Fordist production was often represented as synchronized group dancing, whereas dancing together functioned as an ornamental or critical representation of the subjugation of the worker's body to the industrialized and mechanistic processes in the factory. However, the only way to disturb this collective process came from the intervention of a singular body, from a body, which couldn't follow, was to clumsy, slow, dreamy, lazy or expressive, a body which took to much freedom to move, to express, or to achieve something.[2] Exactly these physical qualities, which prevented the body from dancing with others, were understood as expressions of humanism, or even better – of uncontrollable and undisciplinable human nature. The singular kinaesthetic experience continuously resisted the tuning of the group and its subjugation to the rationalized social machine.

However – what, in 20th century capitalist societies, was an expression of freedom, became, in other ideological constellations, the sabotage of society in general, the representation of an obsolete individualism, which is not able to adjust itself to the new transformations of society. I especially have in mind here the communist countries of Europe, where the image of dancing together functions as a depiction of societies where the dividing line between factory and private life is ideologically erased. Communist systems adopted all movement reforms in the production and work process, but did so with a different underlying concept. The socialist defenders of Taylorism (which included Lenin himself) understood the scientific management of work as a tool for the management of a

2 A famous example is Charlie Chaplin as working at a conveyor belt in the movie *Modern Times* (1936).

new society, where there would be no door between the factory and private life. In fact, there was a lot of discussion among Soviet communists and Russian avant-gardists on the hidden potentials of Taylorism and Fordism, which, in their opinion, went unnoticed by the Western capitalists, who had invented both. Lenin wrote that the Western (capitalist) implementation of Fordism, so it was believed, alienated the workers and developed an authoritarian method of organizing work. Socialist reformers and avant-gardists believed that the new methods of working together could transform society in general. The simultaneous movement of the workers was understood as a transgressive and transformative poetic form through which the development of the new society could materialize. Such was the conviction of A.K. Gastev, for example, one of the chief engineers and directors of the Central Institute of Labor in Moscow (he became its director in 1920). Gastev not only introduced Taylorist methods to the UdSSR and developed them further, but was also a famous poet, celebrating the new power of industrialized labor and the merging of the human being with the machine. In his poems, he developed rhythmical language to describe the new production process, where the workers would move and transform the entire historical era through their joint work.

"When the morning whistles resound over the workers' quarters, it is not at all a summons to slavery. It is the song of the future.
There was a time when we worked in poor houses and started our work at different hours of the morning.
And now, at eight in the morning, the whistles sound for a million men.
A million workers seize the hammers in the same moment.
Our first blows thunder in accord.
What is it that the whistles sing?
It is the morning hymn to unity." (Gastev/Bogdanov 1932: 357)

It is well known that the movement reforms of the Russian avant-garde (Meyerhold, Foregger, and partially – in the European context – also those of Laban) were heavily influenced by the new production processes, by their abstraction and rationalization. The movement reformers sought to abstract the body away from its interiority and develop an effective gestural language. In other words, they wanted to develop new kinaesthetic dynamics through the efficient use of gesture and a sharp instrumentalization of the body. Meyerhold, for example, began to rationalize the apparatus of movement; the actor's body also became a model for a general optimization of movement. Even though his work was closely connected to Gastev's and Taylor's utilitarian models of production, the me-

thods he used, writes Gerald Raunig, went in another direction: he also wanted to denaturalize theatre (cf. Raunig 2010). Contrary to the psychology of a plot and the presence of an empathetic audience, and also contrary to the singular kinaesthetic experience of the dancing body, which was developing as an autonomous aesthetic language in the West (especially in North America), movement in the concepts of the Russian avant-garde (or the important components of biomechanics) consisted of the rhythm of language and the rhythm of physical movement, of postures and gestures arising from the collective rhythms, which coordinated the movements of the body and that of bodies with one another.

What we observe here are thus two different relationships between the conceptualization of movement and the organization of production (labor itself) in the 20th century. In so-called Western societies, which could be more accurately described as 'capitalist' societies, we see processes of naturalizing movement, which opposed the instrumental use of the laboring body and the rational organization of society. Such naturalization of movement corresponds with the discovery of the singular subject, an individual with desires and transversal and transgressive dynamic movement outside the modes of production (metaphorically speaking outside the factory gates). Most of the time, this individual is conceived as constantly in motion, in the throes of continuous creativity and possessing an autonomous aesthetic language: an individual, who cannot *not* dance.[3] On the other side, there is the proposition of coming through the factory gates – the idea that the modes of production can be intertwined with the transformation of society in general.

The movement reforms of the historical avant-gardes erased the door between work and private life, and revealed themselves as kinaesthetic constructions of larger future worlds. In the movement reforms of the Russian and European avant-gardes (especially the Futurists), a fascination with industrialized means of production led to experiments in denaturalizing movement. The body became a field of experimentation for future social transformation and for understanding a new commonality. Here dance and the production process paved the way to exploring a new generality of people: a generality that comes before any individualization, a sense of the political generality of the future, which has yet to come. Unfortunately, the discovery of the movement of this generality was an enormous failure. It quickly lost its emancipatory, political potential and became a totalitarian unity in the communist regime. Where a clumsy, still, expressive,

3 The aspects of kinetic ideologies of modernity are analysed in André Lepecki: *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (2006).

lazy, dreamy, everyday, marginal movement is possibly perceived in capitalist societies as the intervention of a liberated singularity, in the communist regimes, this kind of movement sabotaged the whole social machine. In their utopian pursuit of the future, these societies erased everything that radically existed in the present, because of the cynical belief that the future had already arrived. It therefore comes as no surprise that the communist regimes actually celebrated the most conservative and disciplinary forms of dancing, such as mass gatherings or the authoritarian institution of ballet.

This comparison between two concepts of movement – one that situates the political potential of dance in the movement of a singularity and the other in the discovery of a new (political) generality of the people (especially if we stay with avant-garde concepts) – leads, from today's perspective, to a very interesting observation. We are living in an age that is erasing the doors between factory and leisure time, in a time where individual potential and singular creativity is central to production. The movement of this working rhythm is very different from the description in Gastev's poem, which celebrates exactly the same disappearance of the factory doors. Instead of a synchronized totality of work as a new transformation of society, represented through the image of 'everybody starting at the same time' as described in his poem, today the new transformation of society is taking place with disharmonious working rhythms and flexible working hours, with individualized and displaced work. The factory whistle is replaced by self-imposed and silent deadlines, which drive people to multiple simultaneous and interconnected work and living activities. The movement of the individual, which throughout the 20th century was celebrated as the discovery of the potential of freedom stands at the centre of appropriation, of the exploitation of its affective, linguistic and desirable aspects. Today we are forced to dance in virtuous and conceptual diachronicity when producing; to change places, time, and identities quickly and with only short (but hardly ever destructive) outbursts of crisis. This is the new universality of the post-industrial world and its mode of production.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE GATES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

This argument leads me to a cartoon from 1980 by the well-known American cartoonist and satirist Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel) – *Pontoffel Pock Where Are You?* In this cartoon we again find a satirical image of workers dancing together; the working process in a pickle factory is actually depicted as a harmo-

nious musical. However, one of the new workers, Pontoffel Pock, is quite a looser. He is clumsy and always disrupting the process, poor and unhappy. Clumsy by nature and dreamy by heart, he tries to push and pull the machine as the other workers do, but in his eagerness to do it well, he destroys the whole factory and is dismissed from the factory in disgrace. Wallowing in self-pity, he is approached by an angel, who presents himself as a representative of a global corporation with branches all over the world. Because, as the corporative angel tells him, his lifestyle is pitiable, he is offered a wondrous piano. All that Pontoffel Pock needs to do is to play a few notes, push the bottom of the piano and he can fly to any exotic destination in the world to experience beautiful and exciting adventures. All that is required is a little tune; with just a little bit of virtuosity, he can fly away into an unknown and exciting future. But again Pontoffel Pock is unable to behave right. He has trouble with unpredictable gestures and movements, with his body, which desires too much and is 'always in the wrong place'. He cannot simply enjoy and be spontaneous. Instead he destroys all social relations with his ill-timed actions. This continues until he finds the love of his life (an Arab princess) and gets one more try at a pickle factory.

The cartoon offers a very good description of the shift that occurred at the beginning of the 1970s, a shift, which can be today be described with the terms post-industrialism or post-Fordism, especially when speaking about modes of working. The main characteristics of this shift have been deep changes in the organization of production and the role of labor, which influences social relations in general. Creative, linguistic and affective labor has become central to production. Labor is no longer organized in an instrumental and rationalized way, behind factory doors, but has become part of the production of social life and relationships among people. What was previously excluded from the de-naturalized movement of the Fordist machine is today at the centre of production: creative, spontaneous, expressive and inventive movement. Contemporary production structures demand creative and capable individuals. Their constant movement and dynamism have become the promise of economic value.

The image of production as dancing together is today an anachronistic one, due also to the ineffectiveness of its social critique. Today Fordist machinery has moved out of our range of vision to countries with a cheap labor force, where there is no escape into leisure time, but only the brutal exploitation of life in all its aspects. The contemporary post-Fordist worker is no longer included in the rationalized machine, but is instead part of affective and flexible networks, with his or her own potential for sale. Italian philosopher Paolo Virno, describes the qualities required of a post-Fordist worker, by saying that such qualities are never qualities

"[…] regarding professional expertise or technical requirements. On the contrary, what is required is the ability to anticipate unexpected opportunities and coincidences, to seize chances that present themselves, to move with the world. These are not skills people learn at the workplace. Nowadays, workers learn such required abilities by living in a big city, by gaining aesthetic experiences, having social relationships, creating networks: all things workers learn specifically outside the workplace, in real life in a contemporary big city." (Virno 2009: n.p.)

In other words, production today is experienced as something spontaneous and flexible. The process of work is always "subject to our own initiative" (id.). In the process of work, "I need to be granted a certain degree of autonomy in order to be exploited" (id.). It is from this perspective that we can also understand another image of dancing together, which has begun appearing over the past years in countries belonging to the post-industrial world: huge flash mobs organized by corporations and television companies. On the surface, it seems that these dances celebrate spontaneity and the emotional strength of human relations. However what really constitutes them are celebrations of commercialized joy and spectacular togetherness.

DANCE AND THE ABSTRACTION OF WORK

If we agree with Virno's observation, then it is necessary to rethink the consequences of such changes in the modes of working for the conceptualization of contemporary dance, especially where I have claimed that dance discovers its political and aesthetic potentiality in relationship to the production process. What are the consequences for contemporary dance with these changes in mind? What could the disappearance of the differentiation between work and non-work mean for the relationship between dance and freedom, which was always somehow the basis of thinking about dance reform in the 20th century?

First, it should not be overlooked, that the relationship between dance and freedom no longer has anything to do with resistance to rigid and disciplinary modes of production. Unexpected, non-hierarchical structures, affectivity and linguistic/physical expression have entered post-industrial production and represent the core of post-Fordism as the new organization of the production processes we are living in. The autonomy of creativity and aesthetic experience, which was so important when resistance to the rationalization of labor first emerged, now represents an important source of producing value. What we thus observe are relationships between contemporary dance and new modes of pro-

duction, in which movement and constant flexibility play a central role, together with individual expression and spontaneous creativity. Today subjugation is composed of continuous movement, a flexibility of relationships, signs, connections, gestures, bodies – continuous dispersion outside the factory gates with the intent to produce (and spend) even more. Production today encourages constant transformation and the crisis of the singular subject, with the intention of capturing outbursts of creativity and translating them into value. Production encourages ceaseless collaboration, which must be temporary, but not too affective, otherwise it can become ill-timed and destructive.

If this is truly the case, then we must ask ourselves what it exactly is that we do, when we work, or more precisely, when we work with dance. The political potential of dance is not related to the space outside of work, where the body is free to move and disclose its potential of being in time and space, but it must be put into dialogue with the flexible production modes and immateriality of contemporary work. It is common knowledge that the production of contemporary dance is today becoming more flexible through continuous travel. Where the exchange of forever-young and forever-experimental performances (a kind of cheap labor force for more and more globalized performance markets) goes hand in hand with spectacular shows. How collaboration is encouraged for collaboration's sake. How the continuous traveling movement of the labor force is unavoidable. However it is often forgotten that dance and movement have their own materiality, not only that of the body, but also of time and space, which is not abstract, rushed into the spectral kinetic flow, but can also be grasped, located, stuck, rough and ill-timed. This materiality resists the contemporaneity of time and in some ways sabotages the spectral appearance of the 'now' and gives another rhythm to the flow of time. This materiality can be also be brought into relationship with the materiality of work in general and in this sense, dance is again very close to questions of labor.

Thus dance is not close to questions of work, because of its ability to function as a representation of work, an image of the working process, but because it is work in terms of its material rhythms, efforts, in how movement inhabits space and time. It is work in the sense of how bodies distribute themselves in space and time, how they relate to each other and how they spend and expand their energies. The political potential of dance therefore does not have to be sought in an abstract or democratic idea of freedom and the infinite potential of movement, but in the ways how dance is deeply intertwined with the power and exhaustion of work, with its virtuosity and failure, dependence and autonomy. In this sense, dance practice over the last decades has stressed its own ontological propositions (such as dance equals movement, production and collaboration in dance, the re-

lationship between dance and theory) (cf. Lepecki 2006; Kunst 2009; Franko 1995). These are propositions, which all open up dance practice to being aware of the relationship between dance and work. If dance is work (and not something opposite to it, dance freed from the materiality of it), then the political potential of dance can also be understood as an interesting repetition or replacement of the avant-garde gesture: what would that proposition – dance as work – mean for a future society? Is it possible to discover an alternative to continuous movement and speed, to the flexibility of bodies and spaces, to the dispersion of energy and the power of the bodies collected together only for advertisement purposes and massive spectacles? One such answer could be that dance can reveal how kinetic sensibilities not only flow, but open up caesuras, antagonisms and unbridgeable differences. In this sense, many dance performances of the last decade have re-questioned the relationship between movement and dance and broadened the notion of choreography. Another answer could be that dance with its materiality can resist the abstract notion of labor and reveal the problematic relationship between the abstract new modes of labor and the bodies themselves. New modes of labor have tremendous power over the body, especially because they are increasingly erasing every representable and imaginable generality of the body. The dancing body is no longer resisting the dull conditions of work in search of a new society outside of work, but it does have the power to disclose how the materiality of bodies distributed in the time and space can change the way we live and work together. It can use this politically and aesthetically transgressive line between work and non-work to open up chances for a future society.

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The Collective That Isn't One

LIGNA in conversation with SANDRA NOETH

SANDRA NOETH: In your performative audio play *Der neue Mensch. Vier Übungen in utopischen Bewegungen* (*The New Human. Four Exercises in Utopian Movements*)[1], which was also presented during the Dance Congress 2009, you strongly focused on concepts of collectivity and the choral. The piece is a collective choreography designed with the help of various traces of instructions and absent references, which the members of the audience experience and execute individually via headphones. How is this relationship between the individual versions of the movement instructions and the formation of the groups organized?[2]

OLE FRAHM: Our question is aimed at the audience as a collective. One starting point was the idea that in theater the audience situation is rarely brought into play. In other words: you always have the presence of a crowd of people, who have more or less randomly met in the auditorium, without really having gone there together. There is a certain recognizable middle-class audience, who are there on a regular basis, but ultimately it is dominated by a necessary anonymity,

1 *Der neue Mensch. Vier Übungen in utopischen Bewegungen*, premiere October 2008, Kampnagel Hamburg.

2 The conversation between LIGNA and Sandra Noeth took place on February 7, 2010 in Vienna. LIGNA is Ole Frahm, Michael Hüners and Torsten Michaelsen and exists since 1997. The group develops situations between theater, dance, installation and performance, which establish new spaces of action, enable unlikely, collective movements and reinvent the role of the audience. With their models of performative radio use, such as the radio ballet, they intervene in the public sphere and question its norms and controls.

so that the individual can focus on what is happening on stage. So there's this collective, which doesn't act, but only observes and which is physically attacked by the stagnant air in the very narrow corridors. We wanted to cast the spotlight on precisely this group – and for this, we of course looked to Bertolt Brecht and his *Lehrstücke* (teaching plays). What interested us most was how the audience can be moved to become aware of itself. Namely by putting them into contact with one another …

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: ... and allowing them to become an audience for the others. The audience is thus split up into four groups, who perform different things parallel. In doing so, they follow four different movement concepts – by Rudolf von Laban, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Bertolt Brecht and Charlie Chaplin – and because these groups are set in a certain relationship to each other and watch each other during the performance, every participant is both actor and spectator. You see things that you have already performed yourself or which you will be performing and after a while you understand the structure of the piece. We create a situation in which you can, so to say, play with the others, but in which something always evades capture, something that can only be accessed bit by bit through the process. However, it's not necessary the case that you can grasp the totality of the piece after seeing the four parts. I believe there is always something left over that you don't have, which maybe didn't quite work out, which is random for all in each and every performance.

OLE FRAHM: The decisive aspect is that the singular experience of the spectator cannot be replaced. It is always singular. You may be part of a collective, but will always remain within your own realm of how you perceive the space and your own body in relation to everyone else. This subjectivity is something that is created by the headphones. It would be a completely different situation, if we would use a single loud radio. But it is precisely the internalization of the external radio voice, which creates the personal space of perception, which in turn produces one's own irreplaceable relationship with the world.

If I am part of the Laban group for instance and I see how the others raise their hands, I know that we're hearing the same thing and yet nevertheless I don't know for sure how the others interpret what they are hearing. Especially in the case of the Laban swings as presented in the piece, it's not quite clear to amateurs how to execute them. At the Dance Congress it was of course very nice to see how the many dancers present in the audience performed these swings.

On the one hand, there's this singularity of perception, on the other, there is a collective moment of awareness, which is somewhat scary. In the performance,

we repeat the choreography of the first *Radioballett*[3] four times. In the video documentation, we can see how in the first round, in which people are supposed to point upwards, some point up with a straight finger, other with an outstretched hand.[4] Over the course of three-quarters of an hour, the mass forms itself and unconsciously agrees on how each individual should point. This harmonization definitely has something to do with the principle of mimesis. It is the mimetic ability of humans, which evidently articulates itself as a desire to be formed – almost as if there were such a thing as a correct execution of the movements. This mimetic force is also in *Der neue Mensch* – for example in the previously mentioned swings.

SANDRA NOETH: My impression is that failure plays a major role. Thoughts such as: "I'm too slow", "I can't follow", "I missed something in between". In the beginning, the audience is very occupied with trying to understand the structure of the piece and then gradually slips into its role, learns to handle the theatrical space, has maybe already repeated some movements. What surprised me is that apparently the audience usually very quickly accepts what you're suggesting. Even if everyone is free to act as they wish, the authority of the voice in the headphones takes effect. Regarding the dance context and the dance and art historical dimensions that you are addressing as a group, this observation reminds me of choreographic processes of creating unisono and group figures in connection with concepts of subjectivity and individuality as are currently being intensely discussed.

OLE FRAHM: Yes, the work of Rudolf von Laban was one starting point, which had a couple of aspects that we found difficult. But then there are also moments in his work, which really impressed me. When Laban joined those veggie communes near the Lago Maggiore, he developed a radicality in his art, which is truly uncompromising. But which still – and that is the decisive difference to the other three positions – really searched for attaining unity with the cosmos through dance. Laban's modernist 'We-must-return-to-the-fundamental-structures-of-movement' and his conviction that dance needs no music, were very controversial positions in his time. He had a modernity, which far surpassed his

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3 *Radioballett. Übung in nichtbestimmungsgemäßen Verweilen* (*Radio Ballet. Exercise in Lingering Outside of Regulations*), Hamburg 2002.

4 See also: *Übung in unnötigem Aufenthalt* (*Exercise in Unnecessary Residency*), Installation, Group exhibition *Art on Air. Radiokunst im Wandel* (*Radio Art in Flux*), Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen 2008/2009.

aesthetic horizon. That, which he really performed, is, in descriptions, often quite banal and above all reactionary, such as reproducing the stereotypical images of the city as juggernaut verses the harmony of nature. Interestingly enough, the performance situation of the movement choirs attest to a kind of grotesque aesthetic that allows associations to Chaplin, Brecht and Meyerhold.

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: These four positions handle the subject, this civil subject, the First World War and the social changes taking place in this period, as well as the challenges of an audience, which is largely no longer a middle-class one, very differently. These are not somehow positions that we want to measure with the same yardstick just so as to extract a LIGNA message out of them. Instead it is interesting for us to create a constellation in which their disparities become clear and which also relates to them on a formal level. What we're doing is concerning ourselves with question of subjectivity. How can we conceive a non-authentic, playful subjectivity, which creates itself through the execution of movements? In this respect, the formal structure of the piece always refers back to the positions we have chosen.

SANDRA NOETH: An important aspect is the how you address the body – between the present bodies of today's audience and those of the 1920s. One the one hand, it contains the formulation of various concepts of subjectivity and community, but it also plays with representations, symbolisms and fiction. Moreover, a certain additional moment of translation seems to play a role – through the language, i.e. the original quotes, but also your contemporary narrative relating to the movement concepts. How do these various discourses and levels come together in the piece?

OLE FRAHM: What interests us is how the audience forms this shared body within a discourse, which may not be very accessible for most of them in the beginning. And which is composed of entirely banal things such as shaking hands with the right hand, walking forward, etc. To state it more precisely, we superimpose two discourses. There is the everyday discourse, which creates the bodies, the subjects and which brings into play a specific, never quite conscious form of subjectivity. On the other hand, we try to find out whether and how this can be contrasted with, disrupted by the discourses on the body from the 1920s. To find out what kind of body should shape the new human. The really interesting thing is to what degree artists in the 1920s were completely confident in their own aesthetic and its social power of effect – from the Futurists right down to the writings of the avant-garde until 1933. You didn't just make a good piece; you were imme-

diately connected to the entire universe. The Futurist painters truly believed that they could paint the laws of the cosmos. And by doing so burn them into the consciousness of the spectator. This discussion is very exciting when we realize that certain questions have been forgotten, namely whether certain collective processes can also be changed collectively and not only be changed top down, as for example through physical education in schools. To bring about change truly as a collective, so that moments can occur with which the institutions and discourses that form the body themselves become negotiable. That means the individual in his or her own body is however only relevant if the social situation is also taken into consideration. Theater rarely takes into consideration the physical situation of the spectator, ignores or forgets its physical situation in the space and reduces him or her to his or her audio-visual apparatus or perception.

For me these aesthetic models are so interesting because they began as early as the 1920s to rethink this relationship differently and didn't limit themselves to the statement that reception is active, because things are assembled in perception. Instead they insisted that we ourselves have to be in the situation, must act for ourselves in the situation. And in *Der neue Mensch* we mainly began thinking about how our own subjectivity is constituted by the body. I find the Brecht sentence – we think differently when the feet are higher than the head – quite revealing. It does work in a certain way; when the spatial situation changes, we are physically different.

MICHAEL HÜNERS: Of course that is nevertheless also just simply a statement. But trying it out, that's what's so exciting. To see whether something happens, to test it. And then it's also quite important that it is still the body acting as the site of resistance. In other words, we could use this body as a starting point to arrive at a political body. What we're looking at in the piece is a social issue. The question of a utopia, of renegotiating society anew or simply projecting it differently. And in this, the body is of course very crucial.

OLE FRAHM: We also discussed whether the piece might be problematic in this day and age. You can't even go to the theater without being accosted. Like those websites, where you have to write your opinion. And that is exactly where the distinction lies. Namely that there is a difference between what we do and this activation of the spectator by the media, which is based in principle upon collecting statistics on the viewer as consumer, in a manner of speaking. In our case there's no surplus value in this respect. On the contrary: you can simply begin to think about what kind of society you want to live in generally.

MICHAEL HÜNERS: These four positions are also outlines. We don't want to lay claim to the fact that if you assemble these four positions something completely new could emerge. And we could question the selection. Why did it have to be exactly these four positions, it could also have been done in a different way.

OLE FRAHM: These four really very different positions surprisingly share an aesthetic, which was not yet authoritarian in the 1920s, and converges on the grotesque, as Chaplin articulated it in his early films, in the display of gesture. The notion of the new human is often prematurely associated with totalitarian regimes. The aesthetic of the grotesque with its discovery of stasis, of interruption doesn't toe that line, however. Laban accordingly dispensed with grotesque elements in his choreographic work under the Nazis. In the course of our research, we discovered that our own aesthetic has also always contained a certain moment of the grotesque.

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: Ultimately we have always worked in the style of the grotesque. Even in our first performative pieces, we used the radio in such a way that it didn't demand from the people that they really act out theater. It was always about performing gestures. As for example at the Main Train Station in Hamburg, where we presented the *Radioballett* and wanted to let the people perform gestures that subverted or transcended the regulations of the space.

For us, it has always been about discovering that movement always has a real effect on the space even when it is performed mechanically. You don't have to be the person sitting down, so to say; you don't have to perform what you're doing. You simply do it and that in itself has effect. Basically, it is always an invitation to non-emphatic acting, which seeks to challenge you to observe yourself doing something instead. And to see what happens when you do. It's a very Meyerhold-like thought. The movement is what matters and the truly conscious execution of this movement and then the reflection of the effect of the entire thing. And that is – I would say – already an aesthetic, which is entirely more grotesque than any kind of emphatic aesthetic. This is also always our answer to the questions: "You create robots or soldiers, don't you …" and "Isn't that dangerous?" – We would answer with Brecht from the *Messingkauf* (cf. Brecht 2003) that investing emotional energy in the actor or in the Fuehrer, to whom Brecht comes in the end, is ultimately what makes one passive and what is so dangerous. And he responds to that with an aesthetic, which refuses to do exactly that. Which instead discovers the possible distance more in one's own acting. What we're also trying to do is open up the space by playing with subjectivity.

SANDRA NOETH: This detachment in the historical text sections, the voices of the narrators, but also the formal detachment in the piece's performance concept seem to me to be very important and the idea that an encounter can only become possible through this detachment, that only through distance is infection possible. What is interesting in this respect is also that radio as a medium produces diversion. If we read the choreographic as a focused inscription, then we are confronted in your practice with that fact that many things – spaces, structures of receptivity and time – are being dissolved and sent back to their original location and that the location of the choreography is constantly changing and shifting.

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: We began working with the term choreography, when he started calling them 'choreographies of forbidden and excluded gestures'. We don't choreograph in the sense that we arrange the participants in the space and purposefully create movement in most sections of the piece. It can happen that a very direct movement materializes, there is the alignment along the outside edges of the space, an orientation towards the middle, and this is in principle choreographed without us really specifying and determining positions. This kind of thing has to create itself in some other way. By all means, there is a certain composition of the space, whereby the main impression of the piece is that actually very diverse things are happening at the same time and all mixed up with each other and that the positions also occasionally get confused and don't comply with an overall view, but instead are carried out parallel in a disorderly fashion.

MICHAEL HÜNERS: That is why the term choreography is somewhat difficult, because it can't be thought of as a central perspective directed at a single viewer. It is more about the possibilities of the space or rather the possibility of creating certain situations within the space between and together with these four separate groups. And that is why we don't really have the intention of creating a choreographic scheme for a single spectator.

OLE FRAHM: The four positions each follow a different sequence. It is therefore as if we were talking about four pieces. The first position shapes the perception of the piece. Accordingly the overall dramaturgy presents itself different depending on which position that it. At the same time there is a precise rhythm in each of the four repeating parts. At the premiere, we were surprised at how long the Laban people did their swings in that part. It was great for the spatial situation, because it established a funny consistent structure. At the same time, we fixed certain clear points – especially in the stage performance at the end of each re-

spective part. We chose a very simple situation, namely two rows of chairs, which structure the space, emphasized by a spotlight, which illuminates the middle of the space. Moreover it is striking how people never go into the corners of the space, even when the space is completely illuminated. They orient themselves towards the center. In contrast, it's different in the walking part; everyone walks along the edge on purpose, so as not to bother the others in the middle. But there are also a few things that even today aren't quite clear. Chaplin claps his hands on the stage and Meyerhold should – as practiced beforehand – jump. But that only happens in rare cases.

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: I really like it when the last jump by the Meyerhold people is accompanied by the humming of the Brecht people. This creates a rhythmisation. And really there are a great number of overlapping moments, which converge by accident. Ultimately we just brought those things together, which clearly refer to one another – the one side, which does something and the other, which produces the effect. The rest is simply not so precisely choreographed.

MICHAEL HÜNERS: The question is simply, whether a piece shouldn't always have unintended openings, intervals, accidents, interruptions. – A precisely timed, fully choreographed piece aspires towards being something completely self-contained.

OLE FRAHM: It really is difficult. We developed various notations, while writing the piece. In the end it was the sound program, which emerged as the most precise form of notation, this strict synchronity of the track. For us the technical element plays a large role. What situations does the radio create, which no other apparatus can create? Our choreography was based on the question of how the apparatus can be used to produce a particular situation that exceeds one's own power of imagination.

SANDRA NOETH: In this light maybe the choreographic as a space-time structure applies more to radio than to a concrete movement score. At the same time 'reading' notation via hearing demands a more specific form of translation than for example deriving movements from one body to another. What is it that is being transmitted? Words, text, references and ideas, but also simultaneously rhythm and pitch of the voice …

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: It is interesting that a movement also has to be described very differently when it is intended for a situation such as this one, in which it simply runs linearly past the ears and the listener then has to execute it. That is also something we firs had to experience for ourselves. You can brilliantly write the movement down on paper, so that it sounds good when you read it. But when you hear it, it doesn't work. First of all, the capacity to absorb information is very limited. In the Laban part for instance, three orientations in the space are explained and that already is quite a lot of information. Then there's the problem of missing parts. Is it then at all possible to retain one's orientation, can you then still continue?

OLE FRAHM: According to Brecht, a great deal of the pleasure comes from precise interaction with the apparatus. Of course we try to build up tension between the things that must be executed very precisely, where you really know that you're doing them correctly and those things, which are simply somewhat less clear. If we had open, poetic instructions the whole time, then people would think, "What do they want from me?". And on the contrary, a constant imperative would be just as boring. The format of the *Radioballett* has been presented by other people on various occasions and it has been interesting to see that, from our perspective, if something didn't really work aesthetically, it was either because it had transformed into a kind of street theater or into a pure simple imperative. It is a fine line that we work on. I truly believe that our subjectivity is constructed in such a way that there is pleasure in the correct execution of something, but that it also needs this detachment.

SANDRA NOETH: … in order to still identify it as a game, as acting?

OLE FRAHM: Brecht said, "It is possible to also live in third-person". There have to be these audience spaces that are indeterminate. For me, one of the most interesting moments is when Brecht rebuilds the set out of chairs. In this moment, it is all about the audience reaching consensus among each other and how the space is truly restructured into something new. These are the moments in which we ask ourselves, what really is our responsibility in continuing to allow this piece to be enjoyable. And that also brings up the question whether there are people who don't participate at all. And if there are such people, are they spoilsports, almost in a Chaplin-esque sort of way, precisely because they don't take on any form of responsibility? On such a note, we can also reflect the institutions that create our subjectivity. Some truly believe in their subjectivity as citizens – I am utterly original, I am not replaceable. Of course, this runs contrary to our ap-

proach. And it is quite surprising to a degree, because it is a theory of subjectivity, which is fundamentally embedded in the 19th century and is apparently still being cultivated, instead of making use of the freedoms provided by the 21st century.

SANDRA NOETH: There is after all also the question why the piece is made for a theater institution and not for a different space.

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: We made the piece for the stage or rather for a theatrical space precisely because the piece deals with that same space of theatrical reception.

OLE FRAHM: We resisted the stage for a long time. In the first piece that we created for Kampnagel, the stage there seemed too small for the wild strike that we wanted to retell. We thought that we had to leave the theater, go out into the public sphere – in other words, interrupt the representation, bring the actual materiality of the body into play. Which also happens now, but on the interior, as we have discussed. Brecht was very helpful in this regard by pointing out this function of theater: you have a spatial situation, which is completely artificial in its artificiality, but which – if its artificiality is taken seriously – suddenly establishes entire discourses. Of course, we could perform *Der neue Mensch* in schools, for example, but that would be a completely differently affair.

TORSTEN MICHAELSEN: Then we would really have to make a piece about school. *Der Neue Mensch* is a piece about the audience and therefore it makes sense to perform it on a stage and to see what form of audience could actually come after an audience – so the proposition of the positions from the 1920s – which has simply outlasted itself, wasn't able to follow through with its transformation in mass society. Thus the audience is called upon to put into practice a new approach. This is exactly what Meyerhold and Brecht were looking into. And Laban ultimately did so as well, by letting the audience disappear altogether. And Chaplin too – by presuming that an audience simply needed a really good joke every 30 seconds in order to be emotionally involved.

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HYBRID SPHERES

Jérôme Bel and Myself: Gender and Intercultural Collaboration

SUSAN LEIGH FOSTER

In what follows, I stage a three-way conversation between French choreographer Jérôme Bel, myself as a feminist scholar writing about a piece he created in collaboration with Thai dancer Pichet Klunchun entitled Pichet Klunchun and Myself *(2004), and myself watching the performance of the lecture along with Bel.*

When I performed this imaginary conversation with Bel at the Dance Congress in Hamburg 2009, the two versions of myself shared one microphone at a podium and I impersonated 'Bel' speaking from a different microphone at the same podium, with each 'person' articulating a different style and tone. At that presentation, Bel was in the audience, and we began a dialogue afterwards that is ongoing, and for that reason, I chose to retain the conversation format used in the conference for this published version of the text. Since the conference presentation, I have viewed a subsequent collaboration that Bel undertook with Klunchun, About Khon *(2009), in which he takes on a role very different from the one in* Pichet Klunchun and Myself. *The conversation that follows gestures towards the ongoingness of both his artistic research and my scholarly inquiry and to the ways in which artists and scholars might enter into dialogues of great mutual benefit.*

Like Bel, I believe that both choreographers and dance scholars engage in research. They propose hypotheses about the nature of corporeality and the construction of identities, both individual and social, and they investigate the ramifications and consequences of their various propositions. Whether this research issues on the concert stage or the printed page, it offers different and equally valid ways of knowing. Therefore, I have attempted to adapt the format of Pichet Klunchun and Myself *in this essay, 'choreographing' the writing so as to affirm*

the importance of performance as a form of knowledge production and, at the same time, de-stabilizing scholarship so that it is not construed as 'having the last word'.

About a half hour into his conversation with Pichet Klunchun about his career as a dancer, Jérôme Bel asks Klunchun to teach him some dance. Declining to learn the role of the demon, because he is not in good shape, Bel requests, instead, to be instructed in a phrase from the female repertoire, one of the three other principle character types in Khon, classical Thai dance. Klunchun then takes him through a phrase, explaining in detail the positions and actions of legs, torso, arms, hands, fingers, and head. Although designed to illustrate the complexities of the form, this pedagogical moment also demonstrates Bel's ability to pick up the movement and execute, at least superficially, a relatively accurate, for the untrained body, version of the phrase. It also secures the notion of gender as performance as these two renowned male artists pursue a seemingly spontaneous cross-cultural conversation about their work.

JÉRÔME: You read that one sentence quite well – it had a lot of commas and halts and awkward turns, but you managed it. Were you trying to choreograph the sentence so as to suggest the way that a dancer learns movement?
MYSELF: Yes, it's very nice that you noticed.

Touring for the past five years internationally and to adulatory reviews and standing ovations across Europe and North America and to more mixed reviews in Korea, Singapore, and Indonesia, *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* stages a dialogue between two artists, who ask each other questions and demonstrate their work to one another as a way of finding out about each other's worlds of dance.[1]

JÉRÔME: This seems like a congenial gathering of people. Does it make you nervous, standing up in front of them and delivering a lecture?
MYSELF: Always.

In what follows, I want to examine *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* in relation to its representation of gender and, even more, the gendered division of labor that it embodies in order to discern what I see as serious obstacles to intercultural col-

1 *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* had its premiere at the Patravadi Theatre's Studio 1 as part of the Bangkok Fringe Festival. Singaporean producer Tang Fu Kuen initiated by collaboration pairing the two artists who were unfamiliar with each other's work.

laboration. I use gender as an analytic framework for categorizing action throughout the performance in order to reveal the underpinnings of the euphoria produced by this display of cross-cultural conversation and understanding. *Pichet Klunchun and Myself* performs the felicitous heterosexual marriage of two cultures whose histories of privilege, wealth, and access to global circulation of products and ideas have been markedly different. It also reaffirms and reinvigorates hierarchies of civilization implemented in Europe's colonization of the world. Although the association between the feminine and the Other and the ways in which the two are used to mutually marginalize one another have been demonstrated innumerable times, I still find it illuminating to move across this territory, yet again, especially in the context of the recent explosion of intercultural collaborations in the arts.

JÉRÔME: And you have to stand very still and look very serious while you read?

The feminine is referenced in this performance seven times: 1) as Klunchun's description of his mother who wanted a son, the more desirable gender, especially after having had three daughters; 2) as one of four types in the classical Thai repertoire of characters; 3) as a character demonstrated by Klunchun who has just been told about the death of her husband; 4) as a form that it would be easier for Bel to learn than the demon form; 5) as the child bearing, non-married partner of Bel and as the vehicle for a family desired by Klunchun, but who does not want to marry, a prerequisite for having children in Thai culture; 6) as the transgendered character of Bel lip-synching Roberta Flack's performance of the song *Killing Me Softly with His Song* in order to demonstrate death onstage;[2] and 7) as the nearly naked dancers performing in a sex bar in Bangkok.

In addition to these appearances of the feminine on stage and in the dialogue, I am also interested in the performance of the feminine that occurs throughout the piece in the form of a set of dichotomies that align systematically with the masculine-feminine dyad. In this dyad the feminine is fleshed out through its association with tradition, unquestioning allegiance to larger social order, the non-technological, the desire to explain and be understood; the contorted and unnatural cultivation of the body; and as the object caught within representation. In contrast, the masculine is embodied as experimental and contemporary; as al-

2 *Killing Me Softly with His Song* was composed by Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel in 1971. Roberta Flack recorded it in 1973, and her version won Grammy Awards for Song of the Year, Record of the Year, and Best Pop Vocal Performance by a Female Performer.

ways questioning, conducting research, presenting the latest reality; as hi-tech; as privileged to initiate questioning and to evaluate answers; as eschewing all refinement, exaggeration, or premeditated self-presentation; and as dwelling outside of representation.

JÉRÔME: That's a very impressive set of claims. I can see why you want to be very quiet in your body.

The performance begins with Klunchun and Bel entering the stage and seating themselves on two chairs facing one another. Barefoot, and dressed in loose, cropped pants and T-shirt, Klunchun carries a bottle of water. Bel, in jeans, boots, and shirt, glances briefly down at the laptop on the floor beside his chair, before beginning a set of questions to Klunchun. The 90-100 minute performance consists entirely in a mutual interview, conducted informally, first by Bel and then, in the second half, by Klunchun. The conversation proceeds methodically from personal background to training, to opportunities to perform and make a living as an artist, and the parameters for how various subjects might be represented in dance. Each artist, familiar with the answers he will deliver, nonetheless proceeds in a seemingly spontaneous manner, creating a dialogue that is more organized than a typical conversation, yet unpretentiously straightforward and dedicated to the task of finding out about the other.

JÉRÔME: But I have to say that it strikes me as very odd, this custom of standing up in front of people and reading a piece of paper. Do people ever extemporize their lectures?
MYSELF: Yes, some professors are very accomplished at that, especially here in Europe. I find it most impressive, the way they form such perfect sentences spontaneously. But I'm no good at it, and I only have twenty more minutes.
JÉRÔME: Well then, I suppose you should continue, if you want to make all those points.

We learn that Klunchun became a dancer to give thanks to a deity associated with dance after his mother had prayed to it to become pregnant with a boy. Expert in the demon repertoire, Klunchun explains that nowadays he typically performs excerpts of the classical court danced narratives for tourists who book dinner and Thai dance for a given evening. A recent Prime Minister dedicated to modernizing the country, abandoned the classical arts in favor of cha-cha and tango. Klunchun, however, remains dedicated to the project of revitalizing this classical repertoire and demonstrating its value to Thai culture.

At Bel's request, Klunchun demonstrates various aspects of Khon – basic training exercises, character types, and ways of representing death onstage. Differing positions of arm or hands designating different characters are seen by Bel as almost imperceptible, however, Klunchun assures him they are enormously distinct. Scenes of violence and destruction remain opaque to Bel until Klunchun describes the action while dancing it. Once he is initiated into the symbolic system, Bel is better able to follow along, sometimes correctly guessing the meaning of Klunchun's actions. Still, Klunchun must explain to a disbelieving Bel the refusal of the form to represent death onstage. Bel also queries the strenuous, even grotesque, demands placed on the hand when he attempts to reproduce Klunchun's intense curvature of wrist and fingers. Klunchun responds matter-of-factly that the dancer's training constructs analogies between the body and temple architecture. The curves of the hand serve to re-channel the energy back towards the center of the body, so that the dancing establishes a continuous recycling of effort. Klunchun contrasts this aesthetic with the Western propensity to throw energy away in various leaps and extensions of body parts.

Here, for the first time in his interrogation, Bel expresses admiration: "I'm very impressed; this is something I had never thought of before." Up until that moment, Bel alternates most often between silence and skepticism, confusion, dis-belief, and perplexity in response to Klunchun's answers and demonstrations. Requesting to be shown a violent scene, for example, Bel initially rejects Klunchun's performance as insufficiently violent until Klunchun decodes it for him. Responding to the idea that death could be signified by a long and exceptionally slow walk across the entire stage, Bel is at a loss to imagine how meaning can be conveyed within the form. Even the "Good luck" that Bel offers in response to Klunchun's expressed desire to vivify Khon for a younger generation belies his uncomprehending incredulity.

JÉRÔME: Do you think you change people's minds when you give a lecture?
MYSELF: Do you when you present a dance performance?
JÉRÔME: Maybe I just give them something to think about.
MYSELF: And some parameters for thinking about it?
JÉRÔME: I suppose so.

Bel then invites Klunchun to question him, and we learn that Bel, although unmarried, has a child. Expressing a desire for children, Klunchun rejects Bel's proposal to bear one out of wedlock. Bel's raised eyebrow and shrug of the shoulders renders Klunchun's response prudish and old fashioned. Asked to demonstrate some dancing, Bel replies with beguiling modesty that he is not a

'real' choreographer, nor does he perform. After Klunchun objects that he has shown Bel a great deal, Bel offers one of his favorite scenes: he stands unassumingly gazing out at the audience with interest but no affect. Deploring the society of spectacle in which we are living, Bel explains that such an action is "not a representation". In a second demonstration, Bel uses his computer to play a soundtrack from David Bowie's *Let's Dance* to which he moves with a marked absence of energy, commitment, or fervency, thereby exposing the traditional association of rock music with abandoned physical display.[3]

MYSELF: How are you finding the lecture thus far?
JÉRÔME: You're making some interesting points, but there's someone who's almost asleep over there, and I can see why – listening to this complicated prose has a kind of numbing effect. And there are no pictures or video excerpts … seems a little dull.

When Klunchun expresses disappointment at Bel's performance, Bel retorts that he is not surprised. Advocating for his anti-virtuosity approach, Bel aspires to create more egalitarian relationships using pop music, a form that belongs to everybody. Bel continues by explaining that whereas Klunchun dances about and for a King, Bel's country beheaded theirs two hundred years earlier so as to live in a more egalitarian society. Sponsored by that government, Bel conducts research within the 'contemporary arts', producing new works, whose form and content are unforeseen, and whose reception is frequently mixed at best. Nonetheless Bel aspires to make space for viewers to have their own response to life's enduring challenges. He illustrates this invitation by performing a very slow slump to the floor while singing along with *Killing Me Softly with His Song*, and then remaining inert for the last verse. Klunchun admits to having been moved by this action since it reminded him of his paralyzed mother's death, and Bel is pleased that his aversion to virtuosity and the quiet and matter-of-fact display of the body lying onstage as the symbol of death has been successful. Having agreed that they are very good viewers, even ideal, of one another's work, Bel reminds Klunchun that he cannot tell him anything. It must be discovered.

In one final example of his choreography, Bel begins to demonstrate a dance based on the manipulation of pieces of his own flesh. But when he moves from his ample stomach to take down his pants, Klunchun refuses to view anything further, claiming his culture's standards of aesthetic decency. Bel responds that

3 *Let's Dance* was the title track on David Bowie's hit album *Let's Dance* which issued in 1983.

he has seen considerable nakedness in Bangkok in the bars, but Klunchun explains that these dancers are working for tourist dollars. At this point, Klunchun and Bel agree to end their conversation.

JÉRÔME: It also seems to me that the whole set-up with the podium and the microphone is rather, if you don't mind the expression, phallic.
MYSELF: What would you do instead?
JÉRÔME: Well, I'm not sure, this is your gig, and I don't usually perform in this kind of situation. Maybe you should have a microphone that no one ever speaks from. Or you could circulate through the space rather than standing in one place … Or so something with the paper you're reading from … I'd have to think about it.
MYSELF: Well, do. I'd like to know how we might make it different.

All of the appearances of women in the piece cast them in highly traditional roles – as mothers, as members of the social whose roles are well established and who take responsibility for grieving for the loss of others, as sex workers, and as roles inhabitable by men when the need arises. And each role locates women in an inferior relationship to men. As mothers their labor is erased, for it is Bel who 'has' a child, and Klunchun who became the dancer. As sex workers, they are betraying their country's standards of decency. As theatrical roles, they demand less physically than other character types, or else they serve as vessels easily occupied by the male artists to demonstrate their form's aesthetic proclivities. The fact that these two male artists find so much in common in these archetypal feminine images permits them to establish a tacit familiarity and a tenuous equality to one another. The ease with which they reference the feminine and move in and out of her roles confirms their privilege and superiority.

At the same time, the masculine-feminine binaries operating in the guise of oppositions such as tradition/experimentation and representation/beyond representation work to place Klunchun in a distinctly inferior position. Klunchun's unquestioning acceptance and pursuit of dancing as a life calling, his devotion to resuscitating an outmoded form, the rigidity of the form itself with its detailed specifications for roles, stories, and modes of representation – all seem quaint and naïve at best when compared with Bel's iconoclastic vision. Klunchun's pliability, both in terms of how he has worked to cultivate the body, and also his amenability to explaining and demonstrating his form, signal a willingness to connect to Bel and to the world that Bel's aesthetics, in their guise as pioneering research, disdain. Where Klunchun has dedicated much of his life to the acquisition of technical facility at dancing, Bel has devoted a comparable amount of

time to learning and then unlearning how to dance. Where Klunchun can efficiently decode the meanings behind each gesture and phrase in his danced dramas, Bel aspires to create space for the ordinary and the everyday as actions that cannot be decoded because they simply are what they are. Staring straightforwardly at the audience, lying quietly on the stage, Bel claims to eclipse representation by presenting things that cannot mean anything else. Yet even these claims are vivified and fortified by the prior revelations of Klunchun regarding how dance signifies.

JÉRÔME: Then why didn't you let me begin this presentation?
MYSELF: Because I believe that even if you gave an anti-lecture first or even without my lecture, you'd still be operating within representation and, here, within the frame of an academic lecture.

Bel stakes his claim to choreographic originality by implementing a distinction between that which is caught within representation and that which resides outside of it. Claiming a naturalness equivalent to that of the early modern dancers a century ago, Bel obfuscates his heroic aesthetic quest through beguiling ineptness and a willing confession of his lack of competence at dancing and his marginal status as a choreographer. In so doing, he secures a prestigious position for himself on the vanguard of the avant-garde. From this position Bel serves, not a monarchy, but rather the 'people'.

JÉRÔME: They don't have to come to my performances anymore than they have to listen to this lecture.

Bel's location beyond representation, however, depends upon the prior establishment of the mutual interview as the format in which intercultural collaboration will be displayed. The dialogue-as-performance recapitulates Bel's dedication to arranging the 'spontaneous' onstage. The two artists have not met, exchanged ideas, and then developed something for presentation. Instead, they represent onstage their initial encounters and explorations with the same quality of unpretentious straightforwardness that Bel invokes when staring at the audience or lying on the floor as if 'dead'. Bel has thereby established the representational grounds on which their exchange will take place and then located himself outside that framework as an artist who eschews representation. In so doing, Bel uses the comparison of his own approach with that of Klunchun in order to expose, most humorously, the intentions of his artistic practice in relation to the general workings of contemporary concert dance. However, he also creates for

himself a special place of privilege beyond the roles of masculine and feminine from which to display the brilliance of his artistic vision.

JÉRÔME: Well, isn't that what you're doing to me?
MYSELF: It's true, I invited you to this lecture. But I'm trying to find a space where we can have a discussion that does not advantage one of us at the expense of the other.

Throughout the performance, even as he is positioned within this representational system, Klunchun preserves his dignity, integrity, and worldview. He quietly rebuts Bel's dismissal of the different positions of the arm for different characters by asserting their dramatic effectiveness. He likewise rejects Western dance as a practice that throws energy away. And he steadfastly maintains his modesty in the face of invitations to produce a child out of wedlock and to view Bel's naked body. Although located within the apparatus of representation, he nonetheless perseveres in the commitment to his art and his willingness to share it with anyone who expresses interest. He even challenges Bel's theory of representation by continuing to decode, in the same way as he has his own work, Bel's performance of death.

According to Klunchun's aesthetics, the dialogue with Bel places him at no disadvantage nor does it demean his art form or way of life. He never attempts to ingratiate himself or his dance with either Bel or the audience. He presents the facts of his life and dance form with care and confidence. Similarly, for Bel's aesthetics, given the limited amount of time allotted for the two artists to get to know one another, the most honest plan, one preserving the integrity of each practice, would be to present a simulated version of their initial encounter onstage. Yet the collision of these two worldviews and their assimilation into Bel's conception of representation reinvigorate the first-world's heritage of privilege based in colonial histories and the stereotypes that enabled colonization.

JÉRÔME: But if we're always operating within the realm of representation, there isn't any place for hope, any imaginary where we could get away to a different world.
MYSELF: There's always irony.
JÉRÔME: You mean, reflecting and commenting on things while you're doing them?

Transnationalism and Contemporary African Dance: Faustin Linyekula

SABINE SÖRGEL

TRANSNATIONALISM AND CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DANCE

"Transnationalism involves a loosening of boundaries, a deterritorialization of the nation-state, and higher degrees of interconnectedness among cultures and peoples across the globe. As people make transnational voyages and live lives of flexible citizenship in two or more cultures, they adhere to a new type of nationalism that creates an exclusionist discourse and builds 'the Other' as conservative defenders of cruder territorial loyalties. This rhetoric disturbs the social fabric as traditionalists and transnationalists create 'imagined communities' defined in particular ways." (Duncan/Juncker 2004: 8)

In the age of globalization contemporary identities emerge from diverse corporeal sensations and cross-cultural inscriptions, which increasingly build 'imagined communities' beyond national confines. Discourse on contemporary African dance may serve as a lens through which dancers and choreographers from the African continent explore a transnational politics of belonging that transcends earlier discourses of post-independence African nationalisms of the 1950s and 60s. The question of contemporary African dance is a much debated one among dancers and choreographers on the African continent since the mid-1990s (cf. Sanou 2008; Douglas 2006; Tiérou 2001), which presents a choreographic quest that creates new epistemologies of creativity and freedom between tradition and (post)modernity.

Alphonse Tiérou's *Si sa danse bouge, l'Afrique bougera* (2001) gives an example to illustrate this argument, as he outlines a new transnational politics of dance that considers contemporary dance as an 'imagined community' outside

(neo)colonial discourse and racist representation. "Lorsque la danse paraît le masque tombe, dit un proverbe africain" (Tiérou 2001: 161), he states in the concluding chapter to his book which outlines the challenging politics of an emerging African contemporary dance form. As it turns out, Tiérou's query into the meaning of African contemporary dance propagates nothing less than the upcoming therapeutic against the persistent inferiority complex of the colonized.

As was first outlined by Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and is meanwhile well known, colonialism suppressed the many facets of African cultural expression. Languages, religions, philosophical views, and dance were misrepresented by colonial discourse and its pejorative misconceptions denied African identity on equal terms. Yet, Tiérou's analysis goes beyond the lamentation over an irrevocable loss as he demonstrates how to overcome this depressing state of affairs in a self-confident appropriation of Western choreographic models. While the colonialist negation of African humanity and culture persists in the current debates on dance – which more often than not reiterate stereotypical views on African dance as being tribal, primitive, sensual, and exotic (Tiérou 2001: 14) – he suggests that a knowledge of choreographic practice will provide a base for further theoretical investigation as well as documentation of African dance forms in a global setting (id. 2001: 46).

Western misnomers for African dance forms have long since falsified its complex philosophical conceptualization, he argues, which is neither animalistic-mimetic nor exclusively ritualistic, but rather outlines a highly sophisticated mode of being-in-the-world (Tiérou 2001: 33-34). One of his examples of this complexity is taken from Wèon (Ivory-Coast) culture and refers to its many name-giving dances which demonstrate how deeply embedded they are in the complex philosophies of griot (story-telling) culture. In that sense, dance originates identity and embodies so much more than language could ever express. As Tiérou comments:

> "La danse africaine est un moyen d'expression, mais un moyen d'expression plus fort que le geste, plus éloquent que le langage, plus riche que l'écriture. Elle va au-delà du mime. D'ailleurs il existe une différence irréductible entre le mime et la danse. Le geste du danseur est projectif, il induit une expérience non réductible à la parole. Celui du mime est descriptif. Le mime est comme le mot ou le concept. Il se compose d'une réalité déjà existante ou résume un fait. La danse dépasse ce qui est pour suggérer un possible, un imaginaire […]." (Id. 2001: 33-34)

African contemporary dance thus appears to zoom in on the pre-representational qualities of dance as to emphasize the dancer's agency over his or her objectifi-

cation by the colonialist gaze. Hence, Tiérou encourages a fresh perspective which derives from an embodied understanding of African traditional dance forms and their oral histories, yet combines these with contemporary European dance training and technique in a strategic appropriation as to defend African culture in a competing struggle over global legitimacy and copyright.[1]

After all, there is no turning back to innocent origins anymore, neither for the contemporary African choreographer, nor his or her Western audience. While there is no outside to the traditional dancing circle, colonialism's alienating gaze enforces a separation that irrevocably divides the dancer from the dance. Likewise, dances presented within the Western proscenium arch frame their performers as visual objects and/or artifacts, once that these traditional dance forms are presented on the world stage.

African contemporary dance thus seeks to remedy earlier post independence efforts of the 1950s and 60s which established national ballet companies in veneration of traditional dance forms, but were often stifled by a static notion of cultural heritage. Although process and exploration are considered key elements of traditional African dance in its community context, such development was denied in the name of national treasure building. Ironically, many national ballets on the African continent thus featured dance as a form of auto-chauvinism by adhering to Western models of art objectification and the cultural museum (Tiérou 2001: 44-45). This raises the pressing issue then of how to define contemporary African dance without adhering to Western hegemonic models of representation. Is it possible?

Postcolonial theory seeks to redress this double-bind by arguing that colonial hegemony may be undermined from within its own framing. Homi K. Bhabha's critical concept of colonial mimicry thus introduces an emancipating trajectory by which an appropriation of Western contemporary dance forms by African dancers and choreographers should not be regarded as a form of neocolonialism, but rather decolonization. In fact, as the following example of Faustin Linyekula's *Dinozord: The Dialogue series III* suggests, the dancing body emerges as an ennunciative presence from which a transnational dance politics may be developed.

1 Such strategic efforts appear increasingly important as to acknowledge, preserve and further develop dance forms that are constituted by improvisation and repetition rather than writing/notation (cf. Foster 2009).

FAUSTIN LINYEKULA: *DINOZORD: THE DIALOGUE SERIES III* (2006)

"Il y a longtemps que je voulais trouver une façon de raconter le Congo …"
(Linyekula 2007: 2)

Faustin Linyekula's *Dinozord: The dialogue series III* interrogates the possibility of accounting for the traumatized history of the Congo after colonization, dictatorship and the ongoing civil war, when there is hardly a sense of nation anymore, but instead the haunting notion of a state of ruins. The performance begins with a pre-performance installation of photographs and documentary film-clips, as well as interviews, taken from Faustin's home village Kisangani.[2] While audience members slowly assemble in front of the stage doors, one may not yet be aware of it, but already one has entered a transnational performance-space which aligns Kisangani and the local venue (which in my case was part of the Utrecht Springdance festival 2006). Faustin is dancing among our midst, wearing white-face make-up, black jeans and a white shirt. His ongoing movements between the Kisangani photographs and the audience members mediate between the documentary footage from Kisangani and the international festival world. On the floor then, one discovers pictures from an African village as bits and pieces from the monitored interviews on the screens are audible. A little undecided whether deciphering Dutch subtitles will be easier than discerning the French accents I hear, I move closer to the monitors and actually now see some of the Kisangani villagers narrating their stories as I pass along. When I finally move on into the actual theatre space, I have already become a momentary inhabitant or visitor to the world of Kisangani, as I listened to the villagers' stories and encountered traces of their private lives.

This pre-performance set-up suggests a spatial concept that has recently been described under the rubric of contemporary cosmopolitan performance. According to Paul Rae (2006), audiences in such a globalized theatrical setting must find ways to communicate across cultural affiliation and national divides as to allow for an "experience of theatrical spatiality that expresses the intertwined experiences of place and identity in an age of complex connectivity" (Rae 2006: 10-11). With regard to Linyekula's multi-media installation as an example of this, we may thus assert Rae's observation that cosmopolitan performance aes-

2 For the following performance analysis also compare DVD *The Dialogue Series III: Dinozord* (Linyekula 2007).

thetics introduce a shift of theatrical spatiality bordering on the transnational in the sense that they

> "[…] provide the context within which the individual can find an experience of spatiality that reconciles the fact of interconnectedness to the inconceivable extensivity of those connections, and an experience of sociality that recognizes the stranger without compromising the disinterest upon which their identity as stranger must, at some level, be maintained. An experience, that is, approaching the cosmopolitan." (Rae 2006: 20)

As Faustin dances between us, he thus allows for a shared moment of recognition, where although we may have never been to Kisangani we feel invited to join in conversation with his community that he mediates for us rather than the other way round. In a way then, this set-up includes us almost as a dancing member as we move in-between their chosen stories and images. Even though we are geographically separated by ever so many miles, the installation makes us aware of their presence and agency as performers in their own right.

Yet, once inside the theatre my assigned seat places me again within the imperial gaze of the Western proscenium frame. When Faustin enters from the wings, he thus introduces himself more formally, as he demonstrates a keen awareness of the convention by finding his stage-managing position behind yet another wooden frame on stage. He refers to himself subtly as "a multi-dimensional songster", who "sings everything, religious songs, traditional songs, Congolese" (Linyekula 2007) as to tease his audience into the world of disbelief. The stage set-up is quite simple: a multi-media desk, operated by Faustin from behind a wooden picture frame, a laptop and digital-beamer for projections onto a white canvas at the back wall of the stage, a chest, a microphone and a typewriter – minimal props for the five performers (Serge Kakudji, Dinozord, Papy Ebotani, Djodjo Kazadi, Papi Mbwiti) who have now also appeared on the left side of the stage to engage with. As was already mentioned, there are frames within frames in this set up and one already senses that there will be no full picture presented as to grasp the meaning of this playful deconstruction of the proscenium's imperial gaze.

As sound-operator Faustin continues to set the mood and atmosphere of the choreography; he introduces the members of his company by name and profession – a counter-tenor, an actor and two dancers – who will from now on join him on his return to the village of Kisangani. Finally, so Faustin tells us, he wants to give a funeral for Kabako, his long-lost friend, who died from plague twelve years ago. Originally commissioned for the 2006 Salzburg Mozart festival, the choreography evolved from the solemn sounds of the Catholic high mass

requiem which we now hear being introduced from off-stage. Simultaneously, I hear frantic typing which performs an underlying score to Mozart's organ, ominously connected to the presence of the type-writer on stage. Linyekula's performance uses motifs from the Mozart requiem, such as the *Day of Wrath* and *Final Judgement*, as yet another unsettling frame through which we, the international audience, become attendants to this curious mass service. Although we are most probably a rather unholy congregation, we are nonetheless cleverly summoned in our role as international witnesses, and after all in the vicinity of the International Court of Justice in Den Hague.

The Mozart requiem is divided into fourteen movements, which the choreography basically takes as its point of departure for the performance which becomes more and more of a contemporary passion play. Dramaturgically this structure presents different stations of suffering, abstract images from Congolese history, commemorated in front of an international public. The performance further evolves as a complex mix of diverse cultural signifiers, which Faustin guides us through by controlling the sound board and digital projections from behind his picture frame. There is much information to absorb over the next hour: abstract contemporary dance vocabulary, electronic sounds, images from a prison in Kinshasa, excerpts of Mobutu in French which taken together present the hybrid nature of contemporary African culture between tradition and modernity.

The performers' face-masks and body paint thus appear as abstractions from African traditional rituals though likely misleading as we name them according to Western misconceptions, and as in fact we may learn from the interview Faustin gave to Irene Filiberti in 2007. Here, he explains that the numbers on the performers' backs simply emerged from adolescent memories of happy soccer games and have nothing to do with Western desire for exoticism. In this respect, the prevalent colors of black, white and red are as open to interpretation as they would be in any other abstract contemporary performance, especially if we take up Tiérou's comment that African dance is in fact no more mimetic than European contemporary forms. The color symbolism can hence represent death, innocence, and blood, but it may also be perceived as an affect that adds to the overwhelming sense of trauma that the performance presents.

It seems no accident then that the conscious choice of loin-cloths plays to the same stereotypical audience expectation. And yet, no performance could be further removed from the Western misconception of 'tribal' dance. There is no mistaking this for a traditional burial rite, even though some of the movement vocabulary is derived from there as the performers rotate their pelvis ever so subtly moving around the chest of hidden documents. The traditional dancing-circle as

a continuum between the living, the dead and the yet to be born is irrevocably broken in today's Congolese society and therefore demands new vocabularies and names as Faustin's comment suggests:

"My dance will be an attempt to remember my name. I must have lost it somewhere along the dark alleys of Memory. I've been wandering ever since […] Thus I was born in a land called Zaire, the most caring hand I could ever find under the sunlight. I grew up believing this, until … 1997, lines from a conversation with History Zaire was but a lie invented by Mobutu, a dead exiled land. Perhaps my name is Kabila; perhaps I'm a bastard son of King Leopold II and the Independent State of Congo. I'm a kid soldier scavenging through a heap of lies, raped virgins and cholera. Democratic Republic of Congo was my real name, rectified my fathers […] My glorious legacy […] Where is the truth? Is there a stone or owl or river or sorcerer out there to teach […]? One possible answer: land of exile or native land, perhaps everywhere is but exile; perhaps my only true country is my body. I'll thus survive like a song that's never been written." (Linyekula 2008: n.p.)

Celebrating the pelvis traditionally signifies the continuation of life, however, here this familiar movement enters into a strange dialogic combination with the solemn choir music. Instead of invoking a false nostalgia for an Zaire as an imaginary homeland, Faustin's personal memories evoke the political presence of Kisangani in a transnational setting. Hence, the performance is not only a funeral to Kabako, but becomes an accusation against the auto-chauvinism of African nationalist discourse and its horrors of dictatorship and civil war crimes in the face of human dignity.

Throughout the performance there is a chest on stage, full of documents, which becomes a pivotal object in this respect. At first, when the performers circle their hips very slowly around it, the wooden chest is used as a coffin, but later it resembles an archive of civil war atrocities, when the performers tear away at those letters like howling dogs. These papers are haunting though we never quite know what is written on them, for the dismay alone is enough for us to imagine the atrocities and unaccounted crimes against international law and human rights. In that sense, we are confronted with precisely that "non-signifying presence" Paul Rae defines as the surplus of insoluble difference within cosmopolitan performance.

As spectators we are actively summoned to listen to the testimony at hand, and as soon as Faustin consciously switches into English for some of the passages of the performance, one realizes the urgency of this performance to find the ears of international audiences worldwide. The mechanical sound of the typewriter over Mozart's requiem makes sense then, as we can read it as the somewhat

desolate attempt to keep track and document the pain that we feel expressed through the music and in the dancing bodies. So if I am indeed cast as a member of some kind of a transnational jury here, then this Mozart requiem is not only held for Kabako, Faustin's friend, but also a commemorative service to the unburied dead of the Congo.

Faustin Linyekula's pre-representational return to the body as an individual's protective shield of intimate knowledge and experience reverberates with Tiérou's dream that African contemporary dance will allow for an expression of freedom beyond national confines and racial stereotypes (Tiérou 2001: 162). African contemporary dance thus becomes the imaginary home for Faustin and his dancers at a point in Congolese history, when all other systems of representation and communal affiliation have failed. It seems ever more important therefore to realize that this emphasis on the experiential rather than representational mode of dance cuts right through Western politics of objectification as it articulates the artist's only strategy for survival. As Faustin's persisting questioning of all representational frames contests, dance is the only mode of potentially being free as each new movement allows for an agency on one's own terms:

"Is this Art? Is this Dance? Is this Contemporary African Dance? How will I know if this is art? Do you call Art one's attempt to resist the cycle of destruction by planting seeds of beauty/seeds of dreams in a hopeless context? What then when this resistance is written in one's body? The body as the last shield for freedom." (Linyekula 2008: n.p.)

DANCE: THE EMBODIED POLITICS OF TRANSNATIONALISM

Faustin Linyekula's example presents the transnational politics of dance from an experiential perspective that situates the dancing body at the originating moment of representational meaning and identity. In line with Tiérou's theoretical framing of an emerging African contemporary dance aesthetic in the beginning of this article, my analysis of *Dinozord: The Dialogue series III* attempts to show how this ethical shift towards the performer's agency is closely aligned with the complex conceptualization of traditional African dance forms, where there is no outside to the dance, but everyone participates. African contemporary dance thus appropriates Western theatrical forms as creative mimicry (cf. Bhabha 1994), whereby choreographers like Faustin Linyekula or Salia Sanou present a contemporary ritual of counter-memory (cf. Roach 1996) and hope. While this aesthetic choice confirms Western hegemony to some extent, it undermines preva-

lent discourse of inferiority/superiority as these choreographers combine African traditional dance forms with European contemporary idioms. In that sense they perform nothing less than the alternative to a postmodern cynicism of resignation to the status quo. African contemporary dance is hence characterized by a mixture of Mozart and Ndombolo which makes dance from the African continent visible on the world stage from Kinshasa, to Berlin and San Francisco. Less concerned with the rhetoric of post-independence nationalisms, African contemporary dance introduces a politics of transnational affiliation between dancers and their audiences worldwide. To summarize then, Faustin Linyekula's choreography establishes a sense of communal belonging beyond national confines and thereby creates the possibility for a deterritorialized transnational politics to emerge.

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Flee(t)ing Dances! Initiatives for the Preservation and Communication of Intangible World Heritage in Museums

ANETTE REIN

Holistic, or so-called traditional worldviews are characterized in particular by how the material, everyday realm and the immaterial, spiritual realm are experienced as inseparably intertwined, as two dimensions of one reality. In this sense, a dance performance – since it has its roots in both worlds – embodies a special type of medium, which allows these two dimensions to communicate (cf. Rein 2010).[1]

The task of collecting, exhibiting and communicating tangible and intangible world heritage – in this case, dance events – presents museums with a special challenge – one that I will further elucidate below.

A museum collection mainly consists of tangible things. If we look at the history of ethnographical museums, we must ask ourselves: to what extent have traditional dances, as largely intangible forms of cultural knowledge, been collected despite their ephemerality and been given equal status to tangible objects? To what extent are and have they been archived and used in museums to represent cultures?

1 I would like to thank Gabriele Klein and Sandra Noeth. Their critical questions caused me to develop further perspectives on the subject. I thank Heide Lazarus, Annette Hornbacher, Leontine Meijer-van Mensch and Reiner Zapf for their constant willingness to discuss the issues further with me.

All dances contain tangible (e.g.: dancers, costumes, stage, audience, etc.) as well as intangible aspects (timing, religious practice as an expression of an ontology, sequences of movement, music, etc.). Only when all components interact seamlessly is a traditional dance event judged successful by its participants.[2]

At the beginning of the 20th century, museums began commissioning collectors to document data on the material, origin and function of things. At this point in time, the museums realized that objects without accompanying data were without value for the institution – empty material shells, so to say (cf. Laukötter 2008: 4). With the advent of increasingly improving technical recording equipment, collections of intangible world heritage, e.g. large music archives, were for this reason established to supplement the collections of tangible artifacts.

"The inclusion of other legacies has been common practice, at least in leading institutions, for many years. They are no longer – or at least, no longer only – to be considered storage spaces of tangible traditions. Instead, they have defined themselves as the agents of cultural values and perspectives in a more comprehensive sense." (Beier-de Haan 2007: 56)

In contrast, the documentation of dance only became more widespread with the advent of more sophisticated film equipment, which also allowed their meanings within the respective indigenous contexts to be grasped and recorded in more diverse ways (cf. Rein 1994). It is the fleeting nature of a dance event that contains special potential within the diversity of cultural production and thus also requires a special approach.

In this sense, let us take an exemplary look at a film sequence of the Balinese temple dance *Rejang*[3] and its context as stored in a museum archive. Then we will examine the three steps in the musealization process, to finally explore what – in my opinion – other dimensions of action can be included in the museum's

2 After returning from field research, ethnologists have at their disposal the material brought back by them or their colleagues to analyze cultural events. In the case of dance, these are collected material accessories, notes, photos, music recordings and ideally film and video documents archived in an ethnographical museum. Here the documents are further analyzed and prepared for presentation in accordance with the museum's mandate to educate the public on traditional cultural production.

3 The results of my field research in 30 Balinese villages from 1985-1987 forms the ethnographic basis for this text. All of the cursive words in the text are terminology from ethnology or museology that are not explained further. The above film sequence was recorded by Reiner Zapf on October 19, 1985 in Subagan, an Eastern Balinese village.

educational mandate if we wish them to fulfill the expectation of translating and communicating non-Western world views and life practices.

BACK – FORWARDS – A LITTLE FURTHER BACK – PLAY!

Illustration: Rejang in Subagan (Bali), October 19, 1985

Photo: Anette Rein

The following film scene unfolds before my eyes:

Young girls stride in a circle around a shrine, while alternately raising their right or left arm. When their hands are down, they grasp the shawls hanging from their hips, lift them briefly and let them go when their arm is lifted to its highest point, so that the colorful floating fabric highlights the girls' movements. The sound of an orchestra can be heard; the shadows on the ground indicate that it must be around midday.

The film sequence ends and I press repeat. I watch the film again and again. I study the textiles that the dancers are wearing, individual details of the stairs that lead to the shrine that they are circling, and the temple wall in the background. The same events seem to happen over and over again, and they appear to be endlessly repeatable. The cameraman's perspective decides what I can see.

There is no camera pan to show me the wider surroundings of what I had observed at the time: the way the mothers stood around the circle and how they were bursting with pride watching their daughters dancing. No one tells us that some of the girls took part because they had been healed from a severe illness

and that their participation was part of their parents' vow to attain the help of the Gods.

It remains unclear why the girls in Subagan were still little children, while in the next village Timbrah, it was only young women, who danced at the *Rejang* until they married. Who is there in this film to tell me that each village had its own rules stating that in Subagan, the dancers stopped dancing the *Rejang* upon the onset of menstruation, while in Timbrah, they only began participating in the temple dance after menstruation had set in?[4]

The smell of the blossoms in the dancers' headdresses and the siblings' laughter in the temple's neighboring courtyard, unexpectedly chasing a chick that was to be sacrificed after the dance – none of this reveals itself to me while watching the film. The camera team determines what you see and hear; it reduces the complex *Rejang* dance to the girls' flow of movement. The musical accompaniment doesn't provide any further insights.

Still, this film sequence could be a part of an exhibition about Balinese dances. However, before this dance can be made public as an exhibit in a glass case or shown on a screen, it has to go through the process of musealization. This process removes the tangible and intangible cultural expressions from their original context in order to integrate them into the academic environment of the museum institution.

PROCESSES OF MUSEALIZATION

According to Anja Laukötter, the act of musealization takes place in three steps (cf. Laukötter 2010: 120ff). Figuratively they correspond with the classic model of liminality in rituals that, according to Arnold van Gennep[5], can be summarized colloquially as: *remove – recreate – reintegrate*.[6]

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4 The use of past tense is here a conscious decision. An *ethnographic present tense* would suggest that the dance that was recorded many years ago still takes place in this form today. In fact, even these dance traditions have always changed over time.

5 In 1909, van Gennep described the structure of rites of passage for the first time. In the exhibition *Reisen und Entdecken. Vom Sepik an den Main* in the Museum der Weltkulturen Frankfurt am Main (October 27, 2007 – August 30, 2009) the various steps of musealization were staged and explained in a companion book to the exhibition (cf. Raabe 2008).

6 I wish to thank Dr. Matthias Jenny, director of the Palmengarten in Frankfurt am Main

First: 'removed' from their original context, the things are robbed of their function – they are taken out of time and space – in order to be exported in this still 'unclean' condition for further processing.

Second: the semantic change of the objects takes place along a prescribed path through the various departments of the museum: in a process of gassing, inventory, conservation, restoration and declaration. They are integrated into the museum's system of rules and regulations in the workrooms far from the public eye. Dislodged from their true symbolic context, the objects are sorted according to principles of materiality, authenticity, analogy, causality or functionality and then assigned to a culture – *ergo*, 'recreated'.

In this second step, the prerogative of interpretation is defined after physical appropriation has taken place. The objects become scientifically legitimized and are often declared exceptional. Especially chosen pieces are given this mark of quality by labeling them as *top exhibit* or *masterpiece* for the general public.[7] An object that has been sanctified in this way comes to represent an entire culture, since ethnographical museums never show the people themselves, but only their forms of cultural expression (cf. Köstering 2003: 17).

Third: the last step of musealization is its exhibition. The visitors' individual perspectives give the things their exclusive aura and thus turns them into museum objects (cf. Laukötter 2010: 121). Their new status is now also perceived by the public and thus they are 'reintegrated'.

"For the museum context, a single object was not sufficient. Instead, it needed […] an exhibited collection in order to fulfill the expectations that had been created." (Id.) Only with the help of the presented objects, a sheer vast mass of things, could e.g. ethnographical museums convincingly demonstrate to the public their expertise in the mastery of knowledge and the interpretation of the world in the midst of the ostensible chaos of cultural diversity. The final decision of what is shown in an exhibition, and in what way, resides with the curator – the established scientific expert (cf. Laukötter 2010: 122).[8]

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for the information that these three steps of musealization not only apply to things, but also to plants. The arrangements of plants in public shows are not to be equated with nature, but rather represent our Western idea *of* nature. The composition of arrangements and collections also lies in the responsibility of curators. In German the terms are *raus – rüber – rein*.

7 See *Being Object – Being Art. Meisterwerke aus den Sammlungen des Museums der Weltkulturen Frankfurt am Main*, http://www.mdw-frankfurt.de/Deutsch/ (March 21, 2010).

8 Only thanks to the demands of New Museology since the 1970s has the sole claim to

EXHIBITING AND COMMUNICATING

Even today, the collected objects with their static materiality remain at the center of interest in many areas. Interactive methods such as *hands-on* and *minds-on* seek to directly communicate the scientifically gathered knowledge about the objects, as demonstrated in the following play on words: 'grasping', under-'standing' and re-'living' knowledge.[9] In contrast, although dance is an undeniable cultural phenomenon – it simultaneously cannot be 'grasped' nor 'held tight'. A dance is an ephemeral 'in-between' shrouded in all sorts of manifestations that lend specific points of memory (cf. Kuhnt-Saptodewo 2006) to the ephemeral – and pose a great challenge for the museums' mandate to collect and communicate.

Despite existing knowledge of the many aspects of original dance events, we find isolated objects, such as dance masks, hung in glass cases like art objects even today. A complex dance event is in most cases still reduced to tangible aspects confined to glass cases after having run though the process of musealization and forced into an immobile, frozen form. They die the museum death (cf. Pazzini 1989: 124) in order to be reborn in a second life as a museum object.

The following situation illustrates the complexity of a dance event.

"A visitor standing in front of a glass cabinet illuminated by neon lighting, is peering into it with curiosity. A mask, a skirt-like brown costume, a foot rattle and a photo of dancing Indians are exhibited there. The text on the wall explains that the mask represents a spirit of the nature, who plays an important role in the initiation of Turkana girls. A foreign world opens up before the eyes of the observer; however, its vitality remains inaccessible. She doesn't see the squirming wild demons, doesn't hear the yelling of the crowd, the roar of the music instruments, doesn't feel the vibrating, buffeting bodies around her, doesn't smell the smoke of the fire and doesn't perceive anything of the fascination of the spectacle that possesses the revelers." (van Elsbergen 1998: 537)

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expert status in dealing with 'the world' been broken by the active participation of those affected (producers, users, etc.) from the countries of origin in the interpretation of the world. This was the beginning of the ongoing process of deconstructing expert knowledge and the role of the curator versus the knowledge of laymen.

9 Both of these terms stem from museum pedagogy and characterize the specific interactivity of programs in which touching things and being addressed by them are central.

Let me summarize specific aspects of ritual dances and their role in the ritual. Using the example of the ritual Balinese dance *Rejang*, I will argue that we have as yet no sufficient methods available to archive this phenomenon in an appropriate way – by which I mean the possibility of reproducing it in its original sense.

Ritual dances are always performed when extraordinary, exceptional areas of experience are meant for display. These dances, which are in the broadest sense improvised when seen from a Western perspective – are a "cultural setting" (Huschka 2009: 8) whose movement sequences are memorized by observation over many years. If we examine ritual dances with this aspect in mind, then it is clear that a specific form of knowledge transmission is taking place here: not by showing and repeating concrete sequences of steps and positions (cf. id. 2009: 19) – as in academic dance – but by imitating role models who, for their part, are also emulating a memory (cf. Rein 2000/1).

As described above, holistic worldviews see the ordinary and extraordinary dimensions of reality as constantly present and inseparably intertwined. In the case of Balinese ritual dances we can say with some certainty that dances take place in a ritual when spiritual entities manifest their presence. Dance steps that appear to be spontaneous represent a non-ordinary, spiritual dimension of reality that follows the spiritual beings presented in dance. It is the staged alternative to the ordinary human order (cf. Hanna 1987; Rein 1994; Kuhnt-Saptodewo 2006). This is expressed in the fact that profane dance movements are seen as owned by humans and are actively taught and trained. In contrast, ritual dance movements, in which the talent of an individual is meaningless, are seen as an expression of a holy choreography in which humans are the medium for the embodiment (cf. Rein 2000/2).

Central aspects of a three-phase temple festival on Bali may illustrate this better: the decoration of the temple; the arrival of the Gods and ancestors who come to rest on the seats that have been prepared for them; and the hospitality towards the spiritual guests and their return to their residence, the holy mountain *Gunung Agung*. According to Annette Hornbacher, during their stay in the temple the spiritual guests accept

"[…] smell and luster, or as the Balinese understand it, the essence (sari) of the aesthetically transforming material offerings and performances […]. In return, they leave their blessings and revert to their invisible state [in the end] (Hornbacher 2005: 358). The manner of ritual configuration [is not] unconscious performance, but rather an act of in-

sight […] (id. 2005: 362). The body [of the dancers] becomes the kinaesthetic form of representing metaphysical knowledge." (Id. 2005: 386)[10]

All of the media or 'configurations' used in the ritual – the decoration of the temple, the music groups and the ritual dances – communicate an aesthetic transformation of material reality to impart metaphysical knowledge (cf. id. 2005: 358). The dances don't provide symbolic images; they show the human body as a visible aspect of cosmic energies that can't be concretely represented. These dance movements are cosmic movements (cf. id. 2005: 387). They communicate the unity of *sekala* und *niskala* (cf. id. 2005: 385) of the tangible (ordinary) and spiritual (extraordinary) dimensions of reality (cf. Rein 2010: 9).

Against this backdrop, I would like to return to the museum as an institution with its various functions to offer a perspective of how a museum can comply with its educational mandate in the context of traditional dances.

THE EDUCATIONAL MANDATE OF MUSEUMS

The complex institution museum is composed of various central parameters: cultural heritage (in the form of collections and archives), functions (collecting, conserving, documenting, exhibiting and educating) and society (cf. Meijer-van Mensch 2009: 20). Each specific mandate is the consequence of a certain set of priorities and how the contents of individual parameters are defined. If we go along with the work groups on the homepage of the *Deutsche Museumsbund*, then we can differentiate between scientific museums, historical museums, museums of cultural history and art museums, museums for the history of technology and open-air museums (cf. Museumsbund.de). Irrespective of the subject, which a museum is devoted to, the initial foundation is a collection.

Museums have their origins in the royal art and curiosity cabinets of the Renaissance; to fill them, things were collected world-wide on the basis of personal preferences and research interests, arranged freely according to material and the diversity of form and presented, in constantly new variations, to only a select

10 "Duft und Glanz, oder nach balinesischer Auffassung das Wesen (sari) der sich ästhetisch transformierenden materiellen Gaben und Aufführungen entgegen […]. Im Gegenzug dazu hinterlassen sie ihren Segen und kehren [am Ende] in die Unsichtbarkeit zurück. […] Der Weg der rituellen Gestaltungen [sind keine] bewusstlose Performanz, sondern ein Akt der Erkenntnis […]. Der Leib [der Tänzer] wird zur kinästhetischen Repräsentationsform von metaphysischem Wissen." Additions and edits by the author.

group of people. In compliance with an encyclopedic principle of collecting, these things were supposed to showcase the entire world in all of its different manifestations (cf. Bredekamp 2009: 28). The spaces that housed the collections became places of an imaginary appropriation of the world. Exotic objects represented foreign worlds and made them seemingly accessible (cf. Bräunlein 2004/1: 32).

From the 19th century onwards, the objects were made accessible to a broader public according to a system influenced by the natural sciences during set opening hours in newly constructed buildings for presentation (i.e. museums) as national cultural heritage. However, the museums' own focus was still directed inwards and concentrated on the upkeep of the collections and on research.

In the 1979s Hilmar Hoffmann issued the slogan "culture for all" (cf. Hoffmann 1979), which formulated a shift towards a form of socio-pedagogical mandate for museums as "social places of learning" (Bräunlein 2004/2: 56). Museum educational service was professionalized as the social medium for knowledge transfer concerning all objects in the collections (cf. Meijer-van Mensch 2009: 21f). Museums developed into public, social institutions of learning that proclaimed an active role from an emancipatory point of view (cf. Bräunlein 2004/2: 57). According to Leontine Meijer-van Mensch, "the recommendations of the UNESCO for the involvement of all people in the shaping of cultural life […] (Nairobi 1976) […] was a further important milestone in that period" (Meijer-van Mensch 2009: 22).

Despite these recommendations, the perspective on the objects of the Others continued to be primarily aesthetic and relationships of power were mostly ignored. Despite this fact, the necessity to 'understand one's Own and the Other' transformed museums from places of learning to spaces of cultural tolerance and understanding over the following years. Ethnographical museums in particular were discovered as protagonists of multi-cultural enlightenment (cf. Bräunlein 2004/2: 59).

Accordingly, the work of ethnographical museums in the early 1980s concentrated on the presentation of collections in the context of current, socially relevant and comparative cultural issues. However, the *native point of view* still remained stuck in its reconstruction from a European point of view and the voices of the Others are even today not yet systematically incorporated in museum presentations. This concentration on data about material culture presents itself as a shortcoming in communication about complex indigenous systems of knowledge in the context of the (historical) artifacts in museum collections (cf. Rein 2009: 18; Rein 2010).

DANCE AS AN INDIGENOUS SYSTEM OF KNOWLEDGE AND OVERSTEPPING OF MUSEUM BOUNDARIES

The UNESCO Convention of 2003 raised worldwide awareness for the impending loss of the diversity of intangible world heritage due to the spread of globalization. Indigenous peoples suddenly had a voice – something no one had reckoned with at first (cf. Alivizatou 2007). Now their knowledge of oral history and cultural practices that had not previously been recorded in writing was much sought after. The call was also to document contexts in order to gain a better understanding of cultural diversity (cf. Seyppel 2007: 77).[11]

Traditional systems of knowledge and their oral transmission are directly tied to age, descent and gender. The small girls who dance *Rejang* in Subagan participate, because their parents want them to – they know little more than that about dance as a religious practice in life. Even the nubile dancers from the neighboring village Timbrah only know excerpts of religious knowledge about dances and temple rituals. They learn the holy songs, but don't understand what they mean. Only the village elders have this knowledge. As is standard in *gerontocratic* societies, one has to have reached a certain social status (i.e. marriage and children) and biological age in order to be completely able to participate in the respective gender-specific pool of knowledge.

The traditional knowledge tied to dance movements in Bali, is part of the intangible world heritage that was first publicly recognized this last decade for its importance as an autonomous system of knowledge and as a contribution to cultural diversity. Part of the knowledge of the meaning of dance movements is the temporally limited appearance of Gods during the dancers' flow of movements – after the dance, at the end of the ritual, daily life begins anew until the next ritual.

Documented through media and analyzed by academia, 'dances' are available in museums and archives for researchers and are also subject to their interpretations. Their previous ephemeral quality as an expression of a different, holistic worldview doesn't seem to matter anymore. Conserved on tapes and reduced to the material dimensions, dances, as well as objects die the museum death.

Ethnographical museums, who are committed to the transmission of non-Western traditions, are involved in an almost impossible balancing act between the demands of collecting, storing and presenting the diversity of world heritage

11 In the UNESCO list, rituals and festivals are in third place – after the performing arts.

on the one hand, and presenting non-Western systems of knowledge to local visitors in an understandable way that respects the original intentions of its producers on the other.

NEW PATHS

In my opinion, the following paths exist when dealing with museum collections (and dance) in order to integrate them as indigenous carriers of knowledge systems in the museum's educational mandate and to conform to the objectives of the UNESCO Convention from October 17, 2003 on the conservation of intangible cultural heritage:[12]

First: The direct involvement of knowledge producers in the archiving of their cultural products is essential. All aspects of documentation and collection should be discussed and realized together with them.

Second: Indigenous representatives should be invited to discuss historic collections and to tell their own stories about them (cf. Rein 2010).

Third: All (dance) performances that take place in the context of museums should be organized together with the performers (producers of culture), so that all participants are given a forum for inter- and trans-cultural dialogue.[13]

Fourth: Unlimited respect should be first granted to indigenous worldviews and systems of knowledge before the academic museum mandate and so-called expertise takes hold. New insights can only be discovered in mutual dialogue.

Even if these paths towards an 'inclusive museum' are strictly followed, the conflict – between collecting and storing, and the ephemeral quality of dance movements that is characteristic for the short-term, imagined presence of spiritual entities in a ritual – remains. The museums' attempt at archiving this concept of ephemerality in some way or another in order to communicate it through objects in its preserved state is doomed to fail – except if the institution museum expands its educational mandate to explain to visitors how to concentrate on the

12 Beier-de Haan states a difference between collection strategies and exhibition practice. For some years now, the latter has been attempting to secure a greater involvement of indigenous statements – whereby a generally required practice of participation does not yet exist (Beier-de Haan 2007: 57).

13 From 2000 to 2008 international musicians appeared in the Museum der Weltkulturen Frankfurt am Main in the *Musikalisches Wohnzimmer* and *Jardin du Monde*. The extraordinary thing was the close contact between the artists and the audience with many stimulating and very personal conservations about traditional music and world music.

staging of the ephemeral in the present, to enjoy it, absorb it and remember it themselves. This would mean allowing a dance event to simply occur in the here and now and to only remain stored as a fleeting event in individual or collective memory. A museum mandate that is expanded in such a way (beyond the museums' collections) would, in my opinion, equally contribute to preserving *and* communicating world heritage on the basis of explicit respect towards indigenous worldviews and traditions of knowledge.

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The Bluff of Contemporary Dance

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER in conversation with GABRIELE KLEIN

GABRIELE KLEIN: Today, on April 7, 2011, the Ivorian president Laurent Ghagbo barricaded himself in the bunker under his residency in Abidjan. He insists on his right to presidency although he has been voted out of office and he is fighting against the elected president Ouattara and the Ivorian people. You have many close contacts with the Ivory Coast and work a lot with Ivorian dancers ...

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: Yes, it is interesting to see how we already anticipated the current political situation in a piece that we developed a year ago with Franck Edmond Yao. In this production, he dances the role of a typical nightclub-goer fighting for space in front of the mirror in a disco. "It is all about defending one's place. It doesn't matter what for. This place is my place and that is exactly how it is in politics" says Frank E. Yao and attempts to take up as much space as possible by moving his arms and legs, kicking and beating the floor. In the piece, he directly shifts over from narcissistic clubber to a western scene in which two political rivals stand facing each other just like Gbabgo himself formulated it in foresight. In a combination of movements and text – a style, which has now become typical for our work – theories become physical reality and the physical turns back into language.

GABRIELE KLEIN: You are a theater director, who also develops choreographic pieces with dancers, such as the *Logobi* series[1].

1 *Logobi 01* (2009, with: Gotta Depri, Hauke Heumann), *Logobi 02* (2009, with: Gotta Depri, Gudrun Lange), *Logobi 03* (2009, with: Laurent Chétouane, Franck Edmond Yao), *Logobi 04* (2009, with: Jochen Roller, Franck Edmond Yao), *Logobi 05*

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: I know nothing about contemporary dance nor have I ever claimed that my work is about dance. We[2] created the *Logobi* series, because I had been working with dancers from the Ivory Coast for years, but I did so as a theater director. The working principle behind *Logobi* is no more specifically dance-oriented than in our other creations, where we also already worked with movement. They are however always about the relationship of language and movement. If I weren't able to work with language, I would be lost in working with movement. In other words, yes, I use dance elements, but I only do so in order to accomplish other things and not as a reflection of dance itself. Ultimately, I've always exploited movement in order to make theater.

GABRIELE KLEIN: How did the *Logobi* series begin?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: Gotta Depri, a dancer from the Ivory Coast, who I've known for a very long time, said he'd like to live in Hamburg. But there's no dance scene for him here, nobody knows him and as an Ivorian dancer with a different dance culture, he's marginalized. He received his training in traditional dance and in the contemporary urban dances of the Ivory Coast. In *Logobi 01*, he shows what he has danced so far. In contrast to European dances, which we appreciate abstractly, the dances from the Ivory Coast are readable for all, just not for a European audience. This is also why we explain the movements during the dancing. It was a research project for Gotta Depri, Franck Edmond Yao and myself, because for all of us – them as African dancers and myself as a theater director – European dance or what is here commonly considered contemporary dance, for example in respect to technique, is something we are not familiar with.

GABRIELE KLEIN: What does *Logobi* mean?

(2010/11, with: Richard Siegal or Paula Sachez, Franck Edmond Yao), directed by: Gintersdorfer/Klaßen

2 Theater director Monika Gintersdorfer, Ivorian dancer Franck Edmond Yao and visual artist Knut Klaßen began working together in 2005. With a German-African team of performers, they have produced pieces in independent venues and theaters, in galleries and museums, as well as in the public sphere in the field of theater, dance and performance. They have participated with their work in festivals in Abidjan, Ivory Coast and in Europe and received numerous prizes, e.g. Impulse Prize of the Jury 2009, George Tabori Prize 2010, Dance Company of the Year 2010, Faust Prize for Richard Siegal in *Logobi 05* 2010.

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: *Logobi* is the name of an urban dance form, a street dance from the Ivory Coast. Initially, it was primarily danced by very muscular men: doormen, bouncers, tough guys. Then the dance became sleeker, more elegant, no longer so male-agressive. It became a dance that anyone can dance, a woman, a little girl. Nowadays everyone dances *Logobi*.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Does *Logobi* have a special dance technique?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: *Logobi* has a canon of movements. The movements are actually quite provocative. They say: look at me. I am a strong, handsome guy and perhaps I'll be a real star some day. If you want, come compete with me. But you may get your ass kicked.

GABRIELE KLEIN: It sounds similar to the battle culture of hip hop.

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: Yes, *Logobi* is glamorous and a very gestural dance. The movements are meant to tell stories, imitate language. Unlike hip hop, *Logobi* is also a very beautiful and sleek dance and not necessarily purely about confrontation. *Ziguei* was more aggressive. There were even cases, in which it caused other dancers to leave the dance floor. But anyone can dance *Logobi* and people often dance it in front of the mirror. It is a kind of self-reflection that serves as a form of self-confirmation. *Logobi* is not really a dance, danced with a partner. Everyone dances in row facing the mirror. So you have to fight for a good place in front of the mirror and then defend this spot.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Where do they dance *Logobi* in the Ivory Coast?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: In clubs, discos. Abidjan is the economic capital. That is where most people live. That is also where most of the new urban dances are created and where all the important clubs are. New trends spill outwards from there over into the countryside or into the smaller cities. Urban dances also serve to immediately translate current events. At the moment, for example, there is a curfew and as soon as they can, everyone crowds into the clubs. You will find all ethnicities gathered together in the clubs. Ethnic differences aren't as important there. The only thing that counts is style.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Is *Logobi* also a dance spread with the help of visual media, as e.g. in the case of *b-boying* or *video clip dancing*?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: *Logobi* first and foremost developed in the streets. Meanwhile, there are a lot of video clips about *Logobi*, but in the beginning, it was purely street and club performance culture.

GABRIELE KLEIN: How and where did you develop an interest in dance?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: I first encountered *Logobi*, when I was commissioned to film a *Coupé Décalé*[3]-Show in Hamburg. As a performance, I found this system to be very strong: to call out certain words and immediately perform them. In the process, the sequence of the texts produced new meaning, a non-narrative content. It was very crazy craziness and to a large degree contained much freedom: to constantly re-formulate new combinations and to design a kind of reality through performance, which provides the performer with status as subject. In Abidjan, club dance is not just amusement. Instead, the participants take what they have created in the performance into their everyday lives and thus transform accordingly. *Coupé Décalé* was created by the group *Jet Set*[4]. I filmed several of

3 Douk Saga (1975-2006), called the 'President', Lino Versace, Solo Béton, Boro Sanguy and the other members of the self-proclaimed *Jet Set* created *Coupé Décalé* in 2003 in the milieu of the Ivorian diaspora in Paris. Developed in a period of crisis and impoverishment in the Ivory Coast, *Coupé Décalé* provides space for a parallel world between Paris and Abidjan, which allows individual existences to become expressions of an assertive play with codes and clichés in a mixture of subversive self-affirmation, dandyism and glamour. With breathtaking speed, this music, dance and lifestyle genre soon spread through the clubs of Abidjan to then become a massive success in West and Central Africa, the Caribbean and Europe. *Coupé Décalé* reached such popularity that Douk Saga's funeral even took on the form of a real ceremony of state for a true president of Abidjan. *Coupé* is street slang in Abidjan for 'doing mischief or being drunk'. In the Parisian reality of the Ivorians, the term transformed its meaning into 'to cheat, to bluff, to make a cut', followed by *décalé* and *travaillé*, running away and working. However, this modern term for working actually means declaring a hedonistic lifestyle with expensive cars, brand-name clothes, champagne and Cuban cigars and the earning and spending of a fast buck out of hand to be a true profession.

4 The *Jet Set* combine artistic expertise and glamour with precarious living conditions, problems with the law and money, in other words common everyday life as experienced by those migrants living in the banlieues of Paris. As self-proclaimed stars, they keep their battles with the police, the courts and their fluctuation of solvency as invisible as possible, while asserting the status of fame, glamour and wealth. Theatrical presentation, exclusive designer fashion and the creation of ever-

their performances. These performances are not about embodying certain roles and contrasting them with mundane everyday life. On the contrary, the performers give themselves names such as 'Le President', 'Le Bankier', without associating these roles with specific gestures, facial expressions or movements. But they are always and everywhere 'Le President' and everyone call them by that name. In this respect something created in the performance, which has an effect on life itself. From this perspective, life itself a performance: we perform what we want to be.

GABRIELE KLEIN: How did you translate that into a theatrical concept?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: We used the system that these shows have, combining text with movement, but without the music, which normally also plays a part. We formed teams in which dancers worked with actors. The language had to be translated, German-French and French-English. Initially, we chose simple movements loosely connected to what is being said. The movements could be dance movements or more athletic or look like working motions. At first, the movements were there in order to create something similar to a group identity: one person does a movement, which the others can immediately join in on. And we kept it so simple, because we wanted to keep audience inhibition as low as possible, when we were performing outside. We performed in places, such as the banlieues of Paris, where the audience has a lot of knowledge about and experience with movement. The audience was the experts and we wanted to integrate them.

GABRIELE KLEIN: What role does the audience play?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: For us, it's not about: here are the artists and superstars and you can just sit and watch. We do not build stages when we play in the streets in order to stand level with the audience. Eye to eye and not elevated. As a performer, this makes you very vulnerable. The audience reaches out to touch

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new dance forms are indispensable elements of this concept. In accordance with the principles of reevaluation and exaggeration, a parallel society is created. The members of this society meet in the suburbs of Paris, in the Ritz, the Atlantis or along the Rue Princess, the party strip of Abidjan the *Jet Set* sets the stage, not vice versa. In the clubs, DJs sing stories of a Jet-Set world, in which the migrants occupy the higher positions, become bankers, ambassadors or presidents. The political mixes with irony, amusement and show.

you, push you. By making the movements simple, anyone can immediately join in. If you are talking while you are dancing, you have to think and formulate at the same time as well. And when you take a pause from speaking and the movement continues, it's no problem at all.

GABRIELE KLEIN: What kind of texts did you use?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: One of our first pieces was *Verlieren* (*Losing*) (2006). *Verlieren* was a mix of outdoor performances. We went out onto the streets and visited Ivorian artists in their homes in Paris, Marseille and Hamburg. These were, in other words, people who also had the status of migrants. This double life as artists and migrants of color is something we wanted to make visible in the performances and in a film.

We also showed it in La Courneuve, which is the banlieue in Paris, where journalists made those pictures of burning cars that went around the world. It was also a period of intensified conflict between France and the Ivory Coast, a conflict, which also greatly changed the lives of Ivorians in France. The texts that we used also referred to the political situation of the migrants.

The performances featured, for example, DJ Arafat, Maga Din Din or Zike, as well as people, who are well-known in show business and nevertheless still live in the banlieues. We developed scenes with them and filmed them in their apartments. So actually it was more like 10 to 12 people, who performed in the film.

GABRIELE KLEIN: What is your typical working process, for example, in *Logobi*?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: *Logobi 01* was about the situation of Gotta Depri. And from *Logobi 02* onwards, we asked people, who are not part of our team, to collaborate for a short space of time. We didn't want to rehearse *Logobi* longer than a week.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Why?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: First of all, Ivorian dancers work rather quickly. They don't want to repeat and rehash what they are doing for 4 weeks. And we don't want anyone to act as if they are watching something that they have already seen 10 times before. Ideally, they should watch as attentively as if they were seeing it for the first or second time. In *Logobi 04*, we worked with Jochen Roller, in

Logobi 05 with Richard Siegal – in order to have any chance at working with these very busy dancers, you have to keep the rehearsal periods short.

GABRIELE KLEIN: How would you describe the work on *Logobi 04* with Jochen Roller, for example? What was your role as director therein?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: The dancers, Jochen and Franck, and I spoke with each other, even before entering the rehearsal space. We also showed each other things. It was a constant back and forth – a system of demonstration – from talking to performing to talking, from table to stage to table. Later, I disappeared from the stage. Because I've known Franck Edmond and Gotta Depri for so long and also actually know Ivorian dance pretty well by now, I can easily say which movements are interesting to present.

GABRIELE KLEIN: And then there's the moment of choreographic decision-making. Who makes them and which decisions?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: It depends. *Logobi 01*, *02* and *04* have a fixed order, i.e. I select the order of the performance out of the material that was created over a period of 5 days. For example: we begin with the funeral dance, then do the rain dance and from this, we move on to the first urban dance. In *Logobi*, it is up to the performers whether something is fixed or not. In *Logobi 05* with Richard Siegal, nothing is fixed, absolutely nothing. Richard didn't want to provoke any form of repetition.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Neither did you, right?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: Yes. In *Logobi 05*, I wrote a list during rehearsals. Half an hour before the performance I went to Richard and said to him: if you could get to this point sometime during the performance – that would be nice. And he said: Monica, you told me, you don't like repetition. And I said, yes, but that was really very good and then I threw away my list. In other words, in *Logobi 05*, our goal is to never repeat anything and the structure between the two dancers has to be found anew every evening. *Logobi 05* therefore has very different performances. When I send out a DVD, it's never clear whether the presenter will really get the performance that's on it.

GABRIELE KLEIN: I see a difference: *Logobi 01* and *02* seem to be more about representation and *Logobi 05* more about the performative. From this perspective: Is *Logobi 01* more a piece and *Logobi 05* more a process?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: The method is the same. The way we approach rehearsals and ask questions: why could such a movement be successful? Or why would such a movement be accepted in one cultural system and not in another? In *Logobi 01* and *02*, we explored Gotta Depri's question of whether contemporary dance is no more than a bluff.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Is this a politically, a post-colonially motivated question?

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: In my opinion, it is not particularly political to make politics an issue. It is political, when you try to change the personal circumstances of people through your work. We did *Logobi*, for example, because Franck and Gotta Depri had no contact yet with the European dance scene. To get to know contemporary dance, or what the Europeans define as such, by performing and not by reading books or watching films. Through and in performance, real change takes place. Before the performances, they were dancers, who performed in Europe in a specific dance milieu, which had no connections whatsoever to the European dance scene. I wanted to lift this separation between their dance community and European dance. That is why I did *Logobi*. And things have changed as a result. Richard Siegal has invited Franck to take part in his next piece, for example. *Logobi 05* was invited to the German Dance Platform 2010 and Franck and Gotta Depri are now dancers in the contemporary dance context.

GABRIELE KLEIN: It changes the circumstances of individual lives.

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: Yes, it is always quite concrete. In our collaborations with African dancers, it is always also about visas, about receiving permission to move. Until 2009, I invited the dancers at my own risk and with a lot of administrative expenses. That was not without problems, for if one of them had not gone back, I would never have been allowed to invite anyone ever again. Later, I received support from institutions such as the House of World Cultures in Berlin. They organized the invitations and also assumed responsibility and liability. That was a relief, but much has changed due to the current political situation. Our work is currently about providing support for people in the Ivory Coast and

trying to get them out of a country on the verge of a civil war. That is currently our main project.

GABRIELE KLEIN: We can differentiate here between three concepts of inter-culturalism. The first concept pursues an early modernist idea of dance, which says: dance is a universal language. You can see this in ballet: ballet is a European, courtly, i.e. class-specific dance culture, which follows a certain concept of gender and translates feudal structures of power into choreography. Ballet today is a globalized language, disseminated worldwide through colonialization and imperialism, among other things. As a globalized language, ballet disseminates, one could say, the post-colonial myth that anyone can understand dance and choreography, that anyone can read it. This concept of dance as a universal language is something you clearly did not choose. The second concept is that of cultural difference. That dance can be understood as a cultural technique and that its identity is located in a specific culture. Inter-culturalism here means: accepting the 'Other', striving towards an understanding between cultures. The third concept is the deconstructivist idea of constant cultural translation. Here there is no source or target culture; dance cultures are always 'in between', interstitial, on a journey.

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: Yes, the last one interests us a lot at the moment. The first *Logobis* were about cultural differences and about making these recognizable. *Logobi 05* was about the transformation of movements. Here cultural identities were more than just starting points, transcultural formations were the process. Whether transformation can take place or not, also depends on the dancers and their dance biographies. Some move more intensely in a system, have a distinct identity.

GABRIELE KLEIN: Transcending cultural identities is quite an ambivalent process …

MONIKA GINTERSDORFER: For an Ivorian dancer, that which emerges from this 'in-between' space is extremely dangerous. There is the danger of *n'importe quoi* – of no longer being able to recognize anything at all. That it no longer stands for and doesn't relate to anything. In the Ivory Coast, every dance has to have its own name. If someone just simply does something, they are accused of *n'importe quoi*. Just doing something or another, producing a bastard. It was therefore clear that the principle of transformation had to be distinct. How do we manage to not create a *n'importe quoi* in the process of transformation?

ART WORLDS

Transcription – Materiality – Signature. Dancing and Writing between Resistance and Excess

GABRIELE BRANDSTETTER

Dance and *Schrift*[1], i.e. writing, are engaged in a dynamic relationship – and have been so in various respects over a long historical period of time. How can we explore these dynamics, this love-hate relationship? In current dance discourse, opposing as well as connecting positions have been, so it seems, clearly adopted in theory and practice. To exemplify these positions, I would like to quote two statements from the field of dance practice: in response to a question on the relationship of dance and *Schrift*, choreographer Thomas Lehmen stated that they are "completely different domains. Dancing and *Schrift* are simply not the same. There is no linguistic equivalent to what is being danced. There is no such thing." (Klementz/Cramer 2004: 21) Curator Heike Albrecht represents the opposite point of view – a commitment to the communicability of language/*Schrift* and dance:

"Nevertheless, I still see the process of reading dance through language as decisive. The act of repetition, of recognition is also one of reflection, the reflection of one's own position […]. A cognitive process is set in motion and this is where the articulation of ideas through dance and language come face to face." (Id.)

1 Translator's note: The German terms *Schrift* and *Schreiben* both translate as writing in English. *Schrift* stands for the material side of writing, i.e. text (typeface, font, script, etc.). We have chosen to retain the German term in italics throughout the text to differentiate it from *Schreiben*, which is the actual physical act of writing.

The following paper seeks to explore the relationship of dance and *Schrift* in a way that examines their differences and conjunctions beyond the usual well-known oppositions – the oppositions of orality/corporeality and texuality, presence and absence, performativity and semiotics, ephemerality and traces.

This requires ignoring a large part of the relationship between dance and *Schrift* – a field, which is, after all, widely discussed in the area of cultural studies. In the case of *Schrift*, I am first of all referring to the broad range of discourses covering the history and presentation of dance and choreography and which are, in fact, inseparable from their creation: discourses, such as those expressed in concept papers, written project applications, program notes, reviews as well as essays and historical analyses. In addition, I will also ignore the highly varied 'forms of dance notation' with their intricate intertwining of *Schrift* and movement and their historic transformations. And finally, this is also not the place to examine 'dance' and '*Schrift* as cultural techniques', although this is also an important aspect.[2]

Instead, I would like to concentrate on a perspective that focuses on the performativity – of dance, as well as *Schrift*. Instead of speaking of dance and *Schrift* in a 'general' sense, I would like to approach it from the perspective of movement and its corporeality – and examine both forms of expression, dancing and writing, as movement phenomena. So, instead of speaking of dance and *Schrift* – i.e. writing as text, it will be dancing/choreographing and *Schreiben*[3] – i.e. writing as a physical act. This will bring to our attention other similarities and disparities.

In philosophy – especially in phenomenologically accentuated philosophy – the issues of dancing-writing are examined primarily from the body's point of view. Jean-Luc Nancy, for example, approaches the subject of "writing the body" (cf. Nancy 2008) from the perspective of the gesture of addressing. Writing here means "not the monstration, the demonstration of a signification, but a

2 On dance as a cultural technique (the theory of Marcel Mauss) cf. Inge Baxmann: *The Body as Archive. On the Difficult Relationship between Movement and History* (2007); as representative of the extensive literature on *Schrift* cf. Gernot Grube/Werner Kogge/Sybille Krämer (eds.): *Schrift. Kulturtechnik zwischen Auge, Hand und Maschine* (2005). On the debate between *Schrift* and performance cf. e.g. Waltraud Wiethölter/Hans Georg Pott/Alfred Messerli (eds.): *Stimme und Schrift. Zur Geschichte und Systematik sekundärer Oralität* (2008), as well as Davide Giuriato/ Stephan Kammer (eds.): *Bilder der Handschrift. Die graphische Dimension der Literatur* (2006).

3 See footnote 1.

gesture toward touching upon sense" (id. 2008: 17). The 'body' is thus always already in itself different:

> "Hence the impossibility of writing *to* or of writing *the* body without ruptures, reversals, discontinuities (discreteness) or trivialities, contradictions and displacements of discourse within itself." (Id. 2008: 19)

But finally, it is precisely here – in this contingent 'body writing' – where resistance, the excess of the corporeal becomes apparent: "the ongoing protest of bodies in-against-writing" (id. 2008: 21).

Even writing itself, as a physical act of movement, should be included in this approach. Roland Barthes has pointed out that this aspect of writing has largely been neglected in the theory of poststructuralism: the sensual, physical act that writing can be (aside from the semiotic production of meaningful signs): "[…] *scription*, the moving, the muscular act of writing" (Barthes 2002: 983-984).

In the following, I would like to examine these intersections and differences of 'dancing-writing' and their performative manifestations from three perspectives: 1. transcriptions and transmissions; 2. materiality; and 3. signature.

A literary episode from literature on understanding dancing and writing will provide insight into the fundamental difference between these processes.

The author Robert Walser has discovered a unique form of writing in his 'micrograms'. He permits himself to 'digress' in his *Räuber* novel in order to keep the quill moving, as he calls it. He comments on this as follows: "Maybe this is one of the secrets of better authorship, i.e. there simply has to be something impulsive entering the writing." (Kammer 2008: 195)[4] Walser's poetological reflections repeatedly revolve around the execution and limitations of writing. He observes and comments the scribbling, the sweep of the pen and the application of the pencil. It is about the performance of writing, the complexity of this 'action' as a movement of the body as a graphic act. In an essay on Robert Walser, Walter Benjamin reflects precisely on this aspect of performative writing: "To write and to never correct what has been written is the ultimate penetration of unintentionality and greatest intent." (Benjamin 1977: 325) For the act of writing, this type of performance is highly unusual: to write – for example when creating a poetic text – almost always means moving forward and back again. As a production of text, writing doesn't take place in a single, dynamic movement. Instead, writing is 'roughened' by interruption, deletion, erasure,

4 I am grateful to an excellent essay by Stephan Kammer for pointing out this passage in the text.

overwriting – by those processes of stratified graphé, which, for example, editors are confronted with in the archeology of text generation.

Conversely, this is precisely the distinguishing feature of the performance of dance when presented – namely moving in a single motion, without interruption, without re-vision or correction. If writing reveals itself as performative in the act of putting something (down) *into* writing, then dance does the same during live performance. The difference in 'showing oneself' in each action is characteristic: in its self-recursivity and its self-interruptions, writing already brings its own transformation, modification, re-scription into the performative act. In dance as performance, the reverse is usually the case: the act is unique, irreversible, and cannot be retrieved again nor later corrected. William Forsythe sums up this quality of dance in the words:

> "The choreographic idea traditionally materializes in a chain of bodily action with the moments of its performance being the first, last and only instances of a particular interpretation." (Forsythe 2008: 6)

We have here a substantiation of ideas in movement that "cannot be repeated in the totality of its dimensions by any other means" (id.).

This difference between the singularity of performing dance and the self-interruption in performing writing coincides with another aspect of dancing/writing and performativity. It is the aspect of showing and showing-oneself in the act of movement. In the act of performance, dance shows (manifests itself) and shows itself (points to itself). In contrast, writing as movement – and this has as yet been little reflected upon as an aspect of the performativity of writing (Kammer 2008: 201ff) – eludes observation by an audience. The physical co-presence of actor/performer and observer, constitutive to the presentation of dance, is only of conditional relevance for the act of writing. Instead, the unobserved nature of this act is characteristic for writing. Writing, unless it is done in experimental situations, is a performance that doesn't present itself and is not subjugated to the regime of observation through an audience. All the more complex, however, are the scenes of self-observation in the performance of writing – and here writing and dancing see eye to eye. The 'showing-itself' and 'reading-itself' in the act of writing is a staggered process: by reading what I have written, I see the 'have-written', I see myself as writer. I observe myself in the act of writing-reading. A dancer does not read himself or herself, i.e. the traces of what his or her movement in space has 'written'. Nevertheless, in a temporal dimension that reaches backwards and forwards in time, the multiplicity of self-perception is comparable.

Elizabeth Waterhouse, a Forsythe Company dancer, formulates this self-perception in the following way:

"I have learned to spread my awareness throughout my body [...] to maintain a large proprioceptive awareness that extends from fingertips to toes. I have learned to multitask my concentration into observing/feedback and anticipating/feedforward. [...] Dancing [...] is a skilful activity that binds analyzing and acting." (Waterhouse 2010: 153-181)

This side of an elaborated self-perception in the act of dancing, writing – in a complex temporal structure of remembering and "intuiting" (cf. Walter Benjamin) – seems to me an aspect of performing writing and dancing that deserves further discussion.

TRANSCRIPTIONS AND TRANSMISSIONS BETWEEN DANCE AND SCRIPT

One possibility for examining the relationship between dance and *Schrift* is the aspect of transmission/transcription. Of course, direct translation between dancing and writing isn't possible. Nevertheless, transmissions of a kind do take place – in various discourse scenarios: from dance into texts about dance and choreography, reviews, descriptions, scientific analyses. And, *vice versa*, from writing – from myths, stories, linguistic imagery or theoretical texts – *into* choreography and dance. It is this process in which the ambivalences, attractions and repulsions between dance and text occur – an ongoing process that creates friction. How should we imagine transmissions between disparate elements? And how should we proceed to act upon them? We are thus constantly confronted with the topos of 'untranslatability'. Merce Cunningham, for example, repeatedly emphasized the 'untranslatability' not only of dance, but also of music and other arts.[5]

This emphasizes a side of intransigence, which describes a peculiar quality of the art form of dance – a 'presentation of difference' and action that occurs nowhere else in a similar fashion. In Thomas Lehmen's words: "In working with dance, I (already) see a space in which things can be said in a different manner than with language" (Klementz/Cramer 2004: 21) – a statement, which *mutatis*

5 Susan Foster made a critical reference to this debate on 'untranslatability' in her reflections on methodological problems, while however still assuming that the integrity of dance allows for transmission into other media (cf. Foster 1986: 187).

mutandis also applies to other art forms. In the theory of translation – from Charles Peirce, Roman Jacobson, Walter Benjamin to Umberto Eco – there is an almost irresolvable argument about if and how something is lost or whether something is gained – a surplus of sense and sensuality – in the process of transmission or transcription (from one language to another, from one art form to another). In his – broad – concept of translation, Roman Jacobson refers to the work of semiotician Charles Peirce and praises his theory for stating that in "translation, the element that is to be interpreted is always enriched in a creative way" (Eco 2006: 271). In other words, there is an excess of alternatives of meaning and comprehension in such a process. The shifts, detours as well as the gaps and permanent obstacles in what is to be transmitted open up a creative dimension. Disfigurement and similarity are in a state of friction – and it is precisely here that the potential of a third element, *between* dance and *Schrift*, could reveal itself: a similarity without an original. This is why Walter Benjamin speaks of "translatability" and not of (a complete) translation (cf. Benjamin 1972)[6]. Given such reflections on the openness of and the shifts in the translation process, the question 'where is the primary and where the secondary?' seems obsolete. In the process of translation, the intransigency of an artwork becomes apparent – its untranslatablility into language or other media. When dancers and choreographers insist on this chasm between dance and *Schrift* (of translation), they highlight a crucial aspect of the aesthetic experience. They point out the openness of meaning in choreographic work – as does William Forsythe, when he emphasizes the resistance of a choreographic performance to objectifying, unequivocal interpretation: the space-time experience, as succinct as it may be, is ephemeral and evades examination "from the position that language offers the sciences and other branches of arts, that leave up synchronic artifacts for detailed inspection" (Forsythe 2008: 7). Once again, the familiar topos of ephemerality, which makes an act of dance inaccessible and resistant, is invoked to resist the fixation/transcription into *Schrift*. At the same time, there has always been an exchange between *Schrift* and dance, between body and language – especially in the choreographies/performances of William Forsythe. Thomas Lehmen himself points this out when establishing that language and *Schrift* represent media for the conceptualization and interpretation/reading of dance movements on the one hand, but on the other, also constitute elements of the choreographic process:

6 On Benjamin's theory of translation: cf. Jacques Derrida: *Babylonische Türme. Wege, Umwege, Abwege* (1997) and *Theologie der Übersetzung* (1997) as well as Paul de Man: *Schlußfolgerungen: Walter Benjamins 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers'* (1997).

"In a ballet by William Forsythe," Lehmen says, "it's about graphic elements, about letters, so to say […] about words that appear again and again. But they have no assigned meanings. They enter a space in which we can't and shouldn't say what a specific element concretely means, although they are articulated in a super clear way. That is simply the space of art." (Klementz/Cramer 2004: 21)

In his *Schreibstück*, Thomas Lehmen himself started an experiment in the space between writing/*Schrift* and choreography. What does it mean to base a choreography on a book, to start from a piece of writing? This implies that the idea already includes a process of transcription. "The idea was," Thomas Lehmen says, "to write a 'dance piece as a book'. Choreographers, dancers and producers were supposed to communicate about the idea and with one another in order to perform the piece." (id. 2004: 20) In a series of performances, three choreographers each showed their version, i.e.: their implementation of the 'plans' outlined in the text and the attached 'boxes'. The transcriptions – into body movement, into dance – are implemented on the basis of an act of writing; they are staggered in time like a musical canon and visible in the same space: as realizations of the infinite possible number of transcriptions in the "simultaneity of corporeal reality" (cf. Lehmen 2002: n.p.)[7]. Each implementation of *Schreibstück* and its respective choreographic re-writing simultaneously refers to what is not being implemented. In the process of transcription and showing the transmitted, it becomes transparent how choreographers work: in the juxtaposition, we behold the processes of decision-making, freedom and reduction contained in the creative process. And what becomes clear is that there is no original version that an author (in the traditional sense of the term) could be responsible for. It is evident that the dynamic relationship of text and body, of writing and dancing is situated in the open field of translatability: as a never-ending process of transcriptivity. Ludwig Jäger applies the concept of transcriptivity from a linguistic perspective and relates it to basal processes of transcriptive adaptation in language: speech (its performance) as an 'ante-script' of the scriptural. – A reflection/the application of this theoretical model for the relationship of dance/choreography and *Schrift* seems self-evident (cf. Jäger 2002).

7 On Thomas Lehmen's *Schreibstück* cf. Pirkko Husemann: *Choreographie als kritische Praxis. Arbeitsweisen bei Xavier Le Roy und Thomas Lehmen* (2009).

MATERIALITY: RESISTANT WRITING/DANCING

Apart from Roland Barthes' books on the theory of writing, the theory of *Schrift* has only recently turned its attention to the intrinsic value of the materiality of *Schrift* and writing: its visual and haptic materiality, the concreteness, dynamics and corporeal nature of writing (cf. Greber/Ehlich/Müller 2002). To describe the relationship of this physical act (in contrast to *Schrift* as documentation), Jean-Luc Nancy uses a term derived from Roland Barthes' concept of "dysgraphia": "exscription".

> "There is only exscription through writing, but what's exscribed remains this other edge that inscription, though signifying on an edge obstinately continues to indicate as its own-other edge. Thus, for every writing, a body is own-other edge […]." (Nancy 2008: 87)

According to Nancy, writing/reading is not primarily a visual act of deciphering, but rather "touching and being touched": "writing, reading, a matter of tact" (id.). The materiality of writing is, thus, fundamentally linked to the experience of resistance. Not only do the 'figures' of movement – writing/dancing – describe the complex structure of the space-time matrix. Their materiality[8] reveals itself instead in the 'flow' of the movement, which makes the exertion directed at the resistant material tangible. Roland Barthes mentioned that the line and the flow of inscription testifies to a power, to work – an 'energon' that appears as a gesture of exhaustion. "The line is a visible action." (Barthes 1991: 170) Is the other side of resistance contained in this act, even if it is not perceivable on the surface? Not just the materiality of the carrier of inscription, but also that of the body, in the resistance of practice, rejection and omission of movement?

The resistance of writing and dancing does not however only mean the friction of the materiality of movement, but also the aesthetic and political dimension of a movement *out* of resistance: writing-dancing as resistance! Contemporary artists from various cultures stage the inscribing motion of the body as a gesture of protest, as an act of resistance against political violence. William Forsythe did so in his choreography *Human Writes* (2005), as did Taysir Batnij in his *Photographic Fragments* (2001) in which he wrote on the walls and entranceways of houses in Gaza: he painted graffiti and scratched names, numbers and drawings into the walls as a protest against the violation of human

8 On the subject – concerning cultural techniques of communication – cf. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht/K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (eds.): *Materialität der Kommunikation* (1988).

dignity.[9] These are gestures that write against the denigration and expropriation of human rights. William Forsythe's choreographic installation *Human Writes* attempts to make the denied corporeal traces of a resistant writing visible as movement (cf. Brandstetter 2008). The project follows a trail that – beyond any perfection of writing/dancing – leads to a victims' perspective on this power of writing. It travels to the very edge of writing, the underground areas and cracks in the movements demarcate the other side of good and beautiful writing, of good and beautiful dancing: "dysgraphia" (Barthes 1991: 173).

Forsythe's *Human Writes* deals with writing as action:

"Writing is always also movement. I consider my choreographic practice to be spatial writing. The dancers' movements should leave traces. In *Human Writes* they have to be good in order to deal with hindrances as best they can to be able to at least reproduce a few letters." (Forsythe 2006: n.p.)

However, the act of reproduction becomes an act of "exscription", of "dysgraphia". The performance is about re-writing individual sentences from the *Declaration of Human Rights*. Dancers and non-dancers/audience members move around desks, 'writing tables'. The rule governing the writing action is that 'no line or letter' is to be created directly. Writing "must be accompanied by a physical limitation, a resistance" (id.). Thus every gesture, every learned movement is broken down and beset with hindrances. Smooth, unobstructed writing – the mastery of movement and thus the performance of writing – is distorted and disfigured. These limiting acts, which the audience participates in as co-writers, are so far from any school of familiar writing/dancing that they become an extreme challenge to movement coordination. Thus these resistances permit something to become visible and tangible in every move, which is hidden in the official text of the *Declaration of Human Rights*: the violence *in* the *Schrift* of the statute. Paradoxically, we are dealing here with a text that postulates the physical and political 'integrity' of the individual body over the power of the state and judiciary. The constitutive paradox that "humanity is still filled with inhumanity" (id.) here becomes evident in the process of writing – even *where* politics acts in the name of *Human Rights*. The white sheets of paper, painstakingly written on, preserve the traces of writing. They are witness to this protest against a disposability of the body, which is defined by politics, economics and the media.

9 See the exhibition *TASWIR – Islamische Bildwelten und Moderne* in the Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin 2009, as well as Gabriele Brandstetter: *Forsythes Human Writes: Vom widerständigen Schreiben* (2009).

SIGNATURE: WRITING/DANCING AS AN ACT OF SIGNING

Finally, I would like to turn to a specific aspect of writing that is related to dancing: the signature. Is there such a thing as signing dance, signing *as* dancing? What could it consist of? In the unique, non-reproducible movement of a dancer? Then *every* dance would be a signing – inseparable from the individual act of movement. Or is the subsequent *trace* of a movement its signature? This presumes that movement is reproducible and transferable – a figuration of dance that refers to the absence of the body. Is the character of a signature the recognizable handwriting of a dancer, a choreographer – in terms of "style" (Foster 1986: 76ff)? What would such an identity consist of? And who or which 'reader'-witness would attest to such a signature?

Who signs (for) dance? And how does dance (counter)sign?

Signing – in terms of signing one's name – is a special act of writing. It refers to (coming from *signatura* = official seal, signature) an artifact, a legal text, a creation or object provided by a sign, name or artist's mark (cf. Macho 2005). Signature is closely tied to the history of authority and authorship, to ratification and authentication. This relationship between authorship and signature is equally important for dance – though far more complicated than in the fields of law, politics and art. I don't want to review here the historically and theoretically difficult issues of dance, 'authorship' and the concept of artistic oeuvre, which are closely linked to the meaning of 'signature' (cf. Brandstetter 2010). This relationship – especially the subject of 'authorship' – is often also the topic of conceptual reflection in many dance pieces by contemporary performers.[10]

The defining aspect of these pieces is an approach to choreography/dance that is not focused on a 'product', but rather on triggering a process of experience. Signature in dance thus does not consist of fixing and preserving an intention behind the movement. Instead it opens up a space for an encounter with the audience in which the choreographic *Schrift* delineates a "neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (cf. Barthes 1977). Tino Sehgal's work, for example, of which there is no written or visual documentation of any kind, is a radical experiment on the question of whether and how signing can still occur if all discourse about a performance and its documentation is

10 The post-structural discourse on authorship – Roland Barthes' *La Mort de l'auteur* (1968) and Michel Foucault's *Qu'est-ce qu'un Auteur?* (1969) – form the matrix of performances by numerous contemporary dancers and choreographers, among them Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy, deufert&plischke.

circumvented. Wherein lies the production, the 'signing', of the performative 'sculpture' in Sehgal's concept installations? Does the viewer – in this co-production – become a co-author of the performance's re-signing? Is it the museum visitors, who assume the act of signing as soon as they enter the museum space that a Sehgal sculpture fills (cf. von Hantelmann 2007)?

The dynamic relationship between author-performer and choreographer-dancer has been dissolved in various concepts underlying postmodern and contemporary productions. This includes the process of removing hierarchies, in which more and more collective forms of production seem to circumvent the rules of (author) representation and the economic rules of commercial exploitation. If these processes of cooperative production as contained in different forms of collective 'working methods' (as Pirkko Husemann has shown) today characterize choreographing-performing: wherein then lies the signing? Choreographers such as Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy and Thomas Lehmen represent a *different* form of (counter)signing *in* dance: for example, the form of 'negotiating' decisions and actions as in Xavier Le Roy's *Projekt* (2003) (Husemann 2009: 140ff).

In connection with issues surrounding the relationship between signing and authorship in dance (which has only been touched upon here), I would finally like to examine the subject of signature from another perspective: can dancing(-writing) be regarded as choreographic signing via the body? Sketching the performance with the 'body-stylo' (to modify a term used in film for the 'auteur'-camera)? Signature and signing are characterized by an irresolvable ambivalence: a signature attests to the signer's identity and the originality of this act of writing; at the same time, it also signifies the absence of the signer. We could thus ask in Jacques Derrida's words: "Does the absolute singularity of an event of the signature ever occur? Are there signatures?" (Derrida 1971: 17) In order to function, "a signature must have a reproducible, iterable, imitable form" (id.). A signature can only be read as a *seal*, *if* repeatable. Bearing this in mind, can dance be signed? For on the one hand, the movement of writing-dancing is unique and cannot be repeated; on the other, its (*Schrift*/signature) motion comes from a repetition, a re-citation. In his thoughts on the "choreographic act" (Forsythe 2008: 6), William Forsythe emphasizes the "irretrievability of choreographic enactment" (id. 2008: 7). All the same, 'repetition' does take place – albeit as ongoing displacement; in this sense, signing would be repetition as a re-citation of the unrepeatable. If we regard 'signing' in dance *not* as a sign of authorship (not as the signet of a product), then we can look at another facet of signing as writing/dancing: signing as poetic practice. This practice is realized with significant differences in different media. Benoît Lachambre's performance