

Is you me //// Par B.Leux (2008) is characterized by ‘inscription’ as a process of incessant signing. In the piece, video artist Laurent Goldring’s simultaneous graffiti and Benoît Lachambre’s movement actions are inscribed into the performance space, laid out as a ‘white cube’, as a permanent superimposition.¹¹ For the audience, the flatness of the quick drawings and their projection on the rear wall of the stage are translated into the physicality of the dancer, who, in a state of permanent transformation, merges with the graphics like a manga or comic book animation. A prominent characteristic of this ‘graphing’ are the acts of deleting, overwriting and (colorfully) superimposing the writing-motions. Processes, which apply to the processing of computer fonts as well as the editing of text, namely the central operations of ‘substitute’ and ‘delete’, are here presented and named as part of the proceedings.¹² Yet: who is responsible for these processes? Who is signing? Who applies the blood-red welt-lines to the performer’s bare back? It is like an alien signature critically examining the ethical dimension of ‘inscription’ in light of its endless virtual manipulability.

By comparison, dancing and inscription can enter into complex poetic and media relationships in other ways, the dynamics of which produce a game of excess – a transformative, kinaesthetic experience that transcends dancing and writing. Trisha Brown thus describes her drawings as “dancing on the paper” (Brown/Teicher 1998: 25). Her “dancegrams” appear neither as documentary nor as prescriptive notations, but rather as a medium that describes the surroundings (“they sculpt space”, id. 1998: 15). The drawings open up an in-between space; they are like a “word”, “that sits in the air between me and the dancers” (id. 1998: 21). Dancing and writing: both are processes that do *not* represent. In an interview with Hendel Teicher, Trisha Brown remarks that before she began drawing, she used language to describe dances and movement. But her type of choreographic thinking led her to begin drawing, because, as she adds, “my personal language of movement was polydirectional” (id. 1998: 13). Here, dance-writing becomes visual poetry, which – in the style of its markings, the rhythm of its lines and their orientation – is itself choreographically conceived. “For instance, the pyramid on graph paper was a dance for three people, and I wanted them to be able to understand the notion of accumulating and de-accumulating.” (Id. 1998: 14)

11 Because of illness, the performances in Berlin (Tanz im August) on August 17/18, 2009, took place without the second performer, Louise Lecavalier.

12 This vocabulary is repeatedly used in the ‘rap’ text of the audio installation.

Illustration 1: Trisha Brown: Untitled, 1975.

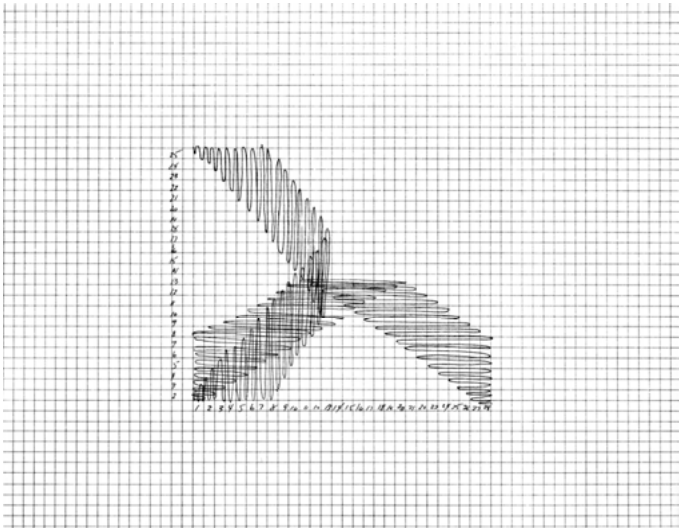


Photo: D. James Dee

Illustration 2: Trisha Brown: Untitled, 1975.

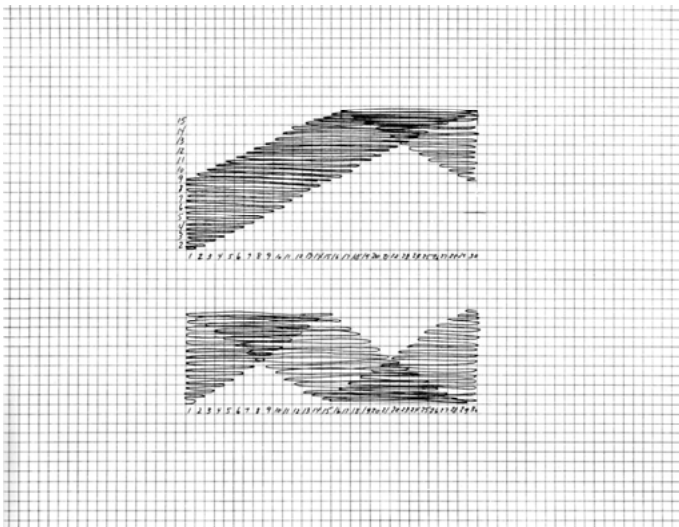


Photo: D. James Dee

Dance (de)scription as ‘graph’ thus gains analytical potential for the choreography of spatial relationships. Drawing lines on paper is simultaneously also

a strategy of designing and a laboratory of ideas in search of movements that are surprising (also to oneself). This is, so Trisha Brown, “a quietly explosive moment”. “A drawing? I don’t know where it comes from and I can’t control it and that’s thrilling, so that’s the pleasure. The rare simultaneity of intention, action, result, timing.” (id. 1998: 32) “Drawing” thus becomes a method of exploration, with which to investigate the limitations of the body and of movement.

Another example is Amos Hetz’s choreography, *I am drawing you are dancing. You are drawing I am dancing* (Tel Aviv, 2007).¹³ The performance oscillates between two fields of drawing: the ‘graph’ of writing – a piece with large, dynamic brushstrokes – and the physical movements of dancing. The dancer/illustrator alternates between both fields of writing-signing. For both movement scenarios – for the brushstroke and the physical action – the style, the dynamics of the movement impulse, the positioning and release of the gesture are significant. Amos Hetz explains his choreography:

“Two actions of the moving body: the first isolated to the hand and arm. The other following with the whole body. [...] This meandering between action and waiting, between the gesture, drawing the disappearing image, still haunts me.” (Brandstetter 2010: 53)

It could be that this drawing, in perceiving the gap between the hand and body, between writing and dancing, is no signing in the sense of authorship. It is not about (counter)signing/naming a piece. What is revealed here is the trace which precedes the act of signing as a gesture: a *paraphieren*, (to place one’s initials)¹⁴, in the sense of a provisional (counter)signing. To *paraphe*, to furnish with an idiosyncratic name, stands for a provisional signature; an act that does not yet imply the form of a (legally) binding text/signature. It is a form of writing-dancing in which the border between body and binding signature is open: a movement by the *Schrift* as well as the dance, which unfolds even *before* the code. On this wavering line of indeterminacy, signing(-dancing) is a poetic game in which – to quote Amos Hetz – “images from the unknown emerge onto the page

13 In the first version, the piece was performed as a dialogue between Amos Hetz and dancer Yael Cnaani. In a second version (that I am referring to here), Amos Hetz showed the piece as a solo (Berlin 2007, Academy of the Arts).

14 Translator’s Note: The German term *paraphe* is descended from the Greek *παπαγράφειν* and stands for name stamps or shorthand symbols as often used in the signing of several page long contracts, so that individual pages cannot later be replaced unknown. While also used for name stamps or shorthand symbols, the English term *initial* lacks this legal implication.

and into the core of dancing“ (Brandstetter 2010: 53). It is a space in which writing and dancing do not exclude one another, but instead meet in a dynamic encounter.

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Autobiography and the *Coulisses*: Narrator, Dancer, Spectator

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When we approach the question of dance as a historical question, we necessarily rely on visual and textual artifacts. A perusal of journalistic, critical, and literary writing about *danseuses* in 19th century France reveals that images of dance, and specifically of *danseuses*, are embedded with highly charged narratives of desire. The figure of the *danseuse* and the trajectories of desire that frame her in this period have been studied quite extensively in both dance and literary studies (cf. Foster 1996; Townsend 2010). One of the difficulties of uncoupling the desire for the dancer from the desire that might be expressed by the dancer is the dearth of literature written by women dancers before the turn of the century. If the terms of the relationship between dance and desire in the 19th century are largely shaped by the literary, critical, and visual production of men, then how can we begin to approach the question of desire from the position of the dancer? By considering the structures of desire that framed the dancer, and then juxtaposing those structures with representations created by dancers in the early 20th century, we can use the artifacts created by dancers, that is, autobiographies to analyze dancers' own relationships to dance, the role of the dancer in her cultural context, and the relationship of the dancer to spectators. When the dancer, having been the object of desire for so long, takes up the narrative position, she reconfigures the trajectories of desire that have come to characterize her.

COULISSES LITERATURE

The vast majority of 19th century publicly circulated documents about dancers, be they critical, journalistic, literary, or visual, are produced by men with limited

training in dance. In my research of the literature that characterized the figure of the *danseuse* in 19th century France, I found almost no documents by women – or women dancers – but did find a wealth of materials that presented the *danseuse* from the perspective of the desiring male spectator or reader. From fictional memoirs, to novels, to manuals and encyclopedias of the Opéra de Paris, this literature of the “coulisses” or the theatre wings and backstage constitutes a veritable genre of 19th century literature.¹

In his study of ballet under the Second Empire, Ivor Guest attributes the following quip to an 1859 article in *Le Figaro*:

“What a paltry opinion novelists have of the ballet girl’s virtue. There is not one Parisian novel which does not introduce a banker or a man of fashion who keeps a ballet girl of the *Opéra*. But the *Académie de Musique* barely contains thirty *danseuses*, so that even if the *rats* and supers were included, there would be at least a thousand happy admirers for each of them.” (Guest 1974: 20)

This quote appears, as well, as the opening passage of an 1887 text entitled *Les Coulisses*.² By the late 19th century, the mockery or critique of male desire of the *danseuse* became itself a pretext for representing such desire. Whether in Émile Zola’s critique of the bourgeois’s desire for Nana, Edgar Degas’s implicit critique of the male spectator of the dancer in his series, or Huysmans’s hyper-framed discussion of Gustave Moreau’s Salomé paintings in *A Rebours*, there appear to be layers upon layers of representations of the *danseuse* insofar as she functions as the object of desire for the male spectator. So, in fact, these representations might be read not as representations of dance or of the dancer but of, collectively, a representational landscape of masculine heterosexual desire for the *danseuse*.

If the voices of dancers, specifically female dancers, are largely absent in the 19th century literature, the contrasting proliferation of dancer’s autobiographies in the early 20th century points to a radical shift in women’s ability, through available artistic outlets, to circulate their visions as women, as dancers, and as artists. The period from the turn of the century and the decades that follow offer myriad representations of desire from the position of the dancer her-

1 A few examples of these popular *coulisses* publications include: Un Vieil Abonné: *Ces Demoiselles de l’Opéra* (1887), Joachim Duflot: *Les Secrets des coulisses des théâtres de Paris: Mystères, mœurs, usages, anecdotes* (1865), Aurélien Scholl: *Les Coulisses* (1887).

2 See footnote 1.

self. These examples arise in a variety of circumstances. We have autobiographical writing from a variety of early modern dancers, including Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller, Ruth St. Denis, Josephine Baker, Maud Allen, and others. These accompany the choreography of these dancers and add an archival dimension to our ability to read and interpret their relationships to earlier representations of dance and of the dancer. Theorizing these autobiographical materials may not be an obvious critical task. It is often clear that the autobiography functions more as a form of self-promotion than as a thoughtful reflection on the work of the artist; however, the genre of autobiography, I argue, reconfigures the historically male narrator of the female dancer and thus does important ideological work with respect to gender, narrative authority, and the performer/spectator configuration.

The dancer's autobiography or memoir, which, in the early 20th century, became a mainstay of major dancers' careers might then be read as a sub-genre of *coulisses* literature.³ As such, we can interpret them both as self-representation and as a voice contributing to a larger cultural and aesthetic discussion about dance. The move to add writing to choreography and performance is one regularly taken up by 20th century dancers. My reading will consider the ways in which dancers deliver certain expected moves even while they supplement, transgress, or deviate from the conventions of the theatre literature. That is, these choreographer-dancer-writers function within the category of *coulisses* literature while they engage in polemics about the aesthetics of dance; and, through their aesthetics, they reach outside the world of performance and into broader socio-cultural and aesthetic arenas. As such, writing by dancers often developed a critical standpoint by which to reconfigure the relationship of performer to spectator. These works, to a greater or lesser degree, comprise some genre standards: early experiences of dance, the discovery of oneself as a dancer, an articulation of one's aesthetic principles, and anecdotes of famous persons and venues. What lies beneath the surface, however, is a desire to represent oneself and one's art, especially insofar as female dancers had been represented – and often idealized or degraded – in such an over-determined way by male artists and writers in the previous decades. The autobiography offers dancers the opportunity to articulate their own stories, to define the aesthetic terms of their art form, and to theorize the relevance of their art in the world. The role of dance critic being largely the

3 Better known autobiographies by early 20th century dancers include: Loïe Fuller: *Quinze ans de ma vie* (1908), Isadora Duncan: *My Life* (1927), Ruth St. Denis: *An Unfinished Life* (1939), Josephine Baker's two co-written autobiographies with Marcel Sauvage: *Les Mémoires de Joséphine Baker* (1927) and *Voyages et Aventures* (1931).

purview of men, women found ways of engaging in aesthetic debates through popular memoirs, autobiographies, or novels. My examples suggest that these texts put forth aesthetic arguments about dance and that they reach out to a broader cultural or artistic landscape in order to articulate sociological, cultural, and political critiques.

SUBVERTING THE GENRE

Amidst the personal anecdotes of Loïe Fuller's autobiography, *Quinze ans de ma vie* (1908) or *Fifteen Years of a Dancer's Life* (1913), the reader finds a narrator who apologizes, sincerely or not, for writing about matters of aesthetics. Fuller's autobiography first appeared at a time of crisis in her career, and its publication was most certainly motivated by the economic pressures of starting a dance school as well as her own transition from performer to teacher. But among the anecdotes of childhood struggles, hard won theatrical successes, and encounters with famous personages from intellectual and artistic milieus, Fuller inserts *Light and the Dance*, a chapter on her aesthetics, which she prefaces with the following:

"Since it is generally agreed that I have created something new, something composed of light, colour, music, and the dance, more especially of light and the dance, it seems to me that it would perhaps be appropriate, after having considered my creation from the anecdotal and picturesque standpoint, to explain, in more serious terms, just what my ideas are relative to my art, and how I conceive it both independently and in its relationship to the other arts. If I appear to be to serious, I apologise in advance." (Fuller 1908: 62)

Most striking in this passage, is of course the extent to which Fuller either is uncomfortable writing as an authority on her own artistic practice or takes the rhetorical position of being uncomfortable with such a treatise on aesthetics. This also tells us something about Fuller's expectations of her readership who might be less interested in her theories of dance than in anecdotes of celebrity. Fuller delivers titillating anecdotes, but by embedding a chapter on her aesthetics and artistic process, she proposes a different performer-spectator relationship through her narration, which feigns an apology only to present an authoritative discourse on her theory of art. What is most interesting to me, though, is that way in which Fuller critiques, albeit subtly, the 'anecdotal' and 'picturesque' aspects of the autobiographical genre in favor of a more 'serious' treatment of the subject of in-

novation in dance, light, and color as well as the ways in which this innovation engages a relationship to the other arts. Later in this chapter, she offers a broad critique of cultural knowledge of motion:

“Our knowledge of motion is nearly as primitive as our knowledge of colour. We say ‘prostrated by grief’, but, in reality, we pay attention only to the grief; ‘transported by joy’, but we observe only the joy; ‘weighted down by chagrin’, but we consider only the chagrin. Throughout, we place no value on the movement that expresses the thought. We are not taught to do so, and we never think of it. Who of us has not been pained by a movement of impatience, a lifting of the eyebrows, a shaking of the head, the sudden withdrawal of a hand. We are far from knowing that there is as much harmony in motion as in music and colour. We do not grasp the facts of motion.” (Id. 1908: 67)

Fuller’s critique of our lack of attention to motion, via a linguistic example, signals not only a limit in the general study of motion, but also a more specific problem in terms of the ability to theorize dance. Without a body of knowledge from which to draw, she presents herself, throughout the autobiography, as a kind of experimenter who discovers hitherto unknown relationships between motion, color, and light. Her aesthetic theories, then, emerge out of a kind of scientific-spiritual journey of discovery; and Fuller measures the aesthetic value of her work by evaluating the audience reactions. Fuller characterizes her artistic intention and its relationship to the spectator:

“To impress an idea I endeavour, by my motions, to *cause its birth* in the spectator’s mind, to *awaken his imagination*, that it may be prepared to *receive the image*. Thus we are able, I do not say to understand, but to feel within ourselves as an impulse an indefinable and wavering force, which urges and dominates us. Well, I can express this force which is indefinable but certain in its impact. I have motion.” (Id. 1908: 71)

Fuller presents her art as an impregnation of the spectator’s mind and then interprets the impact of her dance through a reading – a spectatorship – of her motion’s domination over the spectator. Fuller, in a sense, turns the tables on the gendered relationship of the spectator to the performer and presents herself as the wielder of a dominating aesthetic power. Her authorship, apologetic as it may seem in the beginning of the chapter, presents the spectator-performer relationship from the authorial position of the dancer.

Fuller’s narration challenges a century of writing on *danseuses* that situates the spectator as the authority on the dancer, and in the later-19th century, situates the male narrator as arbiter of the dancer-spectator relationship. In the 19th cen-

tury, to deploy the figure of the *danseuse* in literature or the visual arts constituted a kind of culturally and aesthetically elite position. The poetics of dance, as it is expressed by novelists, poets, painters and filmmakers, often employed narrative and perspectival strategies that rendered the dancer's body an available commodity to the artist who then seems to withhold or deliver the body to the reader or spectator. Fuller's writing resists the narrative power of the spectator, especially the male spectator, with an aesthetic that draws upon her experimentation rather than an existing body of knowledge. She thus opens up a variety of positions from which the dancer might engage in discourse about her art, sexuality, and gender. The narrative position, when taken up by the performer – particularly by a female dancer – disturbs the performer-spectator dynamic and the desires implicit in that relationship.

RECOVERING THE *DANSEUSE*

While the autobiographies of better known and studied dancers such as Fuller are in wide circulation (though often out of print), I'll turn now to two autobiographical novels that have had little or no critical attention. Both are written by women dancers of the early 20th century, and both use the genre of the dancer's autobiography as a platform by which to address broader sociological issues, hence situating dance, and representations of the *danseuse*, as part of a broader cultural discussion. By recovering narratives written by dancers, we gain access to a part of the conversation about dance that is frequently absent from critical or theoretical work. Like Fuller's autobiography, these two novels, one by an Armenian dancer who performed in Paris in the 1910s and 1920s and another by a French dancer who was quite popular in the music halls in the 20s and 30s, offer dancers' viewpoints on the representation of dance and on the role of the dancer-choreographer in a broader artistic and cultural landscape.

The first example is Armenian dancer Armen Ohanian's *La Danseuse de Shamakha* (1918). The novel begins with an account of Ohanian's childhood in Armenia, the displacement of her family due to an earthquake, and her arranged – and failed – marriage to a Persian Christian. After the dissolution of her marriage, Ohanian lives with a group of Muslim women and learns to dance. She becomes a celebrated performer. Through her travels, and as a dancer, she develops a comparative perspective that allows her the role of diplomat in certain instances. In others though, Ohanian is pointed in her criticism, especially in her comments on European spectators of the Orient. As the book comes to a close, and Ohanian gets closer to Europe, she sharpens her critical voice vis-à-vis colonialism and tourism. As she travels to Egypt, her sense of a clash of cultures be-

gins to magnify. Not only is she critical of the new Cairo and of its European inhabitants and visitors, but she similarly clashes with Middle Eastern men who take her for a prostitute. In a sense, Egypt becomes a site of conflict where she must do more than dance; she must make a political stand through her dance.

Visiting the sites in Egypt, Ohanian is struck by the lack of gravity with which the tourists travel – the English, in tennis outfits, climbing to the summit of the pyramids and the American tourists calmly savoring their sandwiches. Dance, for Ohanian, becomes a complex figure of negotiation between Europe and Asia:

“Far from my Persia and my Caucasus, I was drawn more closely to them by a profound nostalgia. And having set aside my pride and my prejudices against the dancers, I clung more and more to Asiatic dances. When with half-closed eyes, to the sound of the stringed instruments, I drew with my naked feet the arabesques of our dances upon the Persian carpets, I would forget that I was very far from the dear walls of our gardens. My dancing was also a mute but eloquent language by which I said to those who treated us with contempt that, although humble in our inferiority to Europeans, we nevertheless have a little grace and tenderness, and that even in our dreaminess there is the strange splendor of hurricanes. In my illusion I thought that the watching demi-gods would mingle with their disdain for us also a little understanding and respect. But the more I knew of these gods and their Europe, the more I withdrew within myself, burying jealously in my secret depths all that was sensitive and poetic. Thus I was wounded less. But ... it’s difficult to run away from all that you love, to struggle against your own heart and to exhaust yourself in vain attempts to resemble others.” (Ohanian 1918: 336-337)⁴

The bitter irony of this passage marks a radical change from the narration up until this point in the autobiographical novel. Having presented the reader with a portrait of an educated, worldly performer, Ohanian mock-humbles herself in front of the European spectators and readers. Thus, she illustrates the exploitative nature of colonial tourism and suggests a complex inter-cultural communication between performer and spectator as well as between writer and reader. Through her encounters with colonialism, she goes from cultural diplomat to cultural critic. This passage functions as a double allegory: first, for the voice of the colonized body in the face of colonial power; and, second, it represents the silence of the dancer in the face of so much male narration of her body. Cairo is, for Ohanian, a revelation of the commodification and manipulation of history,

4 Translations are adapted from: Ohanian, Armen (1923): *The Dancer of Shamahka*, trans. by Rose Wilder Lane, New York: Dutton, pp. 260-61.

culture, and art. Dance becomes a mode of narration and of translation across seemingly un-navigable straits. She ends the novel embarking to Europe to dance in the music-hall. Ohanian's autobiography ends early – she has, in fact, not yet acquired the language in which she will write. It is not until *Les Griffes de la Civilisation*, published three years later, that we hear of her experiences in London and Paris. *La Danseuse de Shamakha* does not reveal any of her European exploits; it allows the reader to speculate on how Ohanian will encounter Europe, just as we are familiar with how so many Europeans have encountered the Orient. Finally, *La Danseuse de Shamakha* elaborates, through its narrative, a perspective on the position of dance in a broader socio-cultural context.

Ohanian's text is largely about travelling to different contexts and observing how to engage in her new reality but it is also an Orientalist text that critiques Orientalism. She learns throughout the novel how to be errant, how to be home when one cannot be home. In her autobiography, Ohanian becomes both a performer and critical spectator of cultural difference. The conventionality of her writing is contrasted by her exceptional story and the development of a critical voice that engages in broad cultural commentary. The figure of dance as an expression of emotion, a narrative, a religious ritual, or an ambassador across cultures becomes an eloquent language with which to challenge authority. Desire, in this text, finally resides in the notion that dance might speak; or, perhaps provide an alternative representational discourse to European Orientalism.

Though her cultural and artistic position is entirely different from Ohanian, Colette Andris also formulates cultural critique through the *coulisses* genre, and she seeks to reconfigure the trajectories of desire between dancer and spectator through a layered, multiple narration that persistently undercuts the notion of authenticity even while it claims to be the voice of lived experience. Andris has a geographic center, but her movement like Ohanian's involves coming into a new world – that of music-hall –, seeing how it works, and then effecting change through the development of her aesthetic. Her second novel, *Une Danseuse Nue* (1933), begins with a disclaimer about the fictional nature of the novel. Based on my research of press clippings, it appears that the story of Miss Nocturne is at least loosely based on Colette Andris's own life (cf. Andris 1933/1). However, Andris insists that:

“Miss Nocturne, *danseuse nue*, is, you may well suspect, a fictional character. Nevertheless, as to the facts of her career, I've invented nothing: why then? I gathered so many secrets, witnessed so many little dramas, and I myself have so many personal memories! I could have simply given you the autobiography of a *danseuse nue*? But, then I would have told you that which I was and not that which I would have liked to be, and it seemed to me

that my modest personality was of less interest than the character of whom I wanted to draw a type: that of the ideal *danseuse nue*.” (Andris 1933/2: 4)

Just as she disavows the autobiographical nature of the novel, she reinforces the authenticity of her own experience and thus secures herself both the authority of an autobiography and the freedom of a novel. Andris breaks away from the convention of dancers’ autobiographies and opens up a space for literary experimentation through complex narrative approaches and the blending of autobiography and fiction. Through her hybrid narration, she sets up a viewpoint that both reproduces and critiques the standards of *coulisses* literature: make-up and costuming, dramatic scenes between performers backstage, lesbian love scenes, Orientalist motifs, and more.

Before launching into the story of her protagonist, Andris takes time to define a *danseuse nue* for readers:

“What we call a *danseuse nue* is an already protected body, defended, dressed, by a layer of grease and by a layer of powder; and then, some flowers, a jewel or a bit of lace come to constitute the [...] obligatory triangle, which must be superimposed over that of Mother Nature; finally, accessories, sandals, wig, necklaces, an immense veil, an immense fan, who knows what other immense items! And so, just as you might think, the ‘costume’ of a *danseuse nue* does not fit in a handbag.” (Id. 1933/2: 8)

According to Andris, to name the dancer, is to mistake her for something other than she is; the name misrepresents her because it fails to take into account her performance. Andris presents the dancer as a series of layers. While nude may imply the absence of clothing, this *danseuse nue* is not only made-up, as it were, and adorned with any number of accoutrements, but she is “protected” and “defended” from an implied audience – and from the implied narrator, the namer, writer. The ‘triangle obligatoire’, the *cache-sexe*, which is a double costume in that it re-covers what Mother Nature has already covered is the costume that constitutes the thing just as the make-up and accessories constitute the *danseuse nue*. The costume, like the name, lead the audience and the reader entirely astray, or so argues Colette Andris.

DESIRE AND THE DANCER’S VOICE

The literature of the *coulisses* in some sense suggests a narrative striptease; it tantalizes readers with a promise of access to a backstage or an interiority that

goes beyond the performance. Of course these narratives, written by spectators, gossips, or performers are an extension of the performance into a narrative realm. While the representation of dancers was largely the purview of men during the 19th century, women – especially women dancers – wrote the most compelling *coulisses* literature of the early 20th century. These dancers turn the reader's desires away from the established trajectory from spectator to dancer and instead complicate the dancer-spectator relationship by introducing a dancer-narrator.

Women's *coulisses* literature participated in a whole variety of cultural, sociological, and aesthetic discourses, the terms of which had been established in the previous century. The conventions of *coulisses* literature and of the performer's autobiography offered women choreographer-dancers an opportunity not only for publicity but for contributing to the discussion of dance aesthetics. The popularity of the dancer's autobiography comes out of the 19th century fascination with the dancer's life, her association with prostitution, and the extent to which access to the dancer's body was a literary and visual trope for masculine artistic prowess. The audience provoked by this less than artistic interest in the dancer opened up the space for the dancer's memoir and, as such, many dancer-choreographers engaged this genre.

As we continue to develop ways of theorizing dance, especially historical dance, we are often dependent on representations, be they visual or literary that take a particular ideological position vis-à-vis the dancer. These works give us insight into the reception of dance, the cultural fascination with dancers, and the role that dancers play in the representational landscape of the period. The importance of the figure of the *danseuse* in 19th and early 20th century literary and visual arts suggests that we ought to take seriously dancers' own representations of their aesthetics, practices, and the implications of their work. Although these might be available only through autobiography or memoir – genres often looked upon with suspicion in academic circles. We ought to read against the grain and allow these choreographer-dancer-writers to help us think through the relationship of dance to writing, of performer to spectator, and to acknowledge the historical development of the complex desires that circulate between the text and the body – language and motion.

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Dance Images.

Dance Films as an Example of the Representation and Production of Movement

KNUT HICKETHIER

Movement and emotion are central categories for dance and choreography – as well as other time-based media, especially film. Film takes aspects of physical movement in space and sets them into relationship to its own potential for creating movement, visualizing and simultaneously recording them and so thus making them reproducible.

In the following paper I will discuss these points based on the example of dance in film. The discussion will focus neither on video performance, nor experimental film or avant-garde mixtures of dance and film. Instead I will focus on ‘popular’ or ‘mainstream’ film and within this field more specifically on fictional, in other words, feature films. Mainstream films are produced both for movie theaters as well as for television. ‘Mainstream film’ here means: the films are intended for a broad general audience and therefore rely on conventional norms of representation and their universal comprehensibility. We are therefore looking at films that are ascribed to popular culture in the widest sense, not special artistic artifacts, which may provide new concepts, new possibilities for the further aesthetic development of dance for the stage. The question that I will address here is thus how popular film handles physical action and dance. I would like to begin with some basic remarks on the subject of ‘Movement and Film’.

FILM AS MOVEMENT-IMAGE

Gilles Deleuze called film the “medium of movement-images” (cf. Deleuze 1986) and by doing so only formulated what has already been widely accepted in film theory since the 1910s: that the mediality of film is essentially determined by movement as image. This movement is achieved through the impression of movement. A series of still images is shown in quick succession, each image capturing a single phase of the movement. The impression of continuous movement is created by projecting the images at a rate of at least 16 images per second or to produce a stable flow of images without flickering: a minimum of 24 images per second. This effect is not because our eyes are too lazy to follow a quick succession of individual images, but because the human brain simplifies the process and creates continuous movement under certain conditions out of a succession of images and the transitions from one image to the next. In film, we are therefore not dealing with ontologically stated movement, but always only with an individual spectator’s impression of movement. This will be important for further definitions of movement later.

Movements in film are above all movements by living creatures or objects in front of a camera, which then records and stores single images of these movements on photographic material (cf. Hickethier 2007: 59). The camera records that which it sees and hands it over to the spectator – the camera’s point of view thus becomes the spectator’s point of view. It shows him what he sees. Film supports this form of total identification, but the spectator nevertheless is always free to take his eyes off the film image and look elsewhere (for example at the woman sitting next to him in the movie theater). Again, this means that film makes the spectator a certain offering of what he can look at – and ultimately the spectator is aware of this, even though he is usually happy to go along and identify with the camera’s point of view.

Movement in film is therefore always connected to the gaze, first that of the camera and then that of the spectator. *Movements in film are thus observed movements.*

In film, the action in front of the camera is called ‘mise en scène’, or simply movement in front of the camera. The camera itself is however also capable of moving and can therefore bring about changes in the depiction of what is happening in front of the camera lens. These changes are not caused by the object being filmed, but by the camera itself, which can also be said to have authority over the gaze. These movements are movements by the camera in the space surrounding it, especially in the space in front of it, which is thus constantly in flux (contracting, expanding, or offering the spectator new spatial perspectives). The

spectator experiences these movements through his perception of the continuous changes in the spatial composition of the image, not through visible movements of the camera itself. The camera as the determining figure remains invisible throughout – it is never seen in the image. If there is a camera visible in the image, it is not the one whose image we, the spectators, are seeing.

So what does this mean for the perception of dance in film? We are dealing with three different actors or rather authorities: the characters acting in front of the camera, the camera itself, and the spectator as observer.

These three have different scopes of action available:

In spite of being the most important of the three – as addressee of all actions by the dancers or characters in front of the camera, as well as of the camera itself – the spectator has the fewest possibilities for action at his disposal: he is stuck in the situation as recipient, unable to leave what the filmic products provides him with: the world of images. He is unable to interact with what is depicted, not even in a limited way, as is the case with video games. He basically remains ‘immobile’; the actions he experiences are the actions of others, whose movements can only be conveyed inductively (for example, in car chases, falls from great heights and so on, which have the spectator holding on to his seat as he physically has the impression of also chasing, also falling, for example in films such as Steven Spielberg’s *Duel* [1971] and his *Indiana Jones*-series, in particular *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* [1984]).

The camera has distinctly greater range of action. Since its gaze and range of movement are of a technical nature, changes in the technical apparatus open up numerous possibilities. Moreover, editing and montage are able to create and suggest movement that has never actually happened in front of a camera. This opens up new filmic possibilities that far exceed the physicality of human movement. In the image itself, these technically produced or cinematographically induced movements are not recognizable as technical, but they seem to place the actors in front of the camera in a new context and give the spectator the impression that they themselves are also capable of completely different movements.

The actors in front of the camera have to rely on their own physical abilities to create movement, but these can be improved with periphery technical equipment. In the case of especially complex or fast movements, this can mean that the actor is moving in a car, a train, a plane, on horseback, or in any other kind of movement apparatus. The imagination knows no bounds and digital film production is able to create human or humanoid movements never seen before with the help of digital enhancement or modification (for example in films such as *Matrix* [1999] or *Avatar* [2009]). Within these movement processes and constel-

lations, which are often linked to the narrative, dance appears as specifically choreographed movement that is integrated into the film as part of a broader ensemble of movements and dynamics.

THE ISOLATION OF DANCE IN FILM REALITY

In order to be able to locate the specific quality of choreographed dance movement in the context of film, I will first introduce a few more characteristics of film.

First of all: film sees itself, and is also seen as such by its users, as a medium for rendering reality. As Siegfried Kracauer wrote, film is a medium for “saving exterior reality” (cf. Kracauer 1964) and what we see on screen is a medium that depicts reality and thus produces a new – filmic – kind of reality. The spectators are guided by an appearance of reality created by the film. Film theory therefore refers to the reality effect that occurs when we watch a photographic film. This reality effect is the result of the ‘dispositif’ of cinema, in other words the medial structure of perception, which fundamentally influences how we watch films.

The appearance of reality is further strengthened by the audiovisual quality of the film, as the images are accompanied by sound, by language, and by music. Silent movements appear artificial, not real. The bodies seem to lack a grip on reality; the illusion of being present in a moment of real movement disintegrates. That is why images in sound films and also in television are always accompanied by sound, be it only atmospheric sounds, the so-called ‘atmo’, which is however what truly makes the images come to life. This audiophonic accompaniment of the visual in popular film means that the action and therefore also the movement are strongly orient themselves towards the spoken action.

Action that largely manages to do without language is therefore rare in popular film. As a result, the physical actions of the film characters are also strongly dominated by the spoken word and therefore also by the narrative of the story.

When language is not used and movements are presented without the accompaniment of language, physical movement is forced to replace language, in other words movements must evoke meaning for the spectator.

Usually, this pantomime-like type of performance does not at first appear ‘realistic’, but is alienating instead. In the early days of silent movies, Max Reinhardt made such a pantomime type of film with *Sumurun* (1910). The actors used theatrical pantomime to give the actions of the characters a dreamlike quality; they seemed to float through the cinematic space. The actions therefore appeared to convey something unreal. However, this form did not catch on as a ba-

sis for arranging movement and creating cinematic meaning. Film aesthetics went down a different path and relied on silent speaking. Experienced spectators were able to read the meaning of what was being said from the actors' lips; written text (intertitles) conveyed the meaning to all others. The characters' movements were not exaggerated through pantomime, but were modeled more closely on the physical movements of every-day life. Only their meaning was made more explicit and pronounced if needed (cf. Hickethier 1986: 11-42). Such physical and silent performances were therefore often employed in the field of film comedy.

Jacques Tati's films are good examples of the effects of performed movement. In *Play Time* (1967), there is a scene in which we see the protagonist (Tati himself as Monsiour Hulot) in a modern office building in Paris, waiting to be admitted. The film leaves a lot of space for Tati's movements; the spectators are able to follow the protagonist's movements in long shots as he leads them through a flight of rooms. Tati's movements and the camera eye behind him visually enter and travel through the rooms in the film. The comic moment is triggered on the one hand by the protagonist's movements, which are evidently inappropriate for the exploration of a building, but also gradually appear more and more natural to the spectator, while the modern architectural setting with its automatic doors, lamps, and glass room partitions, which don't really bring transparency into the space, appear less and less suitable for human movement.

The film accentuates the arrangement of the rooms through editing and montage, creating new spatial perspectives and thus constantly confronting both the protagonist and the spectator with new rooms and new situations. This provides a stage for the protagonist to act on – a special sphere of action. This impression is underlined by the fact that the character is often shown from head to toe, thus also directing the spectators' gaze towards proxemic movements.

However, mainstream films usually operate differently from Tati's film *Play Time*, which mainly used long shots and wide angles. In mainstream film, a long shot is often employed to give an overview of the scene or used as a symbolic angle (to show something of general meaning, which is not conducive to the action). Here, the camera is often very close to the characters and alternates between a socially accepted distance (1,20 to 3,50 m) and a personal distance (less than 1,20 m). This also has an effect on the presentation of movement. In mainstream film, movements recorded by the camera are usually accentuated by frequent shifts between the positions of various observers and their various distances to the action.

Unlike Tati in his films, the actor usually is not 'master of his movements'. The film makes the selection, often only showing parts of the body and only for

a very short space of time. The body and the movements are thus fragmented; the fragments are reassembled and synthesized. The film accentuates and underlines this. An arm movement may be continued by or confronted with an eye movement. This is then followed by the image of an upper body turning, followed by the position of a pair of feet. The montage usually depends on whether the plausibility of events is familiar enough to the spectator – a probability deduced from the knowledge of everyday movements. This can also produce new physical movements, constituted by film itself, and new sequences of movement, which are no longer identical with the movements of the actor or actress in front of the camera.

FRAMING AND ORNAMENTATION

As far as dance in film is concerned, we can now say for the time being that dance challenges the claim to reality posited by the cinematic narrative. Dance elements must therefore be specially legitimized in the film's plot. In short, dance is here a movement made by the body, which expresses a meaning that cannot always be put into words, but can stand for itself as a genuine form of physical expression. For the film and its own claim to reality, dance is thus usually a special, not necessarily natural form of physical movement, a special event. Dance in film is often framed by specific accentuations or markers. The frame also emphasizes the distinctiveness of the dancing.

In Sergio Leone's film *Once Upon a Time in America* from 1984, the hero Noodles (Robert de Niro) returns to New York after many years. He left the city in the 1930s after having been cheated in some prohibition deals and in danger of being murdered by rival gangs. He has now become a respectable elderly citizen. Returning to the bar of his youth to find an old friend and in search of those responsible for cheating him in the past, he goes into the back room of the bar. There, he climbs onto the toilet seat and peers through a small window into a storage room. And sees – a girl dancing.

It is an image from his memory, and it provides the starting point for the subsequent story of his childhood and youth. The dancing is framed as an anomaly in several ways: the film changes color and becomes sepia-toned. As spectators, we therefore now know that we are in a different, past age. The dancing takes place on a stage, in the storage room of the bar. The girl is the bar owner's daughter practicing for her ballet class; we have already been told that she went on to become a famous star. And the scene introduces as observer, the older

Noodles, whose gaze we see and which is then replaced by the gaze of the younger Noodles, thus marking the scene as a starting point for a flashback.

The spectator's point of view is close to that of the observer, whose gaze is returned by the gaze of the small dancer – he, who thought himself invisible in his viewing post is recognized and himself observed – while the spectator in turn observes this exchange of gazes from a third position. The camera repeatedly takes him into the storage room, but he always remains at a greater distance from the dancer than from the observing Noodles. We have here a multiple combination of different characters and their actions, accompanied by, what is now, leit-motif music. This becomes a choreographed movement – the girl's dancing transforms into the mental movement of the observer Noodles, which in turn becomes the (e)motion of the spectator.

The result of this kind of framing of dance in a plot that lays claim to filmic reality, is that, since the 1920s, 'dance in film' has manifested mainly in a specific group of films, a genre or sub-genre, which we call 'Dance Film'.

Dance in mainstream movies is generally dance supported by music. Therefore these films are also referred to as music films, revue films, musical films, etc. Here too, dance usually occurs in framed situations, in other words, a specific space is created for the dancing in the plot of the film, a dance floor, often a clearly defined space in the cinematic image, which is itself defined by a frame and therefore presents the action within this frame as a composed unit – with various emphases, balancing surfaces and forms, and not just simply as dance.

One of the most important examples in film history is from 1934, when sound movies were just emerging. In *Wonder Bar*, the mere depiction of a dance is cinematically enhanced by camera technique and a montage of images and angles, as well as stage machinery and film architecture. The film goes beyond simply framing the dance space and does what it is good at and what has become its main principle: the enhancement of space into a cinematically altered and structured space. Still, all this remains in the realm of physical dance.

The director and screenwriter (Lloyd Bacon) as well as the performers (Ricardo Cortez and Dolores Del Rio) never achieved wide recognition, unlike the film's choreographer: Busby Berkeley. He drove the producers mad with his choreographies and the staging of his dance pieces, but his films set a precedent worldwide and in the end inspired Siegfried Kracauer's famous formula of the "ornament of the masses" (cf. Kracauer 1963).

In *Wonder Bar* (other Busby Berkeley films later resumed this motif), the camera shows a small dance club, a round dance floor surrounded by tables, a host, a small orchestra, a singer. A male and a female dancer enter. Applause. They begin to dance along to the singing and the music: a ballroom dance. The

camera follows their movements. Then it slowly withdraws up to a higher position, so that the dancers move to the bottom end of the image. Suddenly a staggered line of singers moves in front of the dancing couple, they turn around, and taper open, leaving the stage visible again. The two dancers draw back a curtain, a new stage opens up; the dancing couples multiply between the pillars into numerous different formations. They move between the pillars, the space is shown in ever new variations, multiplied by various mirrors. The camera moves to an overhead position: the dancers form circular ornaments and the space keeps changing accompanied by indulgent music: first a mirror cabinet, then the vanishing points dissolve and finally the space itself is multiplied. The cinematic realm acquires a fantastic quality. A female dancer runs away and deliberately loses a shoe, the male dancer follows her, they find each other under leaves moving in the breeze, become leaves themselves by using masks, then break away. As they say at the end of the dance sequence: "Oh, if only this dream would never end."

The focus here is not on the dancers, but on the spectators. It is they, who are supposed to be drawn into the movements to experience the whirlwind of emotions. These music revue films were the starting point for the history of dance film. It is not possible to give a complete overview here, but I will sketch the most significant aspects.

THE RHYTHMIZATION OF CINEMATIC ACTION

An important characteristic is the rhythmization of cinematic action. This can be seen in a German music film, which incorporated dance elements in the depiction of cinematic reality at roughly the same time as Busby Berkeley's reinvention of the revue film in Hollywood. The film in question was made by Reinold Schünzel – a director of various comedies in Germany – who was forced to leave the country after 1933 because he was regarded 'half-Jewish'. One of his masterpieces was the revue film *Viktor and Viktoria*, made in 1933: The unemployed comedian Victor Hempel (Hermann Thimig) has caught a bad cold and is therefore unable to perform in a female role at a Kaschemme (pub), a job that would earn him 10 Deutschmark per show. So he asks a female colleague (Renate Müller in one of her best performances), whom he met at his agency, to stand in for him. Her subsequent performance – she thus plays a man playing a woman – is so successful that she is discovered by a theatre agent and goes on to perform in big theatres, always accompanied by her co-partner Viktor Hempel. She tours across half of Europe to adoring audiences before her bluff is called and she ends

up marrying a rich husband. Gender crossing therefore takes place on multiple levels, and the film draws its fascination from the constant mix-ups and ambiguity.

The film deals with the production of dynamics and rhythm in cinematic reality – outside of the stage performances, as for example, in the following film scene accompanied by music: Viktor Hempel is leaving the agent's office and meets the young Susanne Rohr (Müller) on the stairs. She is a young actress dreaming of a stage career. The physical acting of the two is totally different in spite of the underlying rhythm: her physical expression makes her a prototype of what is natural on film – while he becomes a prototype of what appears theatrical, not natural on film, exaggerated and therefore funny. Rhythmically, they walk down the stairs, their body movements becoming more and more aligned. Their movements pointedly refer to one another, and the exaggeration and slightly hammy gestures of the one are counteracted by the more reserved, seemingly 'natural' gestures of the other. Their walk down the stairs is crucial as a rhythmically structured process, which simultaneously unfolds the exposition of the narrative, laying the groundwork for their relationship. The movements are not allowed to fully destroy the impression of cinematic reality, even though they are structured and transformed into a dance element.

THE CAMERA AS OBSERVER AND CO-ACTOR

A rhythmization of the cinematic action can also be achieved by moving the dance action away from the enclosed stage, the specifically marked area, into the reality of every-day life, into the streets. Backyards and street corners are now the spaces in which the performance takes place, the dance action turning them into dance spaces: ad hoc – only to immediately lose this status as soon as the dancing ends.

In this kind of film, we are thus dealing with a ballet choreographed to music, which only bit by bit reveals itself to us as such. The world is expressed through dance.

First, we have an almost documentary view of New York City. The dancing is introduced little by little. Robert Wise's *West Side Story*, made in 1961 (choreography by Jerome Robbins) based on music by Leonard Bernstein, combines documentary images of inner city life with the space manifesting itself through dance.

The main theme is introduced through and in the dance: a fight between rival youth gangs. The camera is involved as a co-actor: the scene begins with the

skyline of New York. Then the camera travels along the houses, picking up the music that can now be heard. It wanders through the streets and ends up zooming in on some backyard where two gangs, The Jets and The Sharks, clash, provoking and fighting each other, to escape and pursue each other. A danced duel. The dancers constantly form new constellations, break apart, come together again, all the while continuously producing new images of dance movement. The film setting remains the same throughout; it only changes when the camera eye opens up new perspectives and passageways.

The spectators are invited to move through the streets and backyards of New York along with the characters, they are often directly the ‘target’ of the dancers’ movements and are addressed head-on, although ultimately they are only observers after all. The movement sequences are designed in such a way that they are quickly recognizable and identifiable.

There is no underlying irritation of perception, as Busby Berkeley created to some extent. The spectators are meant to be involved; this involvement is achieved through the interaction of the camera eye and the dance movements of the actors in front of the camera. The film musicalizes and rhythmizes the characters’ sphere of action, as well as the urban space, and makes the city vibrate and move. The dance fights between the gangs translate the aggression of battle into dance steps, choreographies, which become more and more recognizable as such in the film and increasingly correspond to theatrical conventions. However, they are thus also simply steps, which solidify their theme’s claim to reality and thereby consistently separate the dance movements as anomalies from the non-dance movements.

Despite the impressive choreography framed by conventional comprehensibility, what remains with us is: that even in the face of all rhythmization, the order of the world is not overturned.

A more recent example of rhythmization in film and a certain type of audience involvement is *Moulin Rouge* by Baz Luhrmann from 2001, which attempts to create cascades of movement, involving the spectators in a frenzy of movement. Here the separation of the dance scene from the cinematic world with its claim to reality, the definition of the dance as something set apart and different from reality, often depicting feelings and emotions, is largely abolished. In the beginning *Moulin Rouge* also presents the dance scenes in a space set apart from the every-day realm of the film’s reality – the cabaret theater that gives the film its name. However, the outside and inside worlds soon begin to mingle, blurring the boundaries between the two. This blurring and overstepping of boundaries is however not achieved by the dancers and their dance movements,

but by the movement of the camera, through montage, and the high frequency of fast-paced cuts.

What is therefore important here is how the dance is presented. In contrast to the almost contemplative treatment of the dance action in *Wonder Bar*, the movements in *Moulin Rouge* are totally fragmentized and re-synthesized in a fast montage of different points of view. The determining factor is the rhythm of the music: the performance becomes an almost frantic whirl of bodies, which is directed straight at the audience and attempts to overwhelm them.

In one scene, about half-way through the film, the young writer and artistic nobody Christian meets the star of the show, the dancer Sadine, and falls in love with her and her dancing. He becomes involved in the action (and with him the spectator in an illusionary way) through a cancan of film characters and cinematic perspectives, which increasingly pick up speed. Here the dance space within the film is no longer clearly separated from the rest of the action. Scenes from the inside of the building, of the stage, and of the dancers are mixed with exterior scenes; the actors seem to be here and there, constantly on the move. The cinematic space is shaped by the 'dance' of the camera, the excessive montage. The bodies of the dancers are disembodied, become visual ciphers, which alternate, disappear and reform in staccato. The film itself and its sequences of camera perspectives and images becomes a frenzy of movement. Singular dance movements become indistinguishable, as everything dissolves in a whirlwind of movement.

The rhythmization of the entire cinematic action abolishes the framing of the dance within the cinematic reality, as has by now become the convention in most mainstream movies. The spectator is invited to abandon his contemplative gaze, his observation post in the distance. He is involved with the help of superficial visual stimuli that are not only founded in the physical movements of the actors, but in all optical tricks that film has to offer. His senses are so overwhelmed that he is hardly able to distinguish single movement sequences and he experiences a rush of excitement. The film therefore focuses on itself and its presentation of the world (and not on dance as an art form in its own right set apart within the film). In doing so, film – especially mainstream movies – has thus returned to its carnivalesque beginnings as spectacle. However, as far as dance in film is concerned, it comes close to what Luuk Utrecht has called "Postmodernism-Dance" (Utrecht 1987: 442), with its tendencies of depersonalization and dehumanization in dance and with parallels to developments in other artistic genres.

CONCLUSION

As far as dance in popular mainstream film is concerned, we can conclude that:

Film and dance are related in that they both focus on movement, the body, and rhythmization.

Due to its nature as a technical medium, film makes other forms of presenting physical movement possible; it fragmentizes movement and re-synthesizes it in new and different ways. It accelerates human movement, enhances it and mechanizes it.

Film lays claim to the representation and depiction of reality. In its presentation, it usually separates dance from the depicted reality by framing it in order to avoid dance threatening its claim to reality.

Film uses dance to create special moods, characterize situations and open up particular narrative spaces.

Film can also integrate dance as an element of rhythm in its depiction of reality and use dance to structure its cinematic reality. This, however, means that the cinematic reality becomes subject as a whole to the mode of a depiction of the world through dance.

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FILMS

Avatar (2009) (USA, D: James Cameron)

Duel (1971) (USA, D: Steven Spielberg)

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984) (USA, D: Steven Spielberg)

Matrix (1999) (USA, D: Andy Wachowski/Lana Wachowski)

Moulin Rouge (2001) (USA/AU, D: Baz Luhrmann)

Once Upon a Time in America (1984) (USA/I, D: Sergio Leone)

Play Time (1967) (F/I, D: Jaques Tati)

Sumurun (1910) (DE, D: Max Reinhardt)

Viktor and Viktoria (1933) (DE, D: Reinhold Schünzel)

West Side Story (1961) (USA, D: Jerome Robbins/Robert Wise)

Wonder Bar (1934) (USA, D: Lloyd Bacon)

Against the Beat.

Music, Dance and the Image in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up*

MICHAEL DIERS

Editing is similar to dancing – the finished film
is a kind of crystallized dance.¹

Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) is neither a music nor a dance film. Dance, theater and music do, however, play a prominent role in the richly faceted panorama of mid-sixties Swinging London, which the film unfurls.² This is especially the case if we define dance in a less restrictive and more broad and open way, the way recent dance theory does³ – not least as a reaction to the radical artistic advances of choreographers such as Pina Bausch, Susanne Linke and Johann Kresnik since the mid-seventies. Dance *is* – or, depending on the point of view, *can be* – simp-

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- 1 Cf. Walter Murch: *Ein Lidschlag, ein Schnitt. Die Kunst der Filmmontage* (2004). I am indebted to Ulrike Schilfert, Berlin for suggesting the motto.
 - 2 From the vast amount of literature, I only wish to list those general titles that were the most helpful for this essay: Sandra Wake: *Blow-Up. A Film by Michelangelo Antonioni* (1971), Roy Huss: *Focus on Blow-Up* (1971), Roland Barthes, Jean-Luc Godard, Wolfgang Jacobsen a.o. *Michelangelo Antonioni* (= Reihe Film Nr. 31) (1984), Ted Perry and Rene Prieto: *Michelangelo Antonioni. A Guide to References and Resources* (1986), Bernhard Kock: *Michelangelo Antonionis Bilderwelt. Eine phänomenologische Studie* (1994), Peter Brunette: *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (1998), Uwe Müller: *Der intime Realismus des Michelangelo Antonioni* (2004).
 - 3 See also the motto of the Dance Congress 2009 (Kampnagel Hamburg): “No Step Without Movement”.

ly anything, which, in an everyday or artistic act of reflection from the perspective of theatrical representation, focuses on a moving or immobile body.

In his movie – which takes place in the milieu of a fashion, i.e. ‘body’ photographer, Antonioni not only reflects the differences and rivalry between the central media of photography and film, but also simultaneously gives center stage (marginally) to the visual arts and (centrally) to the performing arts, thus adding multiple dimensions to the general discussion of the subject of image and movements – moving images and movements of the body on film, especially in terms of a conditioning of the gaze and perception.

I.

To begin with I will quickly summarize the plot to then present in detail a number of select episodes in which theatrical dance play a central role.⁴ *Blow-Up* is about a young, very successful fashion photographer, who has tired of the world of glamour and thus occupies himself with a documentary reportage in his spare time – a project meant to culminate in a socio-critical photo book about the British metropolis (illustration 1). The planned book is largely finished; Thomas, the hero’s name according to the script, has taken his second-to-last pictures last night in a doss house. The last photos – a scene of lovers in a park – are shot the next morning on precisely the same Saturday in June, of which the film now tells the tale (illustration 2).

4 There are 11 dance/theater/performance-related scenes altogether (central scenes are written in italics): 1. *Introductory credits* – dancer, audience and photographer [music]; 2. *Opening* – drive-in/appearance of the pantomimes [sound, atmosphere]; 3. *Photo shooting* – I and II with Verushka [music]; 4. Dance of the models (warming up) [music in the background]; 5. *Models on stage* – photo shooting I and II [music]; 6. Thomas’ jump in the park/jump [without music/ sound]; 7. The lovers swaying in the park [with a parallel pan of the camera in a swinging motion]; 8. *Against the beat* (the girl/Jane); 9. *Struggle and strip scene* (the blonde/the brunette plus photographer as an audience member, later participant) [screenplay: “I’ll put you in a ring together...”]; 10. *Yardbirds concert* – frozen/liberated public [music]; 11. *Pantomimes’ tennis game* (appearance and disappearance of the hero) [without music/sound]; see also: decelerated, ‘paralyzed’ movement of stoned people (party guests) [slow motion]; dead man in the park; classical dance figure made of porcelain in the antique shop.

Illustration 1: A scene from the homeless shelter⁵



Illustration 2: Scene in the park



While the pictures from the shelter depict social misery via images of ‘deformed’ male bodies, the photos of the park emphasize the idyll of mankind and nature. But the idyll is a delusion. As our hero will discover upon examining his photos more closely, death lurks in its wake (*Et in Arcadia ego*). Thomas sees himself compelled to study more intensely what on the surface seems to be no more than innocent photos, after the young woman/Jane, who he had photographed unasked with her lover apparently *in flagranti delicto*, confronts him and insists with all her might that he hand over the photos. However, Thomas does not yield and insists on his right to documentation. Back at the studio, he

5 All film stills are taken from the *Blow-Up* DVD published in the *Cinemathek* edition of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Munich 2005.

immediately tries to unravel the secret by quickly developing and analyzing the pictures. By blowing the pictures up and comparing the individual photos in a complicated procedure, he believes to have come across a murder case. In the thick of the bushes, he first recognizes the murderer's shape, then his weapon, and then, in the last picture of the series, a dead man lying on the ground. However, the crime case immediately vanishes again into thin air, as first the photos, then the young woman and, in the end, even the corpse disappears. Just one single photo, a highly magnified detail of the corpse under the bush, remains with Thomas. But the coarse-grained image doesn't suffice to document a murder; only someone versed in 'reading clouds' could identify the profile of a lying form. In the end, the photographer is left behind perplex with a photo in his hands that proves nothing of what he had witnessed by recording it on camera during the day and thought to have seen deep into the night.

Opening credits or 'All the world's a stage'

The stage and its concept of presentation are elementary motifs in the film, which it exploits in its ambitious forays into a theory of the image and of art. In the opening credits (illustration 3) the viewer peers through a lattice of letters onto a scene in which a young woman in a bikini is dancing on the roof of a shed observed by a diffuse group of onlookers and photographed by a wildly gesticulating man in the foreground. Bit by bit, the camera zooms in on the dancer, so that her face is finally revealed in close-up in the empty spaces between the individual letters and occasionally her eyes looks out of this kaleidoscopically fragmented window or mirror towards the audience.⁶ The images and words fit together in so far as that the movement behind the text, with its presentation and study of the female body, announces one of the main topics of the film. In addition, the dolly shot of the camera in the dance scene and the parallel zooming out of the BLOW-UP text block causes the title itself to be cinematically explicated. *Blow-up*, so the message of this composition of words and image in the introductory credits, means magnifying and viewing something up close. However, the

6 The interaction shown here between text and images is reminiscent of figure alphabets from the Late Middle Ages in which the surfaces of the letters are adorned with figures and even small scenes, as if to suffuse the mute letters with life (cf. Debes 1968). But it is different from the many cases in which medieval calligraphy and miniature painting consciously forewent bringing the written word and the image embedded in its shape into direct association; a biblical text could thus easily be accompanied by profane drolleries.

viewer, who would like to read *and* peer through the letters at the same time to see what precisely is being shown, is quickly overwhelmed. Either he concentrates on the words and reads, or he directs his attention towards the action and thus ignores the list of names. The direct superposition of stationary writing and moving images as well as the film-in-film modus provide the viewer with a initial borderline media experience, making it clear from the onset that it can sometimes be difficult to decipher interfering optical information.⁷ The seemingly exhibitionistic dance scene, witnessed as if through a keyhole, simultaneously exposes a first theatrical situation complete with audience and photojournalist.

Illustration 3: 'Dance scene' in the opening credits



II.

The film's actual beginning also creates a theatrical situation. The opening is dedicated to a performance of mimes. The first take is of a loud and wildly gesticulating group of young people who, like clowns, are wearing colorful clothes and white make-up and carry donation boxes in their hands. They arrive in a convertible four-by-four on an empty square between high-rises⁸, turn a few

7 Script as a signifier and image will continue to play a role in the numerous advertising signs throughout the course of the film.

8 According to the *World Guide to Movie Locations*, it is the Economist Plaza, West End, "a hidden courtyard immediately north of Ryder Street, off Piccadilly in London's West End", www.movie-locations.com/movies/b/blowup.html (January 30, 2011).

rounds and finally leave their vehicle. In great haste, they dash down a flight of stairs in the direction of the street, where they begin their wild task of collecting donations (illustration 4). This playful scene with ‘traveling folk’, who operate in public spaces and turn pedestrians into accomplices was not something Antonioni had to invent on his own; instead, he could take inspiration from the *rag week*: a kind of carnival for charity that takes place in London every spring.⁹ The protagonists of this event draw attention to themselves by making noise, playing small tricks and simultaneously demanding a donation from the public. All this is already inherently contained in the word *rag*, which means prank, bedlam and shenanigan, but it also means stuff, garbage and trumpery. Thus the name of this bizarre spectacle, which aims at alleviating poverty, is also closely associated with social awareness, as beggars often appear in rags.¹⁰

Illustration 4: Rag week scene



Antonioni continues this train of thought in the next scene by shifting in an abrupt transition to a scene of homeless people leaving a shelter. Once again, we have a group stepping out onto the street, but in this case in perfect silence and with non-descript clothing and behavior. The contrast is then again emphasized by jumping back from London’s Southbank district to the West End and dramatically finally cementing the impression by portraying the hero, who has just stepped out of the group of homeless people, as a ‘go-between’ for both milieus. After having climbed into his Rolls Royce cabriolet close to the shelter, where he spent the night for his reportage, he heads downtown and passes the group of

9 As well as in other English university towns.

10 See also the beggar behind Thomas’ car after dealing with the pantomimes.

mimes, who ask him for a donation. At first, the director lets both scenes run parallel, only to then intertwine them thematically with the same characters. The protagonist returns to his daily life as a successful fashion photographer; he is still wearing his beggar's clothes, but he's already back in his luxury car, which socially places him worlds apart from his previous night's companions. Back in the studio, he gives his beggar's garb to an assistant so that it can be thrown away.

III.

Here super model Verushka, cowering in a corner, has been waiting impatiently for quite some time. In the wink of an eye, the shooting begins and proceeds in two phases: first, with music running, Verushka poses in front of a paper backdrop, facing a fixed camera on a tripod (illustration 5); then Thomas switches cameras (and the music) and a kind of *pas de deux* unfolds between photographer and model. He literally 'gets on top' of her (illustration 6) capturing head and details, instead of her entire body, as he had done previously. Now that the previous distance between them has been overcome, the act of photography becomes something more equivalent to a sexual act, maybe even that of an animal trainer, and in the end it leaves both partners exhausted.

Illustration 5: Photographer and model (Verushka)



Illustration 6: Photographer and model (Verushka)



The film camera confidently follows the events and visibly establishes itself as narrator, as, for example, when it is placed directly behind the photo camera in the Verushka sequence and then moves upward as Thomas enters the frame.

“In this take, the film camera traverses the entire space one full time on a vertical plane; the background hardly changes. Thus the main action in this scene relates to the relationship between the recording apparatuses, and only then to the theatrical act itself.” (Schulz 2008: n.p.)

We, as observers, never get to see the pictures that the photographer is taking. One lens dominates the other; precedence is given to the moving image produced by an anonymous and autonomous observer, who presents the scene as an act of dressage.

This ambitious, as well as eccentric version of a photo shoot is answered two scenes later by the routine of a magazine photographer. We see him arranging a group of models into tableaux vivants in order to photograph them – in other words, choreograph them (illustration 7). As a strict dance master, Thomas summons the young women, who have previously been loosening up their bodies to music, and lets them take their places in the prepared set. As Thomas is tired and irritated, and moreover bored by the job, the project has to be interrupted and the models called in again at a later point in time.

Illustration 7: Photographer and models ('birdies')



IV.

To recover from the night's exertions, but also from his work in the studio, Thomas goes out into the park, to go search for an appropriate, i.e., conciliatory and idyllic final image for his book (illustration 2). The park is portrayed as an alternative to the studio on the one hand, and to the city, on the other – a reference to the classical model of *rus in urbe*. Here calm and vast, open spaces abound in place of labyrinthine narrowness and hectic; here the reign of green-in-green nature versus garish color, and instead of angular concrete, meadows and softly rolling hills. It's a humble paradise with a uniformed park attendant and her garbage-collecting spear standing guard at the entrance.¹¹ As though transformed, Thomas now moves forward in high spirits into the slightly hilly terrain and even jumps into the air like a jaunty child. This physical act clearly breaks with the dominant 'choreographic' mode of the studio.¹² It feels like an act of liberation from the normative and stylized atelier situation. This exuberance is likewise an obeisance to the medium film, which knows how to present the little scene with the young man in the green vest with pleasure – with such happiness,

11 Antonioni apparently had the white houses in the background especially built, see *World Guide to Movie Locations* (see footnote 8); he also had the asphalt spray-painted grey and the lawn colored green.

12 Incidentally there are numerous photographs showing people jumping on the walls of Thomas' studio.

in fact, that the montage immediately following the scene seems in its technique to imitate the heel-knocking jump. From jump to cut (illustration 8).

Illustration 8: The jump in the park



Similarly, in the next scene, the film camera gently flirts with the swaying lovers that Thomas is observing and taking photos of. With a slight camera pan from left to right and back again, Carlo di Palma's camera once again comments on the scene by accompanying the couple and playing the role of an autonomous teammate, a real co-dancer (see illustration 2).

Later, in the atelier, Thomas has to deal with the woman from the park/Jane, who, no matter what the price, demands that he hand over the photos he took of her and her lover. First he treats her like a model – *deformation professionnelle* – and casually rehearses positions and poses with her, later offering her a seat and asking her join him for a drink and a joint. Suddenly aware of the jazz music (Herbie Hancock) coming from the record player, he tells her to stop hectically moving to the rhythm, but to calmly work against it: finally, the young woman willingly obeys his insistent “Slowly, slowly. Against the beat” (illustration 9). Once again the photographer is a kind of choreographer, now also coordinating everyday movements to background music.

Illustration 9: Studio scene 'against the beat'



V.

At first glance, one of the most turbulent scenes in the film – things are all topsy-turvy, so to speak – seems to have nothing to do with dance and theater; neither does music play a role. But it still has an important function in terms of contrasting comparison. Incidentally, it takes place on precisely the same studio floor, on which the models and the super model also had their appearances. And this gives the scene its *tertium comparationis*, providing a contrasting image to the two model sequences mentioned above.

Two young women (Jane Birkin and Gillian Hills) appear unexpectedly at Thomas' studio and want him to photograph them. At first, he sends them away again; later, he lets them enter, but only to make fun of them. The two young women, who both dream of careers as models, use an unobserved moment to take a look at the clothes hanging within easy reach on a stand. Upon Thomas' return, one of the most turbulent (and provocative) film scenes in the movie begins. It features a wild tussle; first, between the two girls and then with the photographer. It is a sequence in which both fashion and photography are forgotten as professions and only naked skin and the erotic struggle between the sexes reign; it ends in a kind of 'battle for the (panty)hose' and thus, in a playful way, references the classic *topos* of the female catfight (illustration 10). Antonioni lets his hero frolic, in the words of the moral authorities and censors of that time, 'excessively and lasciviously' with the two teenagers around the photographer's set, which is usually the backdrop for fashion photos (cf. DVDBeaver.com). It is the only important scene of the film in which the photo camera, which the hero is rarely ever seen without, plays absolutely no role whatsoever. Instead, all is

ruled by the film camera, whose medial demands are met to the maximum with plenty of movement and powerful and fashionable colorfulness. It triumphs in the studio, as photography, its related décor and even the clothes are pushed aside. In an about-face, quite libertine for the times, Antonioni intertwines the most important subjects of the film – photography, fashion, silence – by boiling them down to nothing and, in their place, demonstratively and with relish replacing them with alternatives – the moving image, nudity and screaming. Instead of the photographer, it is now the film director shooting portraits of the two wannabe models, who have intruded into the studio like a Shakespearian *buffo* pair to suspend the existing order of things and ignore customary norms and boundaries – those of photography, as well as those of fashion and the ‘measured step’. On the one hand, this scene teaches the audience a lesson on promiscuity and voyeurism; on the other, a lesson about the explosive potential of physical-playful actions based on temperament and an excess of strength, which is wantonly wasted. Here play acts as an alternative to pretended and posed action and takes their place.

Illustration 10: The photographer and the two teenage models



VI.

In search of the young woman from the park, who stole the pictures from his studio and who is the only person that can shed some light on the mysterious events, Thomas strays, among other things, into a beat club (Ricky Tick Club), where the Yardbirds are playing. With the exception of a single dancing couple, the audience is standing mysteriously still, almost turned to stone, in front of a stage on which the musicians are playing their song *Stroll On*. An amplifier be-

gins buzzing and one of the two guitarists (Jeff Beck) unsuccessfully tries to fix the problem by repeatedly smashing his instrument against the speaker. Frustrated, he throws his guitar on the floor, destroying it with his hands and feet, then throwing the splintered neck of the guitar into the audience (illustration 11). As if waiting for a sign, the people in the audience suddenly awaken from their stupor and try to take possession of the fragment.¹³ Thomas joins the battle just for fun and wins. He quickly leaves the room carrying the trophy. Having arrived out on the street, he casts one last glance at the object he has just won and then simply throws it away. A passerby finds it – this former object of collective desire – and lifts it up, only to likewise immediately let it fall again; for him, it is also just a useless and meaningless thing, a piece of trash.

Illustration 11: In the Ricky Tick Club: the guitar neck flies into the audience



Paradigmatically, this scene demonstrates the ‘genesis’ and role of a classic fetish. By first presenting the audience as paralyzed and soon afterwards as if electrified, i.e. by shifting from immobility to movement, or even frenzy, Antonioni demonstrates the mechanics of such a magically charged object, which has attained cult status. Only now does that musical energy truly appear to be released, which moments before, for whatever reason, was encapsulated.

13 Cf. as a prototype for the scene in which the guitar gets destroyed, the spectacular performances and actions of Pete Townshend, member of the rock band The Who, who has destroyed innumerable guitars on stage and has cited, as his intellectual background, Gustav Metzger’s auto-destructive art that he encountered at Ealing Art College where Metzger taught. Cf. in general Justin Hoffmann’s *Destruktionskunst. Der Mythos der Zerstörung in der Kunst der frühen sechziger Jahre* (1995).

The film audience is at first alienated by the initial, totally atypical immobility of the concertgoers. Why don't they submit to the rhythm of the music and dance? And why are they only then released from their stasis, when offered such a simultaneously concrete and symbolic prize from the stage? Antonioni uses the scene to compare the two spaces of spectatorship: the rock and roll palace on the one hand, and the movie theater, on the other. The immobile music audience represents the spectator in the movie theater, who similarly paralyzed sit in their seats and stare spellbound, as if in a trance, at the hustle and bustle on the screen.

The guitar neck serves as a fetish in the context of the fan club and, beyond that, as a kind of media-theoretical sensor, which seeks to awaken awareness of the audience for itself. In the live concert moment, both public spheres merge – the one *in* as well as the one *in front of* the film; the acoustic irritation that provokes the destruction (and awakens the destructive powers) makes itself known to both public spheres in a similar way. Therefore, the instrument-fetish is also a tool to wake up the film audience. At any rate, what communicates itself to the film audience, when the fetish-meteorite lands among the concertgoers, is not just a disturbing noise, but also a little moment of shock. As music as well as silence play a decisive dramaturgic role in *Blow-Up* on a diegetic, as well as extradiegetic level, this is one comparison among many that easily and by way of association not only explicates and comments on the relationship between paralysis/stasis and life/kinesis in reference to dance, but also in reference to the medium of film and the institution of movie theaters. It is a strategy that the director pursues systematically.

In addition, Antonioni uses this etude to draw his audience's attention indirectly to the fundamental opposition of immobility and movement as it is dealt with continually in the comparison of the two different media photography and film. The stationary (black and white) photographic images that the film camera previously paid tribute to via the protagonist's investigative detective work interrupt the familiar continual flow of images by asserting their contrary nature and, like a *freeze frame*, upsetting the film's customary form. This is one of the moments in which the film reflects back on itself – and the audience, awakened from its dream, is called upon to join in this reflection.

VII.

The pantomimes appear both in the first and last scene of the film, as counterparts to the image-obsessed, iconodule hero (illustration 12). While the group is shown in the beginning as participants of the student *rag week*, in the end of the

film, they perform a tennis pantomime (*pas de deux*) on a court in the park, watched attentively not only by the other members of the group, but also by Thomas. Pantomime is a genre that uses gestures to imitate reality. In order to be successful, the performance is forced to appeal to our imagination for its elliptical, deficient images to be completed via association. That this appeal even touches a skeptic like Thomas is somewhat of a theatrical turn and demonstrates a triumph of art and its ability to liberate reality from immediacy and transcend it poetically in an instant of insight. The spectator is needed as collaborator; as is concretely the case for the nameless Thomas. As the imaginary ball suddenly leaves the stage – the playing court – and rolls to the feet of the film’s protagonist, he is invited to actively join in (illustration 13). By picking up the ball, he is accepting and legitimizing the rules of a game that in its performances has to make do without tangible objects and tools and be satisfied with silent hints. This departure from concrete material reality and the emphasis on gestural language is a systematic counterpart to the marked object fetishism of photography, which composes everything that openly appears before its camera lens into an image.

Illustration 12: Pantomimes appear in the park



Illustration 13: The photographer and the imaginary tennis ball



In the end, the pantomimes prevail; even the camera follows their make-believe flight paths, simulates them, and – as a last consequence – finally magically lets the hero disappear (illustration 14). Visibility is simultaneously a symptom and a syndrome of an image-obsessed, iconodule world, which has completely lost sight of reality under the flood of images.

Illustration 14: The photographer disappears from the screen



Blow-Up is a film that explicates creative and skeptical thoughts on the subject of the image, the body and media. Its director uses the intermedial, self-referential and historic interdependencies of the visual and performing arts for a fundamental reflection on stationary and moving pictures, the inter-mediality of genres and the theatricality of physical movement.

It is tempting to use the accommodating term of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) to categorize Antonioni's film due to how it apostrophizes the many named art forms – but it is far from being a synthesis in terms of a harmonious summary. On the contrary: the differences between the art forms and media are not meant to be smoothed over or overruled, but rather exposed, thus letting the film negotiate contrast and confrontation, as well as the possibility of comparison and the reflection of aesthetic and artistic, and not least of all political boundaries and differences.

In the field of dance studies, Gabriele Brandstetter has pointed out that on a more general level the “perspective on the body, the image and temporal structures in postmodern dance and choreography [...] can only be considered in relation to a gaze modeled by photo and film technology” (Brandstetter 2005: 68). Antonioni's film also suggests an inverse point of view. Film and photography can indeed be contemplated in relation to a gaze and events shaped by dance theater by correlating and comparing (and thus not least of all revealing the deficiencies) of motion and immobility, as options of the ‘new’ technical media, with those of the classical performing arts and their patterns of perception.¹⁴

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14 This text is closely related to a current research project in preparation by the author and devoted to the media-reflexive aspects of Antonioni's *Blow-Up*; please also see the following essays by the author: *Mode im Bild, Modus des Bildes* (2010), as well as *Der Fetisch und sein (Kunst)Charakter in Michelangelo Antonionis 'Blow-Up'* (2010). I would like to thank the participants of the seminar *Blow-Up or Art History and Film* at the Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte of the Humboldt University, Berlin in the summer semester of 2008 for their numerous suggestions, in particular Ulrike Schilfert, Florian Unger and Tobias Weißmann.

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FILM

Blow-Up (1966) (UK/IT/USA, D: Michelangelo Antonioni)

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DIGITAL WORLDS – PROCESSING BODIES

Gesture Capture: Paradigms in Interactive Music/ Dance Systems

FRÉDÉRIC BEVILACQUA, NORBERT SCHNELL, SARAH FDILI ALAOUI

INTRODUCTION

Electronic or digital interactive systems have been experimented with in dance for more than fifty years. The piece *Variations V* by Merce Cunningham and John Cage, performed in 1965 with dancers interacting with analog electronic sound systems, is one such groundbreaking case (cf. Miller 2001). The use of interactive digital technology grew in importance in the 1990s with the advent of affordable sensor technologies and software dedicated to motion tracking, such as *Eycon*, *EyesWeb*, *BigEye*, and *softVNS*, which were developed for artistic use. The first decade of the 21st century showed a steady increase of new experimentation and usage of media technologies in various dance contexts and aesthetics, including performances and installations.

This text gives some idea of the wide range of currently available technological tools used to sense gesture and movement. Most importantly, we would like to emphasize that the current discourse on interactive systems has moved away from ‘experimenting’ with technology, which is nowadays ubiquitous, to more fundamental questions on the description and notation of gesture and movement (cf. deLahunta/Bevilacqua 2007), and what transmission these systems could provide or facilitate. Several choreographers and dance companies have built ambitious interdisciplinary research projects (cf. InsideMovement Knowledge.net; SynchronousObjects.osu.edu) involved with such questions. These initiatives reflect the converging interests of different disciplines – dance, music, engineering and cognitive sciences – towards gesture research. For ex-

ample, research on sensorimotor learning has influenced the Human Computer Interaction field, where the role of action and gesture has increased significantly (cf. Dourish 2001; Leman 2007).

Working in such an interdisciplinary context at IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique)¹, we have developed, in collaboration with choreographers/composers/media artists, computer based gesture analysis and interactive audio processing systems that allows performers to control or interact with digital media – sound or video (cf. Bevilacqua 2007). At the Dance Congress 2009, we presented a lecture/demonstration of these tools and explained paradigms that are central to these applications. Summarizing key elements of our presentation here, we will first categorize the different sensing systems typically found in dance contexts, in order to clarify what the term ‘gesture capture’ can encompass. In the second part, we will provide examples of gesture sound controls often found in interactive dance performances.

SENSING FOR INTERACTING

It is possible to argue that in any interactive dance system, the technical constraints related to the chosen gesture capture apparatus influences the choreographic work. Therefore, it is generally useful to describe technical constraints that might inform some aspects of the work. Nevertheless, we wish to emphasize here the interaction paradigms that are associated with gesture technology instead of simply describing the technical features of specific systems. For this reason, we propose to classify the different approaches for sensing gesture as used in dance performances or installations using three main categories, ‘body’, ‘space’, and ‘time’. This classification helps to clarify the metaphors implicitly or explicitly related to interactive systems. Obviously, these categories should not be considered absolute, or their limits as definite: most interactive systems will generally include more than one of these categories.

1 IRCAM is one of the largest public research centers dedicated to both musical expression and scientific research. This article relates specifically to research performed by the Real Time Musical Interaction and the Performing Arts Technology Research Teams, which have been collaborating regularly with various choreographers since 2003, developing interactive systems for the performing arts, such as the *gesture follower* and audio processing tools.

Body

Although it is clear that physical movement is largely used in interactive systems, we first also want to call to mind that numerous other types of body-centered interaction are possible by using, for example, physiological signals.

Physiological signals

All kinds of measurements of physiological parameters can be utilized in interactive systems. Technically these systems are generally adapted from technology developed for biofeedback. Mechanisms such as muscle activation, for example, can be measured in form of electrical activity with sensors that are put in contact with the skin (electromyography). Such systems have been incorporated in dance performances (cf. *Palindrome.de*) or music performance (cf. Tanaka/Knapp 2002). Interestingly, these techniques can also be sensitive to ‘pre-movements’ or muscle tension even if there is no significant visible movement.

Other types of physiological quantities have also been used in media performance including breathing², the heartbeat, and even brain waves. Skin contact between two people, or between the skin and an (electrically conductive) object can also be easily measured thanks to the skin’s electrical conductivity. This property allows for the design of ‘touch sensitive’ objects.³ Performances have also been designed that take advantage of this effect, sonifying skin contact between performers and even the public (cf. *Woudi-Tat.org*).

Body posture and movement

Different types of technological systems enable the measurement of body posture and motion. First, sensors can be attached to the body as illustrated in Figure 1. Miniature accelerometers and gyroscopes are, for example, sensitive to inclination, rotation and acceleration (note: these later types of sensors are now found

2 Myriam Gourfink, for example, used a breathing sensor in her piece *This is my House*, along with other motion sensors, <http://myriam-gourfink.com/thisIsMyHouse.htm> (April 5, 2010).

3 The crackle box invented by Michel Waisvisz is a historic musical example, <http://www.crackle.org> (April 5, 2010).

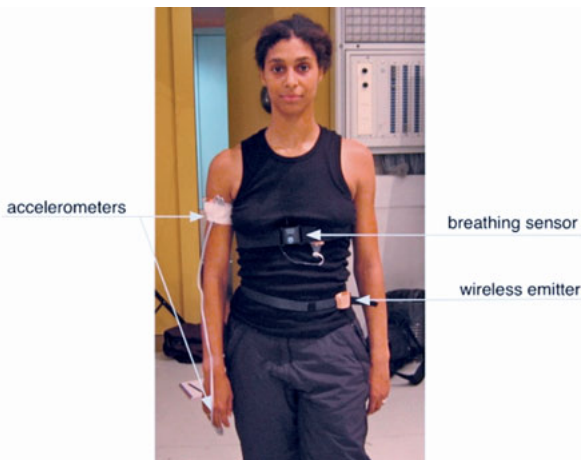
for example in gaming interfaces such as the *Wii mote*); bending sensors measure joint angles.⁴ Generally, the sensors are connected to wireless data emitters.

Second, video systems are efficient in capturing postures and movements of the entire body remotely. For example, a single camera system can track the dancer's silhouette, as shown in Figure 2, taken from the *Double Skin/Double Mind* installation (cf. InsideMovementKnowledge.net).

A large number of computer programs characterize body movement by tracking the whole silhouette or specific body parts. The *EyesWeb* software, for example, computes parameters such as 'quantity of motion', 'direction', and 'stability' among several others (cf. Camurri/Mazzarino/Volpe 2004). This software was recently used to automatically annotate short videos of a web dance database (cf. Tardieu/Chessini et al. 2009).

In single camera systems, the measurement of the movement highly depends on the position of the dancer relative to the camera. To avoid such problems, multiple cameras are required. Typically, 3D optical motion-capture systems, initially developed for biomechanic studies or for animation, allow for the 3D reconstruction of a simplified skeleton. Nevertheless, they require the use of small reflective markers on the body and are generally complex to handle in real-time and in performance situations. Dance performances using such systems have been relatively rare, with few notable exceptions such as two pieces by Bill T. Jones and Trisha Brown, developed at the Arizona State University, in collaboration with the OpenEndedGroup (cf. Downie 2005).

Figure 1: Sensors for breathing and acceleration measurements



4 See the *mini dancer*, <http://www.troikaranch.org> (April 5, 2010).

Figure 2: Video tracking of the dancer silhouette and analysis of the size of different parts of the silhouette (from the Double Skin/Double Mind installation).



Photography: Thomas Lenden

Space

We refer here to paradigms where some properties of the space are explicitly included in the interaction. This can, for example, imply defining particular zones of the space, in which the presence of the user triggers specific electronic events. This type of paradigm is among one of the first implemented historically, using either light barriers or camera systems. In the experimental piece *Variations V* mentioned earlier, proximity to sensors (Theremin antenna) were placed on particular spots on stage and reacted to dancers approaching these particular spots.

Generally, space-based interaction implies structuring the space, and associating audio/video processes with specific spatial location. Commons paradigms are, for example: body presence/absence, crossing borders, entering/leaving zones. Obviously, motion can also be naturally associated with these interactions, for example, by measuring the ‘quantity of motion’ in a particular spatial zone. Nevertheless, we would like to point out that in these cases the motion remains referenced to absolute spatial locations, and not relative to the body itself as described in the previous section.

Time

At first, it might seem unclear how ‘time’ can be referred to a category of interaction. We argue that ‘temporal interaction’ can be put forward in a similar fashion as spatial interaction (cf. Bevilacqua 2007). Similar to spatial limits or zones, one can define time limits and time moments. Moreover, interaction can be based on synchronizing specific dance gestures and sound/visual processes. In other words, interaction can be driven by temporal events, time sequences and synchronization mechanisms.

Generally, this interaction paradigm relies on software that is designed to analyze temporal data, i.e. a sequence of events or postures. Our research currently aims at taking into account gesture data as ‘time processes’. This implies considering basic elements such as ‘phrases’ and ‘transitions’ (as opposed to ‘postures’) in relationship to time-based media such as sound or video (we will describe in more detail possible interaction models in the next section). Note that this approach was motivated in part by collaboration with choreographers, who pointed out the necessity of considering gestures as continuous time-related processes.

EXAMPLES OF GESTURE CONTROLLED SOUND INTERACTION

Digital sound processes can be controlled or altered using the different types of gesture parameters we have described in the previous section. Establishing the relationship between gesture parameters and the actual sound properties is a central task when building any interactive system. Such a procedure is often referred as a gesture-to-sound “mapping” (cf. Wanderley 2002; Bevilacqua/Muller/Schnell 2005).

In the following, we will describe concrete examples ranging from relatively simple mappings to more elaborate scenarios working with complex gestures analysis and audio-visual processes. In the first two sections below, we will define simple relationships between gesture and sound rendering, corresponding to explicit interaction metaphors. By defining this relationship, we can create a sort of ‘musical instrument’ that can be ‘played’ by the dancer. In the last two sections, we will introduce the possibility of handling complex phrases in the interaction design, which can lead to more abstract relationships between gesture and sound.

Triggering sound events

Triggering is one of the most simple and common processes used in interactive systems. As an introductory example, we can show that ‘percussive’ gesture (i.e. strokes measured with ‘accelerometers’) can directly trigger percussive sound events. The gesture ‘intensity’ can furthermore affect the volume and characteristics of the sound.

An application of this paradigm is the sequential triggering of discrete recorded sound events. For example: the dancer selects, in a preliminary step, particular sound events in a recording. Then, each sound event can be played one by one by the dancer using percussive gestures. The dancer can also control the tempo and rhythm of the sequence of the recorded sound. Experiments generally show that the clarity of this interaction allows for a rapid appropriation of the sound control by the dance movements. Nevertheless, this influences performers towards performing discrete strokes or accents. Continuous sound control appears then as a natural extension, as explained in the next section.

Continuous control of sound grains

Continuous movement parameters, e.g. inclination or velocity, can naturally be ‘mapped’ to continuous sound parameters. Examples based on granular synthesis techniques, which have been widely used in dance/music systems, were among the many techniques that we demonstrated during the workshop. Granular synthesis is based on segmenting sound recordings in small ‘sound grains’ and then playing them in such a way as to create sound textures. The original sound characteristics can be either preserved or radically altered.

We experimented in particular with sound recordings related to natural, human or mechanical movements, sounds of liquid pouring, rolling/rotating objects, human beat boxing and machines. These sounds can be easily decomposed into very short elementary elements (i.e. sound grains) and recomposed according to gestural input (cf. Schnell/Borghesi et al. 2005; Schnell/Röbel et al. 2009). In simple cases, dynamic movement parameters such as ‘energy’ can be directly used to control the intensity of rendered sound textures.

More complex relationships make use of an intermediate model mediating specific behaviors between gesture input and sound responses. A compelling example is based on the rainstick metaphor.⁵ In detail, the sound rendering can si-

5 Such a paradigm was used in the installation *Grainstick* by Pierre Jodkowski, see: <http://agora2010.ircam.fr/935.html?event=887&L=1> (April 5, 2010).

mulate the sound of various materials (water, stones or abstract sound textures) as if agitated and moved from one side to the other of an object, according to the inclination of the object. By holding a real object containing an inclination sensor, dancers therefore control the sound of various virtual ‘sound grains’ pouring from one side to the other side of the object. By directly holding the inclinometer sensor to their body, dancers can even directly embody the sound object, ‘pouring sound grains’ by bending their body.

Gesture recognition for media control

Gesture recognition systems are particularly useful where interpretation of sensor parameters becomes complex, leading to cumbersome programming. Even simple gestures and body movements may in fact generate a very large number of movement parameters and complex data patterns.

Using a gesture recognition system can simplify the setting of the interaction and offers possibilities of using longer choreographed movements. A first step is to define ‘phrases’, i.e. gestures units, that the computer system must learn in a first phase in order to be able to recognize them automatically in a second phase. Interestingly, this approach lets the dancer define a gesture ‘vocabulary’ and thus work on a symbolic level. Over the past years, we have developed a system at IRCAM called the *gesture follower* that can be used for gesture recognition of complex postures, phrases or trajectories (cf. Bevilacqua/Guédy et al. 2007; Bevilacqua/Zamborlin et al. 2009). The *gesture follower* has been used in dance performances (cf. TheBakery.org), interactive installations (cf. if-then-installed.leprojet.net) and in music pedagogy (cf. Bevilacqua/Guédy et al. 2007). To use the *gesture follower*, the dancer first records phrases, using sensors or video systems, to define a vocabulary. The control of audio processes (triggering, synchronization and continuous sound control) can then be built on the basis of this vocabulary.

In the case of the *Double Skin/Double Mind* installation motion parameters were fed into the analyzing system, which was in this case especially tuned to movements principles defined by the Emio Greco | PC. The results of the analysis could either be connected to sounds or visual feedback.

In the case of a collaboration with Richard Siegal, we developed another application of the *gesture follower* for an installation (cf. If-then-installed.leprojet.net) and a multimedia dance performance. In *Homo Ludens* (cf. TheBakery.org), Richard Siegal improvises at the beginning of the piece with a set of dance phrases that are recognized in real-time by the systems (he wore motion

sensors on his wrists). When recognized, pre-recorded videos of these phrases were displayed, creating a sort of dialog between the dancer and the videos.

Beyond recognizing phrases, the *gesture follower* allows for the synchronization of arbitrary gestures and movements to time-based media, such as audio and video recordings. Once a particular dance phrase and recording have been entered in the system, it can control in real-time the synchronized rendering of the recording according to the gesture variations. More precisely, the system can continuously control the pace and mix of digital media (rather than just triggering start/stop). In other words, the dancer can continuously control the choices and the temporality (i.e. tempo, rhythm, order) of recording rendered by her/his performance. Therefore, the interaction paradigm enabled by the *gesture follower* equals intrinsically translating the ‘temporal’ unfolding of gestures to the ‘temporal’ unfolding of digital media.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have given examples of sensing techniques for dance-music interactive systems. We proposed to categorize the different paradigms as ‘body’-, ‘space’- or ‘time’-related. The combination of these different paradigms can lead to different layers of computer-mediated interaction between dance and sound/visual processes. The combination of both simple interaction paradigms with recent advances on gesture recognition and following currently gives rise to the novel experiments that we are pursuing. Important challenges lie now in the use of interactive systems with coherent gesture descriptions that could be shared by dancers, musicians and engineers. Recent productions (e.g. *If/Then Installed*) and research projects (e.g. *Inside Movement Knowledge*) that we have participated in are very promising in this regard. Furthermore, we will continue to pursue research on notions such as ‘quality of movements’ that could be derived from gesture capture system. We believe that such analysis should further enrich interaction paradigms with new media.

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Tables of Weights and Measures: Architecture and the *Synchronous Objects* Project

STEPHEN TURK

Writing about a topic outside one's own discipline forces at the most basic level a resituating of standard disciplinary assumptions so that they can be positioned in a meaningful way to the broadest of audiences. This is all the more true in a case such as what I write about today which concerns my work for the *Synchronous Objects* project. This project was a multidisciplinary research effort centered at the Ohio State University which focused on the implications of the complex organizational strategies and conceptual systems found within William Forsythe's celebrated choreographic work *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (2000). The intention of the project was to bring together a group of scholars from various disciplines to explore the possible ramifications of this compelling work for their specific fields; to see whether certain concepts relative to choreographic thinking might cross between disciplinary boundaries. To begin a discussion of the architectural contribution to the project, I would like to briefly revisit certain fundamental aspects of the relationship between the human figure and frame within architecture as a way of situating the architectural component of the *Synchronous Objects* project. The idea of measurement implicit within Forsythe's work and what we saw as an architectural affinity with the issue of frame to body within the dance were central features of the project that I and a pair of student assistants developed. Our project therefore drew upon both our analysis of Forsythe's choreography and the multidisciplinary effort of *Synchronous Objects* project itself.

Architecture has over the last couple of decades rediscovered its connection to the immediate, temporal, and material world of behaviors and effects. So too has it sought to make its own logics of organization and assembly performative. That is, to make systems that behave not so much as abstract linguistic objects but rather responsive organisms which react to the forces of the world. In this sense there is some parallel movement between what is happening in architecture and the goals of the *Synchronous Objects* project, albeit perhaps in different planes of understanding. Architecture has moved from an obsession with the notion of the describable architectural object as a discrete and knowable thing to the environmental notion of architecture as a result of an extended field of forces and flows; a condition where ‘architecture’ loses itself first in the landscape and then in a generalized array of the global ecological, economic, logistical and informational forces in the world. Architecture is therefore, to paraphrase the architectural theorist Bernard Tschumi, not so much an event of construction but is the construction of events.

FURNISHING INTERVAL AND POSITIONING GROUND

From a layman’s point of view *One Flat Thing, reproduced* seems an unconventional piece of choreography. This judgment emerges for many reasons but perhaps central among these is the fact that its staging is dominated by the creation of an artificial ‘ground’ upon, under and around which the dance is performed. Forsythe’s furnishing of the performance space with an array of tables unbalances the conventional understanding of ground by providing a new surface datum which acts perceptually on the figure of the dancers as their bodies are effectively bisected, sectioned and measured by the plane of the tables. The dancers no longer gracefully spring from the surface of a stable earth in this work but rather must negotiate the shifting planes of a newly mobile and fluid set of surfaces, an artificial and somewhat uncanny horizon. They are in a sense partially buried or floating in an unstable world. These playful and surprising juxtapositions between pieces of furniture and performers are perhaps not so surprising when one considers the historical relationship between the words furnishing and performance.

Linguistically these words are nearly identical having at their core the Latin root *fournir*, which means to furnish, to provide, or supply in full. Performance is simply the compound meaning through, during, or by the agency of which something is provided. Performers supply or furnish something; they are a kind of agent or vector of logistics. In this sense Forsythe’s dance is furnished by this

table array, as it provides the field for a new expressive world to unfold. To the architectural interpreter, the spatial, organizational, structural and tactile armature provided by the array of tables plays a central role in the conceptual and symbolic understanding of the meaning of the dance. Their presence remind us of the intimate and archaic connection between architecture and dance by reiterating fundamental conditions in all architectural phenomena, the most central on which is the relationship of the mobile occupant to an envelope or enclosure.

The tables provide us with a perceptual field through which to understand interval, distance, unit and number, the conditions that join the temporal art of dance to the spatial art of architecture. So too can the work be read as an allegorical exploration of the relationship between the human figure and the frames established by society; frames which whether registered through the regulating grid of cities, or the systems of demarcation in mathematics and science, are the cultural legacy of ideas of measurement.

THE CHORA AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE FIGURE

To understand the relationship between architectural notions of spatiality, ideas of measure and choreography that I am developing here, it might be useful to briefly review the classical relationship between the Greek *chora* (situated space, place, position in order) and *choros* (round dance, open dancing ground, enclosure). Both are related to the Indo-European roots *gher-* (to grasp, to bind, to enclose) and *ghe-* (to release, to go, to abandon). *Chora* is quite simply: the place that is made through the going.

This oppositional pairing, to bind and to release, points to a fundamental set of beliefs in classical Greece concerning the possibility of rhythmic interval as the prior condition to the establishment of space. The very possibility of movement is the necessary property for the emergence of measurable and occupiable dimensions. *Chora* is the vessel or receptacle of enclosure, a mold through which this emergence is made possible. The *chora* is quite literally a matrix, a mothering structure, which gives rise to being by providing room for the performance of movement, the interval for becoming in time. In this sense the space of the *chora* precedes and underlies the process of figuration.

Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* literalizes this process in the sense that the array of tables is positioned in a grid-like matrix; a coordinate set, a 'table' of intervals and positions, or weights and measures, which both engenders space and sponsors the becoming of a new kind of figure, a cloud-like field of subjectivity. The *Noise Void Tool* from the *Synchronous Objects* project neatly

encapsulates this idea, where the statistical sampling of movement variation is captured through the device of what might be called visual absence or in architectural terms *the figural void*. The void presented by this tool is the registration of the differences and accelerations of movement; it is in a very real sense a digital registration of the ancient idea of *chora*.

TABULATING MEASURE

Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* can be read as exploring contemporary notions of ideas of measure in an era when measurement is understood to be probabilistic and statistical rather than fixed and ideal. The work can also be seen as mobilizing a Deleuzian concept of 'duration'; an interest in temporal and qualitative conditions in opposition to a transcendental and absolute notion of quantitative analysis. In a somewhat Duchampian sense in which scientific principles are mobilized to describe ironic or non-scientific qualities, Forsythe's *Synchronous Objects* project is actively pursuing the problems of mapping and measuring of distributed flows within a contemporary scientific framework. Certain illustrations from the sciences such as the statistical mapping of *Brownian motion* (the small and apparently random movements of particles suspended in fluids) metaphorically echo the entire graphic ambitions of the *Synchronous Objects* project. The emphasis here seems to be less about mapping in the transcendental sense but rather is in my view an attempt to situate the embodied knowledge of dance as a mediator between the now dispersed disciplinary fields of contemporary aesthetic and scientific cultures.

Forsythe, through *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, might be said to be situating these ideas as a central feature of a post-humanist system of knowledge whose salient figure of study is the manifestation of a new type of statistical or probabilistic identity. This is an identity that is not an ideal humanist centered singularity (a self in the classic sense) but rather one that is conditioned by and constituted out of the flows of modern society; a society in which individual identity is increasingly distributed across electronic networks and broad ecologies. The 'table' in this system is not the physical object but the conceptual representation, a system of 'tabulation', the matrix of columns and rows of a database chart or a cross-reference of associations. This is embodied most closely perhaps in those foundational charts entitled 'Tables of Weights and Measures', the charts which outline the units of measure that underlie experimental technique. This idea was at a certain point in history embodied in actual objects. Tables of weights and measure were literally quite common in the ancient world.

The *mensa ponderaria*, the weigh table from the forum market of Pompeii is a salient example. To ponder in Latin is to weigh; to metaphorically measure and evaluate the burden of various possibilities and it is interesting to note the importance of the table as the site of this action.

Mensuration in contemporary physics is as is well known subject to the limitations of the uncertainty principle. This is an acknowledgement of the effects produced by the act of observation and measurement itself on the state of any particle. The quantum reality of objects exists in a kind of state of superimposition or probabilistic potentiality. From this point of view, Forsythe's piece can be seen as an allegorical elaboration of the problems and dilemmas of contemporary notions of physical reality relative to human perception and subjectivity. The work can be seen as a rumination on the fact that culture in the West has long since moved past the centrality of the body as a measure of reality, a state which was classically evoked by the dual inverted poles of dance and architecture; mirror disciplines which have acted as cultural embodiments of ideas of measure.

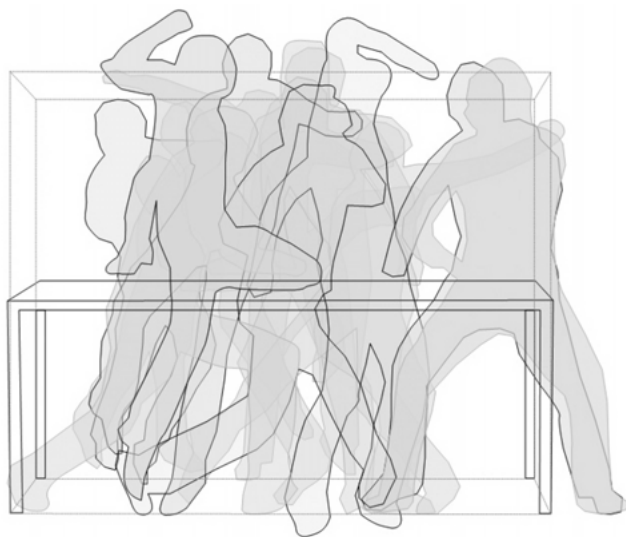
Dance and architecture were those arts in the past that ancient man used to symbolically demarcate his space in the universe, to position and circumscribe a sacred precinct. For the ancients these two arts were symbolic models of how the universe was structured, they were maps of reality based upon both the relative scale of the singular body (building, temple, house, dance) and the collective scale of the people (the theater, processional, city). One might look to the idea of pediment sculpture to see this played out in the most direct sense in ancient architecture. Allegorical sculptures of gods and heroes were traditionally positioned on the entablature of temples as were anthropometric figures used in the codification of ancient measuring systems.

The word entablature is of course referring to an idea of a kind of visual table; a ground for a scene to unfold. These groupings were essentially didactic tableaux enacting various foundation and cosmological events. What is remarkable is that the figures within the triangular frames of the pediment are themselves engaged in a figurative dance which is responsive to the frame of the temple roof. The gods are in a very real sense dancing; a fact that harkens back to an earlier archaic period when the temple activities literally happened in the natural landscape and were centered on ritualistic movement. Pediment with its roots *ped*, or foot and *ment*, mind, is thought to imply the idea of the rituals of pacing out a sacred *temenos*, the precinct or perimeter which is actually the temple proper in ancient Greece. The roots might be said to imply something akin to that which is made in the mind through the action of the foot. The act of demarcating *temenos* is a cutting off from the everyday in a ritualistic act of ma-

king sacred. The movement implicit in this idea is echoed by the related word *tempo*, the rate, rhythm or pace of a dance or musical performance.

These are ideas that for me immediately struck me upon with my first viewing of Forsythe's piece. My own work and research is not typically antiquarian but there was something in Forsythe's dance which brought these very ancient and primal relationships forward in my mind. It seemed that Forsythe's piece was simultaneously evoking these early visual associations of body and frame to revisit their implications in the contemporary world.

Figure 1: Figure superimposition



Graphics: Stephen Turk

ENTANGLEMENT

Indeed, Forsythe's work is in my view an attempt to grapple with these issues and present an updated model for the ways in which the knowledge of dance, conventionally understood and associated with a presumed authentic and 'real' nature of bodily reality, can instead be seen as part of a world subject to the probabilistic nature of quantum reality and postmodern theories of the body. Forsythe's choreography and his interest in exploring these ambiguities with the *Synchronous Objects* project might from this point of view be seen as revisiting dance's ancient role as 'physics'.

Given the complexities of the associations outlined here, the idea of entanglement drawn from scientific theories of quantum reality has in our analysis and design project served as a central trope for understanding the implications of the dance. Forsythe's work seems to have a strong scientific and mathematical interest. Visually in the organization of the piece we saw a strong connection to contemporary graphic representations of scientific principles. Scientific illustrations of entangled particles for instance have a curious affinity and resonance with both Forsythe's dance in plan and indeed have strong echoes in the graphic research produced by the *Synchronous Objects* team overall.

So too did it have strong affinities to the ancient precedents we were invoking in our work. The perceptual and conceptual notion of entanglement can be said to occur at many levels in *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. These would include affects produced by the perceptual field of the dance both at the scale of figure to figure as well as figure to frame relationships. In developing our project we began our understanding of entanglement visually and spatially by mobilizing a series of these historical figural precedents that we believed both related to and echoed these ideas.

For instance, Michelangelo's incomplete sculptures known as the prisoners, particularly the example of the figure known as the *Bearded Slave* from the early 1520s, served as a model of the body caught and measured in a defined volume; a body entangled in a material substrate, struggling to escape from these bounds. For us the implied energy and tension embodied in these works and their echo of classical notions of the idealization of the body as the foundation of measurement now uncomfortably bound and entangled in a volume serves as a resonant framework in our study of Forsythe's choreographic work.

Within *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, the visual interconnections between dancers, their apparent and actual physical intertwining, can be said to be a function of kinds of entanglement. These are general motifs which establish mutual dependencies and produce larger chains of contrapuntal effects within the 'field' produced by the work. We metaphorically transferred this idea to one of volumetric enclosure and registration to capture the dynamic unfolding of these relationships. Our project diagrams demonstrate the process of abstraction and interpretation of the figuration implied by composites of individual dancers relative to the frame of the tables within the dance; a process dependent upon our figure/volume metaphor. These diagrams were then used as a kind of tracery which implied a dynamic force relationship acting on the bounds of a material substrate.

The entanglement of the figure emerging from this process was allowed to register on a pair of implied cubic volumes. We saw the tables as demarcating

spaces both above and below the tabletop, producing volumes which for us were analogous to a rotated and reduplicated version of the *Prisoner* sculpture. This visually establishes the core spatial translation we undertook. I should stress that this was an interpretive exercise which was in no way understood as a deterministic translation. But rather was seen as echoing certain visual and spatial qualities we were interested in capturing within a newly emergent spatial volume. These visual and tactile motifs however point to a deeper understanding of the implications of the ‘collapsed’ nature of the figure and frame dichotomy in the work as suggested by the argument of the *chora*. It is my belief that the complex combinatorial relationships between dancers and their mutual dependencies, pairings, alignments and cues are extended out from this figure/ frame system and that the choice of the motif of an array of figures and tables is best reflected in the notion of entanglement.

Entanglement in the sciences is used to describe the quantum states of particles which have become interdependent upon one another to the point that the observation of one causes an instantaneous transformation in the state of the other regardless of the distance of their physical separation. This seemed an apt metaphor for the structure of the dance in our mind. It is important to stress that for us our collection of furniture blocks was intended to be performative and through their use to evoke this entangled interdependency. We thus settled on a process which stressed this conceptual framework by systematically translating thematic components of the dance through a series of what we called block entanglement methods.

The constellation of interdependencies in the piece is structured around a complex set of themes which are triggered by an internal set of cues and signals. The performers are constantly measuring and judging the temporal and spatial behaviors of all other performers in their local area as well as those at a distance who may provide signal ‘data’ for the initiation of particular sequences. We therefore used the thematic diagram produced by the *Synchronous Objects* team as an essential guide in our investigation.

Given the arguments developed above we explored the potential imaginary collapse between these terms into a third in-between condition. We searched for a way to make a non-literal translation of the table dance by taking into account the effects of the piece and finding parallel architectural phenomena in which they could be re-inscribed. Our goal was not to produce a simple one to one transposition between the notational and contrapuntal analyses and an architectural object but rather to produce a space that was performative and combinatorial in a resonant way with *One Flat Thing, reproduced*.

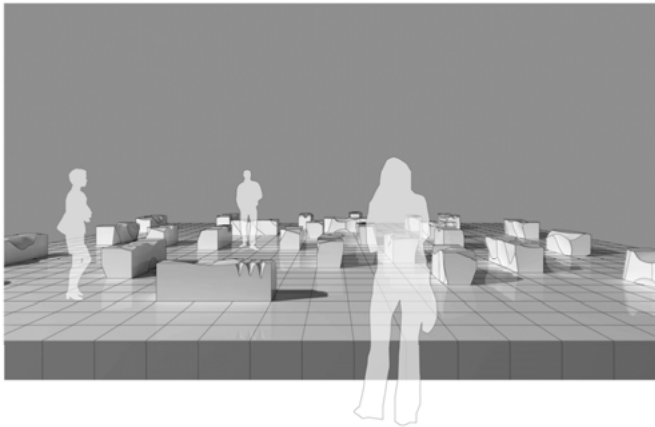
Our project drawings demonstrate the technique of thematic trace that we used to inscribe discrete themes from the dance into unique volumetric structures; drawings which though produced by the measured rigor of contemporary digital modeling techniques point to the ambiguity inherent in all such processes. In our view Forsythe, by multiplying and extending the focal relationship between body and table foils the idea of simple legibility in acts of measuring. By arraying and making mobile a grid of tables and allowing them to be occupied by a fluid set of occupants he shifts the focus from a possible deterministic reading of measure to one of statistical and probabilistic performance.

FURNISHING PERFORMANCE

Playing upon the close association of the words performance and furnishing the project revisits the question of furniture's secondary relationship to the architectural envelope. The complex contrapuntal structure of Forsythe's work and its field-like distributed phenomena were used as templates to reconsider the possibility of a set of abstract 'entangled' elements which were capable of acting both as furniture-like objects and as architectural frames.

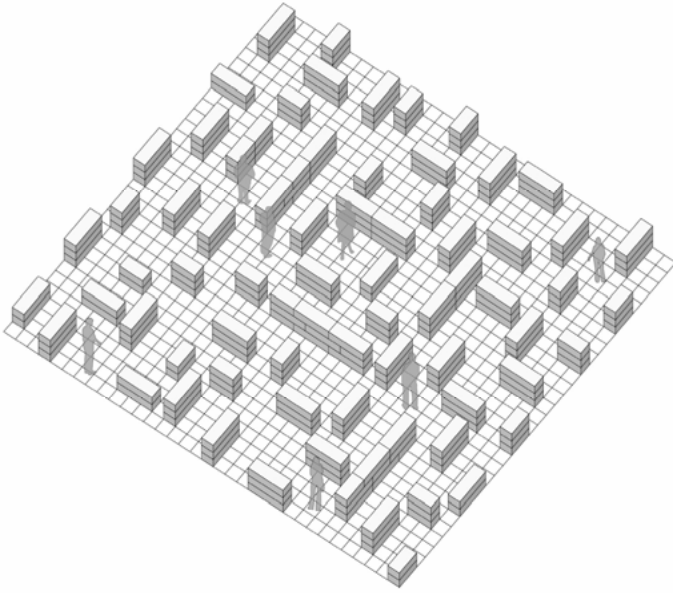
The blocks were produced by computer modeling 18x18x54 and 36 inch cubic 'bench-like' modules. Individual blocks in the system are formed by studying the relationship between different dance themes and finding qualitative aspects of these which are registered in the formal, material and textural qualities of the fabrication cutting process. The blocks thus become resonant 'containers' of thematic variation which can be arrayed and positioned in space interactively over time by the occupants of the installation.

Figure 2: Vray perspective



They were imagined as being the result of the entangled forces of the dancers; the implied volumes both above and below the table surfaces acting as the receptacle of these forces. An entire installation was imagined as a kind of *chora* space in which the thematic combinatorial translations of Forsythe's work could be choreographed by the 'audience' itself. This performative space in our view would provide the same kind of self reflexivity and awareness between viewers and occupants that occur in the original work and play upon notions of dance and architecture's historical roles as symbolic modes of measuring the world. The visitors to this architectural installation could perform the piece themselves by picking up and moving the block furniture elements. The lightness of the material, in this case high density foam, would permit individuals to position or stack blocks into complex ensembles and combinatorial assemblies. The blocks which would exist in a state of constant rearrangement and assembly and would effectively play upon the nature of conventional furniture typology; reconfiguring the ways in which furniture users interact with an architectural envelope to form zones of spatial occupation.

Figure 3: Block diagram 12



One Flat Thing, reproduced can be seen as ultimately ‘environmental’ in the sense that it produces an atmospheric perceptual effect through a give and take of dynamic forces in a spatial field and it is this quality which we were most interested in capturing in our installation proposal. The idea of entanglement which served as our operable metaphor can be seen in connection to a greater problematic of ‘locality’ in contemporary thought which through the interplay of space and temporality reinitiates the archaic link between architecture and dance. So in conclusion our object for the *Synchronous Objects* project was less about the creation of a fixed condition or ideal translated map or thing but rather our goal was to produce an analogous dynamic evolving system responsive to spatial and temporal frames of perception and occupation within an animated local condition.

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Synchronous Objects, Choreographic Objects, and the Translation of Dancing Ideas

NORAH ZUNIGA SHAW

A broad range of new projects are happening today at the intersection of dance research and digital media and concerned with the re-articulation and transmission of bodily knowledge in contemporary dance practices. A few recent examples include The Forsythe Company's *Motion Bank* project focusing on the work of Bruno Beltrão, Jonathan Burrows, and Deborah Hay; Wayne McGregor's work with Scott deLahunta, Philip Barnard and others on choreography and cognition; Emio Greco's interactive installation and DVD *Capturing Intention* created with Bertha Bermudez, Chris Ziegler and other collaborators; Steve Paxton's DVD *Material for the Spine* created by Contredanse; the ambitious online digital archive for Siobhan Davies' work created by Sara Whately and her team in the UK; and my own work in this arena, a web-based collaboration with William Forsythe entitled *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced* that is the subject of this essay.¹ With very different outcomes, each of these projects is concerned with the idiosyncratic nature of choreographic knowledge and with discovering new possibilities for tracing and transmitting ideas contained within the specific dance practices of each artist. These are in depth creative and analytical endeavors undertaken by teams of re-

1 For more information on: *Motion Bank*: <http://motionbank.org/en/>; Wayne McGregor's work: <http://www.eng.cam.ac.uk/teaching/urops/projects-08.html>; Emio Greco's *Capturing Intention*: <http://insidemovementknowledge.net/context/background/capturing-intention>; Steve Paxton's DVD: <http://www.contactquarterly.com/ce/ce06.html#dvd-sp>; Siobhan Davies' archive: <http://www.siobhan-daviesreplay.com>.

searchers that integrate empirical curiosities with post-positivist politics of particularity.

Published online, *Synchronous Objects* is a collaborative choreographic visualization project that flows from dance to data to objects. The dance is William Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (Frankfurt, 2000) a contrapuntal ensemble piece exhibiting an exquisite chaos that is tightly structured by its three interlocking systems of organization. The data are numeric translations of the choreographic structures/systems in the dance. And the objects – animations, graphics, computer applications – are visual expressions of those structures. They are communicative (we wanted to share and transmit information and invite responses), investigatory (we wanted to examine Forsythe's choreographic thinking starting from his questions and interests), exploratory (we wanted to find out how to visualize those interpretations as artists and scientists working in close collaboration with Forsythe and his company), and ultimately creative (we wanted to catalyze the creation of new ideas and new works of art using the ideas in the dance).

In *Synchronous Objects* and the other projects mentioned, research is a creative interdisciplinary pursuit. I am one of the creative directors for *Synchronous Objects* along with William Forsythe and Maria Palazzi. We made the project with many international consultants and collaborators including members of the Forsythe Company and a large interdisciplinary team of students, faculty and staff researchers from the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design (ACCAD) who contributed their collective intelligence to the work. These are not objective studies carried out by seemingly detached scholars but instead are subjectively informed endeavors. And they do not attempt to preserve the live moment nor do they attempt to represent all of dance and choreography. This is not dance documentation for repertory or reconstruction although it certainly could contribute to those types of endeavors. But our work begins from a different point. Instead we ask, what else is there? Or as Forsythe said often during our collaboration "What else might this dance look like?" and "What else, besides the body, might physical thinking look like?". We are working with the difficult but also generative problem of making dance knowledge explicit and sharing it not only on stage and in the studio (as dancers are accustomed) but also through media objects.

These artists (Steve Paxton, Emio Greco, Wayne McGregor, Siobhan Davies, William Forsythe ...) are participating in (and often initiating) collaborative projects with groups of researchers designed in part to define their own legacies but also with the hope of strengthening the field as a whole. The products of each are particular to the artist and to the team of researchers who come together to create

them and are focused on specific aspects of dance knowledge. In our case, *Synchronous Objects* focuses explicitly on choreographic structure in Forsythe's work and on his interest in mobilizing choreographic ideas beyond the body into myriad other interdisciplinary manifestations that he calls 'choreographic objects' (described below). Together these projects and the many others that continue to emerge are the beginnings of what I hope may become a lively discursive space, placing dance at the center of interdisciplinary knowledge exchange about embodiment and physical thinking.

ON CHOREOGRAPHIC OBJECTS

"One could easily assume that the substance of choreographic thought resided exclusively in the body. But is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principles, a choreographic object, without the body?" (Cf. WilliamForsythe.de)

The idea of a choreographic object allows for the transformation of a dance from one manifestation (the performance on stage) into an array of other possibilities (such as information, animation, or installation). Choreographic objects enact a form of translation but not translation only. Like any good literary translation, a choreographic object stays true to the original thinking space of the maker while allowing for new comprehension of the work. And as in all translation, there are gains in communication there are losses as well. One can never fully comprehend German poetry in English and one can never fully comprehend dance without live performance. But we translate the poetry in order to give more people an experience of it; and we translate dances into choreographic objects in order to generate new expressions of the form.

Choreographic objects therefore are never about abandoning live performance. The idea is not to either have live performance *or* have choreographic objects. Just as in the translation of a poem from German to English one does not assume that the German original will be abandoned but that the translation will enable new forms of engagement with the work. The point here is to assert the value of live performance and the kinesthetic communication that is dance by also asserting the possibility of a multiplicity of other manifestations of choreographic thinking. As Forsythe says in his essay on the subject, "a choreographic object is not a substitute for the body, but rather an alternative site for the understanding of potential instigation and organization of action to reside. Ideally, choreographic ideas in this form would draw an attentive, diverse readership that would eventually understand and, hopefully, champion the

innumerable manifestations, old and new, of choreographic thinking.” (Id.) Choreographic objects are, in part, translations of the instigations, instructions, and methods of organization that choreographers use to create action. They create additional modes of communication and exchange.

At the same time, this work goes beyond the purview of translation. Translation implies a close adherence to the original but in the creation of a choreographic object, ideas are allowed to jump and swerve out of familiar territory into new spaces. There is rigorous analysis and in-depth study of a source in order to bring forth its attributes but then the outcome becomes a new work in its own right. For example, *Synchronous Objects* can be understood as a choreographic object or a collection of 20 choreographic objects that function together to communicate the ideas in the dance via animations, interactive tools, and so on. This act of translation took place not only in the creation of data from the dance but also in the close collaboration between the research team and Forsythe to learn from him how the dance works and its conceptual foundations. Moving beyond translation then, the choreographic objects in *Synchronous Objects* integrate the information learned through the labors of translation into new creative outcomes. They are closely linked to the dance, they issue forth from it (as does any translation) but they also step out into parallel virtual incarnations or transformations.

The concept of choreographic objects is active in *Synchronous Objects* but it can also be illustrated through examples from Forsythe’s installation works. For example, in the late 1980s/early 1990s, Forsythe collaborated with architect Daniel Libeskind on a project called *The Books of Groningen N7*.² Libeskind was commissioned to mark the city boundaries of Groningen and he collaborated with Forsythe on one of them, *N7*. Forsythe and Libeskind planted a row of trees and then connected wires from concrete posts to different branches of each tree thereby influencing their growth over time. What else might physical thinking look like? In this case, it looks like the life span of a tree. They are choreographing growth. In another example, *Scattered Crowd* (Frankfurt, 2002), Forsythe suspends 4000 white balloons in large architectural spaces. The visitors to the space choreograph the balloons and the environment they encounter influences their actions. What else might physical thinking look like? In this case, it looks like the interactions between balloons and the movement and choices of the visitors to the space.

2 My knowledge of this project comes from conversations with William Forsythe at the Ohio State University during the creation of *Synchronous Objects*. More info is available here: <http://www.williamforsythe.de/installations.html> (March 30, 2011).

Like his stage works, Forsythe's choreographic objects hold his recognizable physical genius but they manifest it through media, inanimate matter, and the experiences of those encountering the work. The torque of the trees branches in *N7* and the organization of their movement (growth) into subtle forms of alignment can be likened to the extended *épaulement* so characteristic of Forsythe's style and the curious torque of the dancers' limbs. The instigations to action provided by a room full of responsive balloons and the acute, communal attention required of the visitors to *Scattered Crowd* evoke the performance state of dancers in his ensemble works and the complex, seemingly chaotic, but carefully crafted visual counterpoint of pieces such as *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (Frankfurt, 2000) and others. In fact, Dana Caspersen (Forsythe's wife and a long time dancer in the Company) describes *Scattered Crowd* as "an air-borne landscape of relationship, of distance, of humans and emptiness, of coalescence and decision"³, a phrase that could be used to define counterpoint as it is practiced in The Forsythe Company. And in *Synchronous Objects* several of the recurring choreographic principles of the Company are explained in the annotated videos that reveal alignments, cues, and the recombination of movement material as they play out in the piece, in tools that let users experience and create works from the principles themselves, and in our own imaginative re-incorporations of the instigations to action that Forsythe used to make the original stage work.

DANCE, DATA, AND OBJECTS

In *Synchronous Objects* we explore the question 'what else might physical thinking look like?' by delving deeply into the systems that organize one dance. We translate those systems into data and conceptual frameworks and then generate new manifestations of the dance in the form of visual objects/screen-based media. The dance is our choreographic resource, the source from which everything else emanates. The objects are re-articulations of the dance via the data and our own research/artistic interests. They are both creative and analytical. Some help reveal patterns and allow the eye to see or 'read' the dance differently, others use the patterns and ideas in the dance to generate new animated forms, and still others are tools that allow for interaction with the same ideas. The three areas of our process flow in and out of each other, at times line-

3 Press materials for *Scattered Crowd*. Example available here: <http://archive.kfda.be/2005/en/projectdetail.action-projectid=7473&id=331.htm> (March 30, 2011).

ar, at times circular and layered. The data are indications of what we (the research team and Forsythe) chose to prioritize. They are numeric translations of the choreographic structures in the piece. The process of decoding the dance was a creative dialog that dilated between insider accounts and outside observation, analytical needs and aesthetic interests. It was a profoundly collective endeavor conducted over several years in close collaboration with William Forsythe and dancers Jill Johnson, Christopher Roman, and Elizabeth Waterhouse. As we came to fully understand the counterpoint that unfolds in the dance we worked to devise methods for quantifying it in the data and expressing it in the objects. This effort produced two key sets of data: spatial data taken from our source video of the dance and attribute data gleaned from dancer accounts.

Our goal in gathering spatial and attribute data was to discover patterns of organization that we could use to create the objects. We were not concerned with documenting or reconstructing the dance for the stage, nor were we concerned with purely scientific questions. Instead we worked with the Forsythe Company to unearth the choreographic building blocks of the piece, quantify them, and repurpose this information visually and qualitatively. As in many forms of inquiry, quantification requires a reductive process that necessarily obscures certain aspects of knowledge (performance quality, and kinesthetic awareness) in order to reveal others (in this case, choreographic structure). Drawing from the methodologies of many disciplines – dance, design, computer graphics, geography, and statistics – we intentionally privileged the inside view of the dance and used this to drive our process.

In many ways I would liken our data gathering process to the ecological research methods I learned as an undergraduate in environmental science. I remember well the way we were taught to analyze the river and estuarine ecosystems we were studying. The first day was always spent in situ, looking, sensing, and trying to discern patterns. Where did the grass end and the trees begin, what trees where on the edge of the grass and which were deeper in the groves? Why were there patterns of certain grasses in clumps and patches of bare earth? What patterns of life could be discerned through more in depth analysis such as testing the acidity of the water, analyzing samples for microbial life, and identifying specific flora and fauna? When did we need to seek out and reference other expert analyses of this particular ecosystem? We treated the dance in much the same way one might encounter an estuary where the salty water mixes with the fresh and the slightest imbalance or lack of attention can have ripple effects through the entire system. The focus of the researcher brings acute attention to the dance as a phenomenon while simultaneously holding a broad focus to the patterns of connection rippling over its surface. This too can be a form of attenti-

on one brings to the audience experience. If upon entering the theater one encounters a dance as if encountering a new culture or a cherished landscape, what patterns, details and discoveries will surface? And then the next step is to imagine how those discoveries may be shared.

SEEING, TRANSLATING, AND REPURPOSING COUNTERPOINT IN *ONE FLAT THING, REPRODUCED*

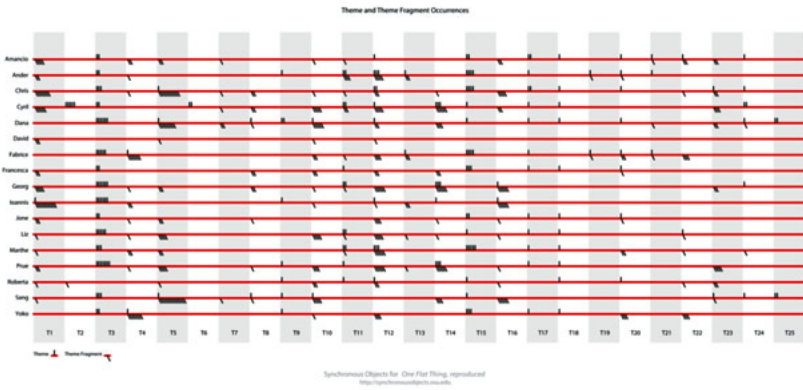
The dance at the core of our research is *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (OFT_r) choreographed by William Forsythe and premiered by the Ballet Frankfurt in 2000. Of the hundreds of possibilities to focus on in this 15 minutes 30 seconds piece for seventeen dancers, our emphasis is on its choreographic structures or systems of organization. This emphasis came from Forsythe's interests and the instigating questions he asked at the inception and throughout the collaborative creation of the project.

Upon first viewing the dance, structure is elusive. Viewers watching a video of the dance often report feeling 'a sense of structure' but struggle to name it. They note that there are occasional moments of unison and/or similarity in the movement material and that there seems to be cause and affect relationships among the dancers. They want to know if the piece is choreographed or improvised and they are intrigued by its complexity. Like many contemporary works, the dance is open to multiple interpretations and ways of seeing. This is true even as *Synchronous Objects* seeks to be explicit about particular aspects of the work and ways of seeing patterns as the choreographer devised them and the dancers enact them. While we invite an infinite proliferation of questions and curiosities in relationship to the work we can also answer the questions that most often arise and share insights that we hope will catalyze new inquiry and creative activity. After many years of research and discussion with Forsythe and the Company, the systems of organization in the dance were distilled into three intersecting categories – movement material, cueing, and alignments – which work together to create the visual counterpoint of the work.

Movement Material Recombination System

While the urgency and immediacy of the dance can make it appear improvised, *OFTr* is a carefully choreographed and tightly crafted work. Members of the company most often refer to the different segments of fixed movement as ‘themes’. The 25 main themes are repeated and recombined over the course of the dance in their full and partial forms. Online in *Synchronous Objects* they can be explored individually in a *Movement Material Index* that gives a short clip of each theme and they are outlined in the graphic below (figure 1). In the graphic, dancers names are listed on the left and the themes are listed across the bottom. When themes are performed in full a hash mark is made above the line, and one is marked below when a theme is performed in fragment. This graphic shows that many different dancers perform several of the themes over the course of the work such as T1, T3, and T12. Some themes like T2 and T6 are only performed by certain dancers and very few times. It also shows the recombination of patterns of the work where T1 is performed only once in full but a total of 44 times in fragment by 14 different dancers and so on. This graphic can be understood as a translation of the work making the thematic structures legible. But it also can be used to devise a new dance, animation, or artwork. What if the full and fragment patterns were used to make an architectural form that related to the theme occurrences but also allowed users to recombine the elements in an extension of the choreographic principle that the graphic elucidates? This is precisely what the architectural collaborators on *Synchronous Objects* explored as part of their engagement with the work but it also could be re-explored and re-imagined by visitors to the site who take up this information into their own disciplinary contexts.

Figure 1: Theme and theme fragment occurrences by dancer.

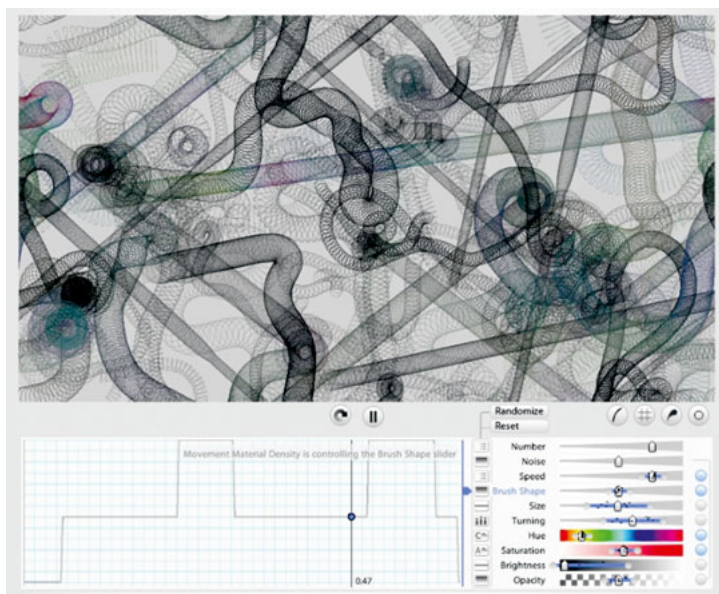


Graphics: Synchronousobjects.osu.edu

In addition to the themes and their interpretation, there are improvisation tasks in *OFTr* that ask dancers to translate specific properties of other performers' motions into their own. The dancers observe each other and make these translations in real time, producing different results in each performance of the work. Improvisations are tightly structured and are most often movements to get from one table to another, tasks in which the dancers wait for a cue and gaze intently at different performers, or alignment improvisations, which are explained later. The *Synchronous Objects* site shows these improvisations in the *Movement Material Index* and in the *Explanatory Video* for the *Index*. The themes and structured improvisations are the building blocks of the work and once the viewer becomes familiar with them, become a visible pattern throughout the work. I personally know them so well now that seeing each theme come and go is like seeing friends surfacing and receding as the dance progresses.

The data for the themes and improvisations is visualized in the manner explained above (diagrams, annotated video and so on) but it is also re-purposed in other ways as in the *Generative Drawing Tool* (figure 2). In this tool, the actions of moving brushes on the screen are organized by the choreographic data (such as the occurrence of themes and their fragments) from the dance.

Figure 2: Generative Drawing Tool within Synchronous Objects. This tool takes data from the dance and allows users to map that data to the actions and attributes of various brushes that move on the screen and create a drawing.



Where the *Movement Material Index* helps reveal structure in the piece, the *Generative Drawing Tool* begins to answer the question: ‘what else this dance might look like’. The algorithms for the moving brushes allow them to be directed by the data but also to move based on a broader set of action choices. In this way, like the dancers, they could perhaps be seen to be doing both choreographed movement and structured improvisation. And both objects might inspire new scholarly and creative activity and invite audiences into a closer more attentive readership of choreographic form. For example, rather than looking only for unison as an indicator of structure, viewers might begin to watch this dance and others for the fleeting instances of similarity and the patterns of repetition that build over longer periods of time.

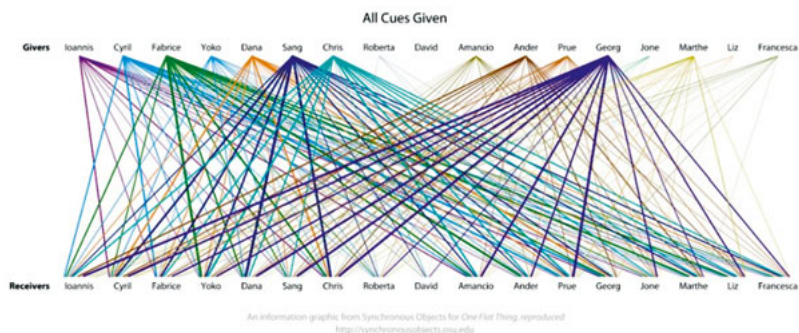
Cueing System

The timing of the dance is influenced by the choices made in the short instances of improvisation and in how the dancers perform the set movement material. But the true internal clock of the dance is the elaborate cueing system that Forsythe

and the dancers created over many years. The musical score by Thom Willems does not direct the timing of the dancers' motions. Instead they wait for and give cues in a constantly shifting network of attention. While cues are common in live performance, the volume in this piece, more than 200 total cues in just over 15 minutes, is unusual. The cueing system also gives the feeling of cause and effect that audiences often note. In *Synchronous Objects* the cues became a vital form of information from the dance about time and the networks of attention and responsibility between the dancers.

The *Cue Annotations Object* shows the cues as they play out with the video of the dance. These animated drawings are didactic in that they 'teach' cueing in the dance. But they also demonstrate the mixture of quantitative and qualitative, analytical and creative work that is central to the project. To make the marks, attribute data from the personal accounts of each of the dancers was cross-referenced and cleaned until a precise network of cues given and received could be constructed. The accuracy of the dancers' accounts was remarkable with only a handful of discrepancies between the accounts that can be attributed to the many changes in the dance over the ten years of its development. As that data set was compiled the iterative animation design process evolved until the lines had the right organic feeling, combined with visual clarity that we wanted (the *Synchronous Objects* Process Catalog for this object shows samples from this development). The animated lines have a kinesthetics of their own that translates a hidden structure in the work that could be sensed but not seen before this process was undertaken. The lines seek to communicate the way in which information is flung out into space with precise but qualitatively inflected actions and received because of the acute physical attention of the recipient who then transforms the cue into new action. Forsythe describes these annotations (and the alignment annotations) as a picture of the dancers minds – what they are intending and the quality of their attention. For example, in figure 3 it is noticeable that the cue network is spread across the entire company with many dancers giving cues to many different people. It is immediately clear that Georg and Sang give more cues than the others and to more people. In this way, the graphic is also a map of responsibility in the dance. Unlike a translation, these forms of information revealed by graphics and data were not available in the original source.

Figure 3: All Cues Given graphic from *Synchronous Objects*. Shows all of the cues given by each dancer and to whom.

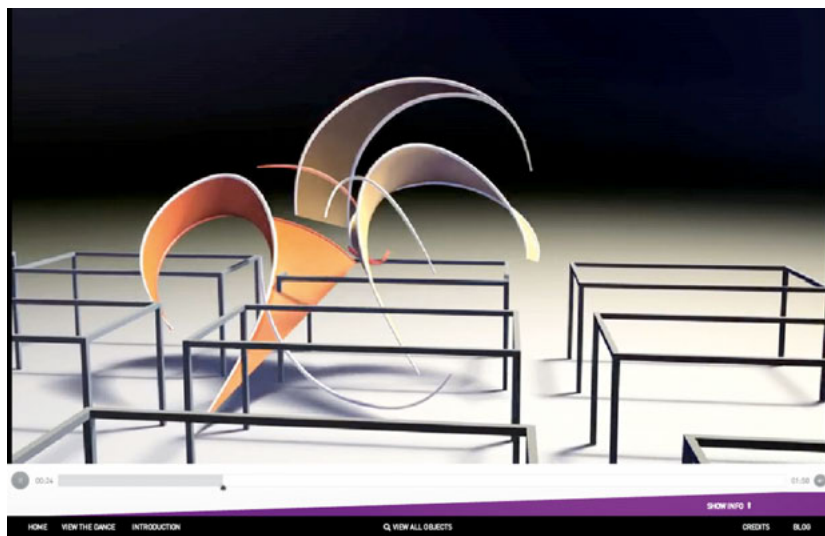


Alignment System

The last system, and the most important for unlocking structure in the dance, is the system of alignments. Alignments are moments of synchronization between the dancers when their actions share some but not all attributes. On a spectrum from unison to difference, alignments are closer to difference. Within the field of complex action that is *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, alignments are those flickering moments of shared directional flows, similar timing, and analogous shapes that the eye catches but can't hold. Alignments are patterns; they are forms of relationship that can be understood as a kind of visual agreement. They occur in every moment of the dance and are constantly shifting throughout the group. The term alignment emerges from the working practices of the Forsythe Company but it is not the only word they use, other terms include hook-ups, agreements, and isometries.

Like the cues, alignments are visualized in *Synchronous Objects* with different degrees of abstraction from the original dance. They can be seen in direct relation to the dance as a form of structural translation (or revelation of hidden information), a step away from dance when the video is subtracted from the annotations, and as an independent set of ideas as in the *3D Alignment Forms Object* (figure 4).

Figure 4: 3D Alignment Forms Object within Synchronous Objects. This object takes a sampling of two dancers' alignments into three-dimensional space and lofts volumes between them creating new spatial configurations.



Counterpoint

All three of these systems together – movement material, cueing, alignments – combine to create the tapestry of visual counterpoint that is *One Flat Thing, reproduced*. We define counterpoint in this dance as ‘a field of action in which the irregular and intermittent coincidence of attributes produces an ordered interplay’. This definition assumes as a starting point ‘a field of action’ with a high degree of difference within which ‘irregular and intermittent’ patterns can be recognized. Imagine the play of light on the water, the intersection of branches in a tree canopy, or the motions of pedestrians on New York City streets. Each of these phenomena presents the eye with complexity but also presents irregular patterns of interaction that can be discerned and highlighted. Those patterns are the ordered interplay. This is not unlike counterpoint in music although it is much more difficult to quantify and that is a subject for another essay.

Another way to understand counterpoint is to imagine it on a spectrum with *One Flat Thing, reproduced* on the left and a marching band on the right. In a marching band structure is obvious, it is clear how they are related, they are all literally marching to the same tune. The primary visual effect is unity. But

underneath the surface is a deep structure of difference, diversity and even disagreement. The marchers have different politics, different training, they come from different home lives, and they may or may not get along when they are off the field. Counterpoint is the exact inverse. In counterpoint, difference and dissonance is the primary visual effect. It is at the layer of the deep structure that the relationships, alignments, and forms of agreement are at work. For contemporary society in which there is very little unity and marching to the same tune too often connotes times of violence and repression, counterpoint may be a very necessary metaphor for living.

What if we were to encounter those instances of disagreement or difference in our work lives, in our schools and on our streets with contrapuntal attention? Rather than forcing things into the marching band what if we brought heightened sensitivity to our connections as the cueing system in the dance demonstrates so clearly? What as yet unseen structures of agreement, fleeting instances of relationship and alignment of ideas might be percolating under the surfaces of our lives? Since the publication of *Synchronous Objects* in 2009, the story of counterpoint, has surfaced as one of the most important aspects of the work. We speak about it, we demonstrate it in the dance and our visualization objects, we teach it in workshops using dance improvisation and the interactive tools on the site, and we continue to explore it in our interdisciplinary working methods, in other dances, and in other aspects of our lives. In closing, I suggest that our objects are perhaps most of all manifestations of the exuberant exchange of ideas we experienced in their creation. Our creative process moved in a constant dilation between independent and collective intelligence, between the known and the unknown, chaos and order, focus and an always shifting network attention. In short, our process was in itself a form of counterpoint.

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WORKING PRINCIPLES

Communicating, Distilling, Catalyzing. On the Creation of Dance Congress Worlds

SABINE GEHM, KATHARINA VON WILCKE

“Taken together, dance supplies a record of where we have been and where we’d like to go, of how we move together and apart, of how we create the environments we inhabit and what we aspire to make of them” (Martin 2009), writes sociologist Randy Martin and makes a plea for concentrating on innovative powers, “those who assemble to create something hitherto unseen and disclose a different basis of incorporation” (id.).

In Martin’s utopian thinking, dance reflects our individual and social movements and perspectives. In its concentrated artistic form, it sheds light on the paths taken in the past, present and future. But dance is more than that – sociologists like Martin believe that movement contains social and political potential, even a formative strength that has the capacity to have social effect. He is thus not far from the question of whether ‘worldmaking’ is possible through art, through dance. Can dance create ‘world’? Or rather ‘worlds’?

The subject of ‘worldmaking’¹ with its possibilities and limitations proved to be essential in thinking about the Dance Congress 2009. It was inspired by a sa-

1 The concept of ‘worldmaking’ refers to Nelson Goodman’s “ways of creating worlds”. Goodman’s philosophy of art and knowledge is based on the idea that the world is not factual, but rather that knowledge of the world is always already ‘made’: “Furthermore, if worlds are as much made as found, so also knowing is as much remaking as reporting. All the processes of worldmaking I have discussed enter into knowing. Perceiving motion, we have seen, often consists in producing it. Discovering laws involves drafting them. Recognizing patterns is very much a matter of inventing and imposing them. Comprehension and creation go on together.” (Goodman 1978:

lon on choreographic modes of work at the Dance Congress 2006 in Berlin hosted by performance theorist André Lepecki and dramaturge Myriam Van Imshoort. At that time, a suggestion by choreographer Thomas Lehmen that art (and other human activity) should be regarded as “making a piece of world” led to a controversy that inspired dramaturge Jeroen Peeters to ask himself in retrospect:

“Are you then adding, transforming, or creating a parallel universe? Who has access to the creation of reality, of the imagination and the representations that shape it? What is the artist’s role? What is the ideology behind it? Are we actually the producers of our own life and its conditions?” (Peeters 2007: 117)

The above mentioned relationship of dance and world, creation and worldmaking led in the preparations to the Dance Congress 2009 to questions concerning possible forms of globalized work environments and lifeworlds, the artistic and theoretical approaches to these worlds, the position of choreographers and their methods for creating and depicting worlds. From this perspective, dance becomes a kind of laboratory in which social and political developments can be tracked down and processed, and forms of communication and community reflected on and tested. Dance can absorb, distill, catalyze, analyze, create and, of course, criticize ‘worlds’, but it is equally dependent on the conditions of the world from which it emerges.²

At the same time, the concept of ‘worldmaking’ brought up questions of how a congress should be organized. How should a congress be constructed in order to facilitate understanding for and reflection of the different working worlds and perspectives of representatives from the fields of choreography, science, pedagogy, journalism and politics? How should it be conceived in terms of content, time and space so that protagonists from various fields of dance can play a part

22) This means that both the recognition of worlds, as well as their making is only possible through culturally influenced forms of access and that the processes that are necessary for descriptive worldmaking are always creative ones.

2) These thoughts take their inspiration from the ‘world’ concept of post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, according to whom modern, intercultural societies in a globalized world are ‘hybrid’ and thus subject to constant change. “To me, hybridization doesn’t simply mean mixing, but rather the strategic and selective appropriation of meaning, creating space for persons whose freedom and equality are in danger.” (Bhabha 2007: n.p.)

with very different motivations and in various forms and so that all participants can move about as freely as possible?

If we define a congress – in keeping with the idea of ‘worldmaking’ – as a “temporary collective living being that is not yet a state body, but after all already a congress body” (Ploebst 2009/1), or even as a “location where knowledge is not just transmitted, but also transpires” (Roms 2006), then further thoughts bring us to the following concrete realizations: there are no events without the movements of their participants, no worldmaking without (shared) steps. A congress is, truly, above all a temporary microcosm and in itself choreography.

And so, as we directed our attention from the greater/whole to the individual/detail, an easily understandable yet polysemantic congress motto emerged on the basis of the ‘worldmaking’ idea: “No Step without Movement!” A title, which both contains an implied invitation for all participants to actively help shape their own dance world(s) and which also, as author Helmut Ploebst pointed out, “almost inadvertently [...] sheds light [...] on the fact that no dance step can take place without inherent intellectual, cultural and political movement” (Ploebst 2009/1).

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AS A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

The ‘social choreography’ of a dance congress with its thematic focuses and bifurcations, “combining threads, tight bundles and diffuse clouds” (id.) is, on the one hand, directly dependent upon the paths and meetings, communications and decisions taken and made beforehand. On the other hand, as a first part of the curatorial process, these preparations are also very much the product of the actual social, as well as political conditions prevalent in culture and education of the particular, specific era that it is taking place in.

While the Dance Congress 2006 sought to establish dance as a culture of knowledge with the programmatic statement of “Knowledge in Movement”, as well as raise awareness for a dance scene, which was at the time just beginning to assert itself, the Congress in 2009 was more concerned with the social, political and aesthetic position of dance in theory and practice. The winding path in the search for topics had as its starting point the very different situations that existed in the dance scene in 2006 and 2009: the establishment of strong national and international networks and organizations, which brought together various protagonists in the dance field, had just begun in 2006. Important initiatives such as *Tanzplan Deutschland* or the *Ständige Konferenz Tanz*, who in retrospect

have both provided the dance scene with sustainable impulses, already existed – but they did not yet have the years of experience, which three years later contributed to the discussions. The period around 2006 was characterized most of all by the new perspectives afforded by the 12.5 million Euro budget of Tanzplan Deutschland, which sparked hopes, visions and prospects in the dance scene.

Compared to the second Dance Congress, the 2006 event, which was initiated by the German Federal Cultural Foundation and inspired by the dance congresses of the 1920s³, was more a first inventory of current trends and debates in classical and contemporary dance, dance pedagogy and academia. In numerous individual discussions with dance protagonists, we filtered out positions and ascertained topics that took their bearings, among other things, from the latest fields of research in dance studies. These were then specified in discussions with a work group in order to finally invite appropriate lecturers.

In contrast, the program of the Dance Congress 2009⁴ was created with a different, more complex approach, which went through numerous phases. Basically our goal was to develop the most urgent topics of the heterogeneous dance scene as close to the actual reality of them as possible and to open up more appropriate spaces of reflection and action in order to facilitate this dance congress as a “highly dynamic, virtual system” (Ploebst 2009/1).

This other approach was the result of our experiences from the first congress, which Jeroen Peeters describes as follows using the example of one of the salons:

3 Patricia Stöckemann on the dance congresses of the 1920s: “In a sustained way, they raised public awareness in Germany for dance [...]. They created the first forums for discussion about dance, demonstrated where dance and dancers stood aesthetically, theoretically and socially; they discussed grievances, developed visions and concrete steps towards qualified training for modern dancers, the establishment of a first dance university and dance as an academic discipline, the promotion of amateur dance or improving the social equality of dancers in society. [...] The dance congresses [...] were meeting places, spaces for debate and exchange between dance protagonists from all fields: dancers, choreographers, dance teachers, as well as those who accompany dance by writing, reflecting and criticizing.” (Stöckemann 2006: 10) Despite the different founding histories, the two dance congresses in 2006 and 2009 reflect the enormous charisma of the original congresses.

4 The Dance Congress in 2009 was once again mainly financed by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, as well as supported by the Department for Culture, Sports and Media of the City of Hamburg and the German Research Foundation.

“Throughout the salon, people’s eagerness to speak up, make themselves heard and participate in the conversation was striking. It was perhaps symptomatic of the institutionalized German dance field, in which many artists are invisible, and of a congress that left little space for audience participation and artists’ voices.” (Peeters 2007: 114)

As it had been the case in 2006, we also consciously avoided the usual procedures followed for academic congresses in our development of the program for the Dance Congress 2009. Instead of posting a ‘call for papers’, topics were compiled in four Open Think Tanks offered in the context of various festivals in Hamburg, Berlin, Munich and Düsseldorf. According to the ‘Open Space’ method developed by Harrison Owen in 1985 in the USA for big conferences, all participants – in total more than one hundred dancers, choreographers, dance teachers, scholars, curators and producers – were asked to contribute their ideas, questions, positions, methods and visions of current art production and work contexts. These were then discussed in spontaneously formed work groups.⁵

The entire agenda of the Think Tanks grew out of the intentions, suggestions and self-organization of the participants, who met for the first time in this constellation. In these laboratories, the dance scene took on an initial, highly active part in designing the program for the Dance Congress 2009.

In the subsequent evaluation of the Think Tanks, thematic catchwords were formed out of the documentation of the work groups. These were then clustered into larger topics and finally structured into so-called mind maps. In addition to this participatory model of finding topics, we were also in active contact with representatives of the most recent German networks, initiatives and projects (Association of German Dance Archives, Federal Association of Dance in Schools, Dance Education Conference, and others) as well as the Center for Performance Studies at the University Hamburg to set the agenda. These diverse proposals and discussions concerning what contents could be essential were the basis for the development of ideas for formats and possible lecturers; out of which, in turn, topics were specified, substantiated or even rejected. The following four thematic complexes emerged from these processes: Dance and Politics, Creation and Reflection, Dance (Hi)Stories and Life Stories. Various performances that experimented with new forms and served as inspiration for unusual congress formats also played a large role. One such example was *Générique* by the Eve-

5 The topics were, among others: writing dance history, the social situation of dancers, dance in schools, education, dance politics, trans-disciplinarity, dance and communication, curating dance, community dance, financial and work structures, dancers as experts, dance and music, the relationship between practice and theory.

rybodys artist collective – a public discussion about a piece that does not exist, in which the collective act of imagination itself becomes the performance. Or the radio performance by the artist group LIGNA, in which the audience explores the space by following instructions given to them via headsets, thereby testing four approaches to utopian movement. In addition, there were a number of work groups who met beforehand by invitation only and whose results were presented as part of the congress, as well as cooperation partners, who had a decisive effect on the development of the program.⁶

For some topics and items on the agenda, we passed on the responsibility to choreographers, theorists, pedagogues, etc. After consulting with us, they chose the speakers and translated the topics into appropriate formats of presentation. This selective delegation of responsibility brought with it new challenges: the struggle to find the ‘right’ contents – i.e. those oriented towards current debates – and thematic accents, as well as formats that were realistic in terms of time and place, required balancing the odds, a willingness to compromise, as well as the ability to find solutions for all in common dialogue. These were all essential curatorial strategies in this phase.

The four thematic complexes⁷, which structured the program at the end of this decision-making process, emerged less as a result of a straightforward objective or the realization of a given concept; it was more the result of participatory and communicative processes with numerous participants. This amounted to arriving at the structure of a congress along winding paths: topics, formats and choice of personnel meander, shift and change; the development process is like a constant see-saw, demanding an incessant willingness to communicate and openness, as well as a precise balance of priorities – especially when one is dealing with such a large array of topics.

6 These cooperation partners were curators, artists and academics: Amelie Deuflhard, Anne Kersting, Jochen Roller (Kampnagel Hamburg), Kerstin Evert, Matthias Quabbe (K3-Center for Choreography/Tanzplan Hamburg), Gabriele Klein, Sandra Noeth (University Hamburg, Performance Studies). Other important partners were the German Federal Cultural Foundation, as well as the Tanzplan Deutschland with its experiences gained from its own initiatives: Dance Education Conference, Tanzplan Local, Association of German Dance Archives. Susanne Foellmer also contributed significantly to the development of the program as research associate to the Dance Congress.

7 Dance and Politics, Creation und Reflection, Dance (Hi)Stories, Life Stories, see website <http://www.tanzkongress.de>.

Given this development, a particular goal of the Dance Congress 2009 was to apply participatory formats. In addition to conventional ways of doing things such as like lectures and podiums, the dominant formats were ones in which the congress participants could actively take part in the discussion and thought processes, or where methods and techniques could be experienced hands-on. We experimented with laboratories, salons, lecture performances, toolboxes and public master classes. Different lecture formats gave impulses from an artistic or theoretical perspective. In the lecture demonstration *Choreographic Thinking Tools*, for example, cognitive scientists, an artist and a dance researcher examined physical and mental processes of creating images. The public could listen in on professional debates such as in *Curating/Producing between Theory and Practice*, where in a 'Q & A' format questions concerning curatorial strategies were discussed together with both curators and artists. Laboratories requested that participants contribute their respective expertise to collaboratively work on results. And after a practical demonstration by school children in the lab *Dance in Schools – Eyes on Quality*, quality criteria for teaching dance in schools was presented and discussed. In master classes, toolboxes and seminars, methods and techniques were tested. The program explicitly aimed at providing events in which theorists and practitioners could enter into dialogue or try out new training methods, choreographic techniques and pedagogical approaches.

It is precisely this difference in formats and the systematic association of theory and practice that distinguishes a dance congress from other, purely academic congresses. A dance congress therefore also requires an accompanying and up-to-date dance program that inspires and expands the contents of debate and is developed in direct relation to the topics of the congress. An event of this size and complexity demands a location that allows for the implementation of a wide array of events and for intense interaction between different formats. As a space in which artistic reflection and production are standard practice, Kampnagel, with its multitude of rehearsal and performance spaces, proved to be an ideal location for spontaneous discussions, in-depth expert debate and interdisciplinary meetings.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK TOMORROW?

In contrast to a dance festival, which asserts a clear curatorial position by presenting 'finished' productions for the audience, critics and programmers to deal with, the preparation of a dance congress is more a question of providing space for topics, propositions, issues and discourse about the art form as such; to facili-

tate collective thinking about artistic practice, techniques, structures, work processes and forms of production for contemporary and classical dance, as well as its aesthetic perspectives and potential in cultural politics.

Both the interaction of theory and practice, as well as cross-genre work, can trigger ideas and new substantial co-operations, which will ideally maintain a sustainable effect even after the end of the congress.

“Each congress, even the most boring one, creates a highly dynamic virtual system whose overall performance is composed of the individuated experiences of participants and visitors; but not only in the moment of giving or receiving information, but instead first and foremost thanks to the system’s influence on the behavior of all participants after the congress and on how their communication ‘afterwards’ is influenced by the congress’s contents.” (Ploebst 2009/1)

Dance congress worlds create temporary communities: meetings of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, who – as in any form of artistic production – are brought together by the shared act of searching for new forms and working methods. Ideally, this ‘worldmaking’ of a dance congress prompts short or long term processes of realization and understanding, which then actively shape dance and its conditions (cf. Goodman 1978).

Evaluating a dance congress also means thinking about omissions and gaps in these temporary worlds. A central thematic focus for the next congress could thus be “an extended, transmedial definition of art, which permits the use of strategies from choreography and dance together with all other all existing and still to-be-developed artistic means [...]” (Ploebst 2009/2). One consideration is to give grants to research projects, as in-depth research and experimentation with form often suffers in artistic processes under the tight time schedule of having to produce. Such research projects could, on the one hand, permit more intensive trans-disciplinary collaboration with other artistic genres and, on the other hand, support advanced theoretical study in cooperation with experts. In addition to an increased interdisciplinary focus that concentrates on neighboring genres as ‘accomplices’ of dance, cooperation and networking between the various kinds of stage dance and its representatives, as well as the activation of municipal and state theaters and their dance ensembles could be pursued further.

From the current perspective, we also see more emphasis placed on the subject of dance and politics, as well as dance and the economy. How will the context of aesthetic and political, resp. economic issues change in the future? Will the ‘crisis’, which is not just economic, but also social, influence dance as an art form or the form and content of the next dance congress? And if so, how?

Enough questions and opportunities to therefore mobilize the “innovative powers” as Randy Martin calls them and to concentrate on the role of the curator as described by Hans Ulrich Obrist:

“The curator is an administrator, sensitive lover, author of prefaces, librarian, manager, accountant, animator, conservator, financier, diplomat, watchdog, exhibition guide, press attaché, transporter. [...] He is a catalyst and *passerelle* between art and the world; he opens up complementary paths and develops new possibilities and contexts that would otherwise remain inaccessible.” (Obrist 1996: 10-11)

Written in cooperation with the journalist Elisabeth Nehring.

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Situational Worlds.

Complicity as a Model of Collaboration

GESA ZIEMER

Dance and other stage productions such as music, scenographic arrangements or performances are ephemeral media, whose products cannot be reproduced. Even when a piece is shown over and over again, it is never the same, for it changes from performance to performance, from context to context, from space to space, from audience to audience. Performers act in the now and according to the situation among themselves and with the audience. They work on the level of perception by creating moods and intensities, which cannot be fully explained by the utterly transparent and reproducible blueprints of choreography. These aspects make theatrical work so interesting and at the same time fragile. Dance calls attention to situational potentials, which may be specific, but are also world-generating in other areas of society that are today increasingly characterized by instability rather than stability (cf. Latour 2007: 18ff).¹

I am thus less interested in the dangers, than in the potentials of instable and temporary environments concerning collective working processes. Dancers possess situational competencies, which enable them to represent something for a moment and create a world. Besides the application of technique, their forms of

1 Bruno Latour describes this development as “reassembling the social”. His associative sociology diagnoses not only the deterioration of social ties, but also focuses on new – namely associative – connections that do not function according to a stable principle. These are reassemblies, characterized by new links and in which unexpected elements are connected with each other. These links are by no means weak, but cannot be described with traditional categories. They are often transient and lose their strength immediately after articulation.

expression are created by intensely confiding in each other physically and emotionally, although their time together is usually limited. In their specific form of collaboration, they combine such contradictory qualities of contact as intensity and transience, commitment and temporality, the public sphere and intimacy, trust and mistrust, effectivity and fragility. How can such situational forms of collectivity be described? Are such collective dynamics already being similarly practiced in other professional fields due to social transformations or are they unique to dance?

In the following paper, I would like to discuss the concept of complicity as a model of collective work. Complicity is a specific form of collaboration, which emerges in temporary and creative working environments. Complicity cultivates the accessing of twilight zones and permits informal working processes and intimacy. It is precisely the secrecy within the group, which holds its members together and strengthens the collective. In order to deepen our understanding of this term, I will explain how it differs from other social and organizational theoretical terms for group work such as teamwork, the formation of alliances and networking. Friendship also follows a different kind of logic of relationships than complicity. These theoretical thoughts will be combined with statements by the dancer Anna Huber, who I interviewed for our research film (cf. Weber/Ziemer 2007) on her complicity with percussionist Fritz Hauser during the creation of her piece *handundfuss* in 2006. A further research project² of mine, in which dancers, musicians, entrepreneurs and academics all equally participated, forms the basis of this analysis.

THE TERM COMPLICITY

What is complicity? In German, complicity is almost exclusively used in a negative way, in order to name collective crimes that are obscure and are committed without a clear perpetrator. The theory of felony as expounded in criminal law offers a concise definition to whose Swiss version I herewith refer. Complicity means accompliceship: “Accompliceship can be distinguished as the collaborative committing of a felony in conscious and purposeful cooperation.” (Reh-

2 The research project took place from 2006 to 2010 at the Institute for Theory at the Zurich University for the Arts and was financed by the Commission for Technology and innovation Berlin. Project Head: Gesa Ziemer, Research associates: Andrea Notroff, Nina Aemisegger, Film: Barbara Weber, <http://www.ith-z.ch/forschung/komplizenschaft/> (January 29, 2011).

berg/Donatsch 2001: 138). The quotation indicates that it is not the responsibility and guilt of a person on which the focus here lies, but the 'co' of accomplice. How is this 'co' practiced? How is it structured? Why is this 'co', which generally is forced to function under adverse circumstances, so effective? These are questions that interest judges, when imposing a sentence. The power of complicity lies in the fact that a group can develop unforeseeable powers in ways that a single person isn't capable of. The specificity of complicity is that the individual can be sentenced on the basis of his or her involvement in the group and not on the grounds of their individual actions.

Complicity is divided into three phases: accomplices mutually make a decision, plan a course of action together and implement it as a joint effort. Classical accomplices pass through these three phases together. The interesting thing about this three-step system is that it includes the entire development from concept to practical implementation. While the decision-making process is still strongly situated in the visionary realm, possible real circumstances are taken into consideration in the planning phase. The implementation then translates the plan into concrete action and is entirely practical. Accomplices thus not only contribute their thoughts, they are also co-perpetrators and in their actions combine theory and practice par excellence. These three steps, which are a succession of idea – feasibility – implementation, therefore brings up questions of whether a transfer of the term to other, legal forms of group work – such as in the framework of art – is possible. The question of 'perpetration' gives rise to possibilities for translation. These exist when, "the party to an offence has reasons to decide on the actual committal of the crime together with others" (id.). The decision-making must refer to the joint realization of the plan. What is clear is that all parties can have a determining influence on the course of the action and thus also bear joint responsibility. A person, who is part of a complicit group, trusts the others, because he knows that the actions of the others will weigh just as heavily as his own. The steering of the collective is thus influenced by the collective itself and not only by an individual. The other person is just as responsible for me as I am responsible for myself. I am just as responsible for the other as for myself.

It is also of some significance for complicity, how accomplices behave towards those, who are not part of the group. Complicity produces exclusion. These are not open integrative groups, who invite as many as possible to take part. Complicity instead aims towards including individuals, who can bring very individual specific abilities into the group. Complicity requires the courage to make one's own strengths relevant for the goal of the group. The forms of expression that complicity can take are therefore also always connected to whether

they are behaving towards an evidently or indirectly repressive person or towards a benevolent one.

DEMARCATIONS: TEAMWORK

In order to more clearly define the term, it is helpful to isolate it from other forms of relationships, such as teamwork, the forming of alliances, networking, and friendship. A team is a group of people set on solving a given task. Teams that function well usually consist of people with different abilities, who pursue a certain goal in an efficient manner and reach this goal bar of any incidents and in accordance with a transparent group structure. Teams often adhere to existing structures and do not invent new ones. In management literature, teams are described as result-orientated actors: “They come together to solve problems, exchange information, make decisions, plan strategies and procedures.” (Hölscher/Reiber/Pape/Loehnert-Baldermann 2006: 3) Teams act in a planned and structured manner and are composed for longer periods of time. Our society depends on experienced, functioning teams routinely working in given structures in many ways and many places. When we see a fire brigade or a medical team at work, we immediately understand that these teams have to be alert and flexible, but should not constantly question the structures in which they work (cf. Weick/Sutcliffe 2003)³.

In contrast to teams, who have to avert the unexpected under extreme circumstances, accomplices literally provoke the unexpected to happen. In certain areas of the arts, where unusual aesthetics are a mark of quality, the unexpected is almost expected. In such experimental fields, artistic accomplices do not act purposefully, as they often do not yet know their exact aim. They come together and in this moment of encounter create a direction, a format, a product. Let us apply these thoughts to the production *handundfuss* from 2006, for which Anna Huber and Fritz Hauser collaborated for the first and only time. For both it was also the first experience with interaction between the media of the body and per-

3 In such cases, instabilities in the structure would impede a trouble-free and smooth handling of emergencies and may, if worst comes to worst, lead to catastrophes. The organization theorists Karl E. Weick and Kathleen M. Sutcliffe support this observation, having examined so-called High Reliability Organizations, such as teams working in hospitals or nuclear power plants. These are relied upon to avert all unexpected occurrences as early as possible. See: Karl E. Weick/Kathleen M. Sutcliffe: *Das Unerwartbare Managen. Wie Unternehmen aus Extremsituationen lernen* (2003).

cussion. Rehearsals began with movement, percussion, reflection, and improvisation in an empty space. Both are seasoned and experienced artists in their own fields, but working together was new for them. There were no pre-determined structures for their interaction; these were invented in the act of creation. As accomplices, they together developed a form of body percussion, in which the music does not illustrate the dancing and vice versa. The conspiratorial moment, which admitted no outside audience, was crucial in the early rehearsal phase. Making mistakes, overstepping boundaries, senseless and sensible attempts at expression only really become productive under non-public conditions. Especially during the first few rehearsals this intimacy is absolutely necessary.

FORMING ALLIANCES

The term alliance helps to define another useful difference. The term is generally used to describe a strategic form of cooperation between large groups, such as enterprises or nation states, but not between individuals (cf. Todeva/Knoke 2002). Groups form alliances when their power is threatened and it is necessary to have allies in order to secure territory or power. In economics and in politics, alliances are regarded as long-term strategic collaborations aimed at establishing synergies. Usually they serve to increase one's own wealth of knowledge and experience in order to maintain one's market position more effectively and with better target strategies. An alliance comprises coordinated action by a specific group in order to assert their position against competition. The members of an alliance do not necessarily share a common goal. Instead it is more about reaching one's own goal, which under the given circumstances is only possible by entering into an alliance.

Alliances differ from complicity mainly in their strategic procedure. Michel de Certeau's differentiation between tactics and strategy is helpful in this regard, as he defines complicity more as tactics. What distinguishes the tactician from the strategist? The strategist lives in a place "that can be described as his 'own' and that can serve as a basis for the organization of his relationships with a specific outside world (competitors, opponents, a clientele, an 'aim' or 'object' of research)" (de Certeau 1988: 23). Strategists act with purpose from the basis of a specific territory – this may be a company, a nation state, a professionally or socially defined position – and carry out calculated transactions. They intentionally manipulate the balance of power. A subject equipped with willpower and power can gain profit from his advantages, prepare to expand, and remain as indepen-

dent as possible from external factors. Outside forces can be observed from a safe place, measured up as objects, controlled and incorporated.

In contrast to the strategist, the tactician only has the place of the other. *Taktiké* literally means the ‘art of arrangement and positioning (on a battle field)’, which means that the tactician acts in conjunction with others. This etymological difference shows that strategy has a hierarchical, tactics a situational leadership model. A tactician takes the available powers, qualities, and effects, and organizes them quickly and according to the given situation. Accomplices in this case have a relationship to the other, “without being able to fully comprehend and or keep him at a distance” (id.). They constantly juggle with various components that open up opportunities for action. They do not possess an autonomous place that allows them to separate themselves from the others. Tactics run wild and create surprises. They are most likely to occur, where they are not expected.

Complicity, as opposed to alliance, is more a tactical way of acting. It allows partners to utilize opportunities that arise, to combine unlikely elements, and thus create fissures and holes in the fabric of established systems. Tactics, due to their context-orientated ability to react, are highly dynamic and useful for creating new situations. Anna Huber says: “Fritz Hauser came to one of my premieres because somebody said he makes music the way I dance. That’s how our collaboration began.” (Weber/Ziemer 2007: n.p.) The quote shows that this was not a case of dancer looking for a musician, but of finding one. The interaction is not strategic, mainly because it does not primarily serve to maintain an individual identity as dancer or musician. Instead, this encounter of skills leads to the creation of something else: the result of unpredictable dynamics provoked. This takes place on stage in the very moment, when performers are not exclusively performing their ideal form, but instead using situational arrangement to show how processes develop and effects unfold.

NETWORKING

A network is the form of organization closest to complicity, but there are still differences. Sociologist Manuel Castells describes the social structure of the network, a result of new information and communication technologies, as based on a decentralized flexibilization of work and life, displacement, and less hierarchical organizational structures (cf. Castells 2001: 423). This social transformation is characterized by three essential aspects:

Economy is informational, global, and organized in networks (Castells 2001: 427). These new networks, which Castells describes as a “series of intertwined

knots” (Castells 2001: 428), are organized in various ways: Not only do entire companies join networks, but smaller networks are also created within large companies. They form for specific projects, disband upon completion of the project and merge again with other networks. Due to its temporality, complicity could be described as a particular type of networking; especially, where Castells describes networks as not simply reproducing existing dominant networks, but capable of initiating social change. This is the case when “cultural communities” are created that represent values not covered by any other network. Or when networks “are based on alternative projects [...] and build bridges of communication with other networks in society.” (Castells 2001: 438) Castells mentions human rights organizations, feminist and ecological movements as examples.

However, he also describes the problems faced by networks. They often find it difficult to coordinate responsibilities, concentrate resources on certain goals, and remain manageable after reaching a certain size. The advantages of dehierarchization thus become a problem, and in this aspect, networks differ from complicity. In contrast to the structure of networks, complicit relationships tend to form much smaller social configurations (cf. Olson 2004: 52f)⁴. It is possible to be part of a network without actually contributing something to it. Complicity, however, requires conscious and active participation. As complicit groups tend to be much smaller, problems in the coordination of responsibilities usually do not occur. Often there is only one representative per function, so conflicts over areas of responsibility are rare. As far as resources are concerned in complicity, the small size of the group usually means that all or most resources are mobilized. So complicity could be defined as an intensification of networking. Undoubtedly Anna Huber and Fritz Hauser and their experimental forms of expression also participate in artistic networks. However, this form of organization is still much too casual. It took complicity to fully solidify the logic of their relationship. And it was the mutual trust, willingness to take risks, the intimacy and

4 The economist Mancur Olson had provided some interesting research. Empirical data support his thesis that small groups are able to develop an ability to act that can weaken much bigger groups. The reason for this seems to be that large groups are often unable to negotiate a strong common interest. Small groups, however, are often interest groups that can act together as one. Based on research by John James, he writes “that in many different institutions – private as well as public, national as well as local – the ‘active’ groups and subgroups are usually much smaller [...]. A sample test showed that the average size of an ‘active’ group was 6.5 members, the average of a ‘non-active’ group was 14 members.” (Olson 2004: 52f)

emotionality of the two that led to the microdynamics, which became the nucleus of a singular artistic form of expression. Anna Huber says:

“On stage, we are linked by invisible threads. We hug before and after the performance, but on stage we hardly have any physical contact at all. Still, we know exactly what the other is doing.” (Weber/Ziemer 2007: n.p.)

In a network, it is not necessary to know what the others are doing, for its members work very autonomously. Nor is physical presence necessary, as many of the large digital networks have proven. On stage, however, autonomy is linked to physical interaction with the other person. Factors such as rhythm, synchronization, and dynamics are crucial for the success of complicit processes.

FRIENDSHIP

The final social bond, which I will not go into at much length and which differs from complicity, is friendship. Friendship is directed less at temporality, and more towards duration. In its postmodern form, based on difference rather than similarity (cf. Derrida 1997), it does not end, because of long phases of silence and dissonance. Friendship is meant to endure such non-harmonic phases. Gilles Deleuze describes friendship as a “presence that is intrinsic to thought, a condition of possibility of thought itself” (Deleuze 1994: 3). In this concept, which refers back to a fundamental definition of thought, friends primarily articulate themselves as different from one another, they have no shared interests. Their strength lies in the in-between, in the gap, which develops out of their different personalities and behaviors and enables other ways of thinking. Friendship is always unique and it is this very experience of difference, which produces its fascination and a form of sociality beyond institutionalized models of attachment. The power of friendship lies in its purposelessness, which allows for the development of new goals. Friends may accompany us, but rarely do they lead us towards a specific purpose. Friendship does not have to (but can) include compliance. Unlike complicity, it does not have to be practical, as there is nothing to be implemented. Upon beginning their collaboration, Anna Huber and Fritz Hauser did not regard themselves as friends, for they tested everything, which was relevant for them at that point in time in front of an audience. Their complicity does not silence dissonances; these are negotiated productively and lead to a form of expression.

So why can Anna Huber and Fritz Hauser be called accomplices in their production *handundfuss*? The example shows that complicity already begins when an individual form of expression is searched for and hence individual collective working structures established. At the beginning, Anna Huber and Fritz Hauser had no pre-determined goal; they created their own goal and were not able to fall back on already tested group structures. This collaboration was temporary and in its early phase, characterized by intimate, non-public and aimless moments alone in an empty space. It is this conspiratorial moment that distinguishes their complicity from a distanced professional relationship, as we know it from other group formations. The two followed a theatrical principle, which was tactical rather than strategic, although strategic action was not totally negated. Every experienced dancer is also a strategist, who knows, however, when to dance the tactical game in order to create presence. Complicity does not make identity un-touchable; it makes it permeable. Once complicity has begun there is no turning back, the shared process of experiencing, learning, and acting is set in motion. Complicity takes place in small group formations, which facilitate active engagement. It is not non-hierarchical, but it plays with hierarchies, which can be altered by the participants in different phases. When complicity is wisely employed, it supports and challenges the idiosyncrasies of the partners where required. Friendship does not necessarily require getting on stage. Complicity, however, includes the presentation of what wants to be presented. Depending on audience participation, complicity is strengthened or loosened. If the reaction is dismissive, complicity usually grows stronger. However, this is not always the case: as in every spy movie, here, too, there are defectors, who may weaken complicity or even end it.

Back to the initial questions: What forms of creating worlds does dance have to offer? Are they special? Or similar in other areas of life? Complicity is a particular form of collective work, which creates specific aesthetic and also social worlds. In dance, the three phases of complicity – decision-making, planning, and realization – are passed through in almost exemplary fashion. Compared to other artistic practices, dance has high situational potential thanks to the element of movement, which requires quick actions and reactions and thus supports situational behavior. This is particularly the case in collectives, who do not simply follow a choreographer's plan, but take on shared responsibility for the outcome. Anna Huber's and Fritz Hauser's unique, temporary and experimental collaboration method is a prime example of complicity. I suspect that the ability to act complicit is also more and more required in other fields of work (cf.

Pongratz/Voß 2004)⁵. Few things can be planned ahead of time and reliably organized, unstable conditions often make it impossible to reproduce team structures, temporary project work makes it necessary to permanently invent new goals, hierarchies are changing, and resources have to be independently obtained. And stepping on a stage is becoming ever more important as a form of presenting results.

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5 Today, instability reveals itself in working lives, whose boundaries are dissolving and which are characterized by self-economization (everyone is an entrepreneur), a high degree of self-discipline (flexible working hours), and growing self-rationalization (everyday life highly determined by technology). This is the conclusion reached by Günter Voß in Hans J. Pongratz/G. Günter Voß: *Typisch Arbeitskraftunternehmer? Befunde empirischer Arbeitsforschung* (2004).

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Protocols of Encounter: On Dance Dramaturgy

SANDRA NOETH

“It’s amazing. We all came together at the same time. Because we are all here ... and you’re all here ... and so we’re all here together”, Claire Marshall puts it in a nutshell in *The Thrill Of It All* by Forced Entertainment.¹

This shared ‘being-in-time’ and the instantaneousness and immediacy of influences and products, which reveal themselves in it, seems to me one of the fundamental parameters for thinking about dramaturgy in the context of current choreographic work.

Over the last few years, a number of performances, projects and their medial and theoretical extensions have formulated an new understanding of choreography that exceeds the organization of movement in time and space: Mette Ingvartsen’s performance *Evaporated Landscapes* can be read as a radical concept of disembodiment, in which neither the choreographer nor other performers set foot on stage, and yet the body is nevertheless, precisely because of its absence, negotiated between the poles of materiality and imagination and constantly created anew in a specific scenario, a machinery of lights, sound, soap bubbles, fog and dry ice. Daniel Aschwanden und Peter Stamer’s piece *The Path of Money*, for which they followed the journey of a banknote or rather of its owners during a trip to China, can be interpreted as a choreographic involvement with individual agents of an economy that has escalated into utter confusion. The sound-text performances of Jürgen Berlakovich are experimental set-ups, which

1 Forced Entertainment: *The Thrill Of It All*, theater performance, premiere on May 7, 2010 at Kaaithheater, Brussels.

situate the place of choreography in the materiality of language, in what evades speech and speech movements, intention and perception.²

Cited here as example and as representative of others, these artists explore in their work the choreographic in other forms or media and in other disciplines, in thinking and writing – thus opening it up to the social and political. Instead of distancing dance from other discursive and artistic practices, this perspective integrates the overflowing and breaking down of barriers by the art form itself.³ This broadening of the term is not only significant for the practice of those artists, who have already long situated themselves between formats and forms of expression and allowed definitional dividing lines such as the differentiation of ‘dance’ and ‘performance’ to become obsolete. It also once more reveals the field of choreography as a historically grown medial hybrid, in mutual manifold exchange with the traditional genres of music, theater, painting or sculpture and moving back and forth between everyday actions and organization, documentation and art work, live event and institutional representation.

At the same time, this version of the choreographic can be read as a conceptual approach and a self-manifesting practice closely connected to various movements of disintegration and interaction, which have shaped the order of the world and its mental environment over the last decades in the form of profound upheavals. Lebanese author Amin Maalouf speaks of a “*dérèglement du monde*”; an irregularity and absence of rules, which has seized various areas of life individually, but also as a whole: intellectual life, as well as the financial markets, climate development, as well as geopolitical situations and questions of ethics (cf. Maalouf 2009: 11). This environment is marked by an immediacy and acceleration of history, whose events are taking place (in their medialized and fragmented form) before the eyes of the whole of mankind and in real-time, and the simultaneous relativity of individual action, which is shaped by local resour-

2 Cf. Mette Ingvarstsen: *Evaporated Landscapes* (2009), Daniel Aschwanden and Peter Stamer: *The Path of Money* (2009) and Jürgen Berlakovich: *Sound-Sleeper* (2010).

3 “I believe the worst habit in dance at the moment is to insist on the autonomy of dance as an independent art form or language. I believe that this differentiation could become a disadvantage for dance. While choreographers already take working across genre boundaries with a broadened concept of dance for granted, the battle for the recognition of dance as such is still being fought on other fronts. Either, because we presenters think that our audience needs such thinking in pigeonholes or because funding programs and cultural politics still follow a logic that presupposes separated disciplines,” said curator Pirkko Husemann in an analysis of the situation in contemporary dance (Husemann/Wagner 2011: n.p.).

ces and structures. It confronts us with the challenge of having to handle disturbing and disorienting experiences (cf. Maalouf 2009: 89), as well as the 'Unknown'. A situation of concurrent worlds, whose connections and correlations, resonances and counterpoints, paradoxes and ambivalences must continuously be integrated into one's life and actions.

“Parce qu’il ne s’agit pas seulement de mettre en place un nouveau mode de fonctionnement économique et financier, un nouveau système de relations internationales, ni seulement de corriger quelques dérèglements manifestes. Il s’agit aussi de concevoir sans délai, et d’installer dans les esprits, une tout autre vision de la politique, de l’économie, du travail, de la consommation, de la science, de la technologie, du progrès, de l’identité, de la culture, de la religion, de l’Histoire; une vision enfin adulte de ce que nous sommes, de ce que sont les autres, et du sort de la planète qui nous est commune.” (Maalouf 2009: 314)

“Shouldn’t art, as the traditional authority for the representation of time and as presentation of an era logically be at the center of the crisis?” asks Frédéric Pouillaude (Pouillaude 2009: 354) and points out the extent to which the decomposition of overarching categories of significance and the associated shift from ideological to identity debates (cf. Maalouf 2009: 23) has also affected the cultural realm and artistic production and creation. With this in mind, a reflection of the status of the choreographic and the performative and their processes of worldmaking seems more relevant today than ever before, especially against the backdrop of the last decade, characterized by a revival of performance art and its extensive museification and historicization. This development has led to a reevaluation of photographic, film and written documentation and in recent years of strategies of reenactment. Performances are meanwhile firmly established as equal parts of exhibitions and art fairs, dance festivals and institutional theater programming – and choose this process of institutionalization itself as starting point for their research.⁴

4 The Burgtheater Wien has produced – just to name some exemplary situations – the independent New York theater group Nature Theatre of Oklahoma with *Life and Times. Episode I + II* 2009 and 2010 under participation of their own ensemble; performance groups such as Rimini Protokoll or Needcompany are also a regular part of performance season of municipal stages; performative pieces are an integral part of collections, exhibitions, and retrospectives in international art museums such as e.g. *Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present* at the MoMA (New York 2010), *Move: Choreographing You* at the Southbank Centre/Hayward Gallery (London 2010/2011)

MOMENTS OF TRANSITION

Art often takes place in twilight zones, between attempts at framing disciplines, legal definitions of public and private, personal precarity and creative waste. In the flickering and static of the moments of interference generated in these processes, in their lapses and their silence, the human body reveals itself as a place of conflict – it is precisely these moments of exposing-oneself, which artists work on and with. In the process, they do not remain constrained to the level of communication with others on stage or exchange with the audience. Instead, they reject in their artistic approaches the concept of the body as a passive refuge of subjectivity and utilize their bodies as material to participate in the discussion on the social re-negotiation of the conditions and conditionality of human behavior and actions. As directly self-manifesting action rather than agents of communication, they are resistance and simultaneously a venture into defining that what is missing in life today, what is censored, the existing or strived towards premises of life. In these moments, a gulf opens up between the vulnerability and the cultural, economic, ethical or also physical restrictions of the body as carrier of control mechanisms and standardization, of dreams and desires; they overlap and trace the quiet, more brittle borderlines of community beyond the accredited selectivity of our life together. It is precisely in the heterogeneity of its aesthetic forms that performance art can formulate its potential to liberate itself from the constrictions of its traditions and update its topics and motifs in alternate spaces, which are always also social spaces. The in-between spaces and their call for social responsibility open up the body in the constitution of presence not only in regard to the past, but also towards the future. Like a texture, stretched between the regulative and the permeable, art and artists are now more than ever presented with the challenge of affectively dealing with and reacting to the described overall processes of change, of organizing the coexistence of multiple and heterogeneous voices and influences and integrating the ‘Outer’, the ‘Other’, the ‘Unknown’ as possibilities in their work and of finding a place for the dancing body in this shifting environment. In doing so, the bodies present themselves as contemporaries that emphasize their own involvement. They cannot be separated from the life, culture, society that they are constantly reflecting and examining; they are the artistic and personal

or the presentation of the *Collection in Motion* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb. Choreographers such as Krđoć Jurak (i.e. *Autodestication*, 2009) or Petra Zanki and Tea Tupajić (*The Curators’ Piece*, ongoing) directly refer to the relationship of markets, institutions and artistic production in their work.

negotiations of self-made and foreign experiences. Beyond daydreams and promises, they facilitate encounters in the speechlessness of a communication society that is continuously in the process of differentiation. These bodies make meetings possible that do not exclude emotions, limitations and injuries, but instead integrate the experience of instability and vulnerability and are thus more than a stylization of the everyday. Without negating the experiences of the past or the temptations of the present, they integrate something upcoming in their perspectives.

I am therefore less interested in the shimmering and yet substantially often meaningless phenomenon of the contemporary (and in the knowledge that, strictly speaking, dance only exists as contemporary, cf. Pouillaude 2009), than in moments of transition, in which the paradoxes and inner contradictions of art become visible. For the art of dance and performance, this raises the question of fundamental historical significance for the art form concerning its potential for transcending boundaries: not as a one-dimensional path from the institution into social reality, but as a steady interplay between formalization and its socio-political reappraisal, between everyday experience and aesthetic appearance, between affective immediacy and its distancing discourse.⁵ Because choreographic work, for example, functions both as an installation as well as live performance and the formats of presentation and reception mutually influence each other, artists pursue these moments of transition in their artistic research and production and in doing so, also explore implicit ideas of the mobile and mobilization⁶ (cf. Noeth 2010). These discursive as well as artistic-practical movements also form the basis for a much-needed new definition of the place of dramaturgy in the context of choreographic-performative processes.

5 “I believe that the feelings produced by books are equal to the ideas that they generate. Actually, I don’t know how to distinguish between feelings and thoughts. They are made of the same substance”, writes Gregg Bordowitz. In the performance-opera *The History of Sexuality Volume One by Michel Foucault: An Opera, 2010* (Premiere October 1, 2010, Tanzquartier Wien), he examined with Paul Chan the epochal theory of Michel Foucault and its inquiry into the mechanisms of ideas and their habitualization, embodiment and transformation into discourse.

6 The moment of transition described here was the subject of the coordinated performance and exhibition project *Push and Pull* by Tanzquartier Wien and MUMOK (October 2010), in collaboration with TATE Modern, London, curated by Barbara Clausen, Achim Hochdörfer, Walter Heun and Sandra Noeth.

WE ALWAYS FALL IN LOVE WITH WORLDS ...

Over the last few years, various events and publications have dealt with the topic of dramaturgy in dance.⁷ We are faced with the need to reexamine a practice that originally developed out of theater and drama. In this tradition, dramaturgy functions as a place in which to structure and organize physical as well as intellectual movements in a largely closed, autopoietic construct that constitutes itself in relationship to elements such as time, space, rhythm, movement vocabulary and phrasing, figures and narration or the relationship of music and movement. As an instrument of contextualization and framing, it is usually related to a specific role in the working process designated as a putative 'first viewer' or 'objective observer'. This idea of the dramaturgical as separate from choreographic and discursive processes has been toppled not least of all by a confident and self-reflexive community of dance and performance artists. Both in reaction to and as a consequence of a world 'in search of', they have created room for collaboration in self-organized artistic processes of research and exchange and appropriated spaces that have emerged between definition of roles, division of labor and economic processes of distribution (cf. Ruhsam 2010). I would like to mention as an example the Zagreb based artist collective BADco., who constantly challenge and redefine the function and responsibilities of their members depending on the ongoing projects and issues (cf. BADco.hr); or the method of re-formulation, which the artistwin deufert+plischke use to provide space for different artistic and discursive perspectives and strategies in the development of their work in form of various differentiated principles of imparting material and writing (cf. Deufert/Noeth/Plischke 2009).

As a consequence, even methodological considerations concerning the dramaturgical require adequate further development, which takes into account new perspectives: how can this 'being-with-an-Other' be organized, the relationship to the foreign, the 'Outside' be defined in the artistic process, how can the unexpected, mistakes, dilettantism, or to formulate it more generally, that which evades control, attention, the institution, be grasped as a specific form of knowledge? And how can dance, the body be defined as a space for negotiation

7 Cf. i.e. *Performance Research: On Dramaturgy*, Volume 4, Number 3, September 2009 or *Maska: The Dramaturgy of Dance* Number 66-67, 2001. See also the theoretical-artistic conferences *Europäische Dramaturgie im 21. Jahrhundert* (European Dramaturgy in the 21st Century), 26.-30.09.2007 in Frankfurt am Main or the SDHS Conference *Dance Dramaturgy*, 23.-26.06.2011 in Toronto.

and as potential⁸, which opens itself to the upcoming (cf. Pouillaude 2009: 23)? In this interaction, this texture of mutual, almost non-identifiable, because simultaneous influences, and traces and logics, between crisscrossing, overlapping, opposing and transforming concepts, ideas and areas of research, it seems helpful to think about dramaturgy not primarily as a form-giving instrument, but rather as a shared practice of encounter. The question of how community is created and whether we can still today say ‘we’ alongside the ‘I’ (cf. Peeters 2007) is, from this perspective, one of the fundamental questions of dramaturgy; the measuring of the distance to each respective ‘Other’, which does not remain limited to the relationship of actors and audience and the investigation of the protocol of encounters in which artistic, discursive, social worlds are created, according to their central functions. It is about the way that simultaneity is handled e.g. the simultaneity of corporeal, political, ethical and other movements, which develop and negotiate narratives and metaphors of how community is created, how we think about affiliation and preservation, about the old and the new, about classification and availability, about hospitality and territory. Performance art and the parties involved create resonance chambers that are influenced, structured and impregnated by developments. In this regard, they contain and produce complexities and relationships to history, memory, society on various levels and in different ways – in relation to our bodies, our movements and language. Dramaturgy is exactly the place within a choreographic process that is dedicated to this very nexus of things.

DRAMATURGY: ORGANIZING COEXISTENCE

In the course of the described broadening of the definition of choreography, dramaturgy has increasingly given less priority to questions of structure, form or aesthetic. It means more than just binding together the separate elements. And its primary goal cannot be to achieve consensus. Instead it is more about tracing the balance and equilibrium of the individual elements (body, movements, lights, sound, space, etc.), the responsibility of all parties involved, the shifts and changes created in their relationships. Accordingly there is the attempt to think about choreography not necessarily as the creation of a repertory in the sense of a fixed movement or a structured sequence of movements, but as the unknown, the vague, the not-yet-attained, misunderstandings, the monstrosity of all artistic

8 Cf. Alain Badiou: “La danse n’est pas un art parce qu’elle est le signe de la possibilité de l’art, telle qu’inscrite au corps” (as cited in Pouillaude 2009: 22).

work, the simultaneity of creating and losing common ground, integrating an shared frame of reference.

In the weaving of the dramaturgical protocol, the focus lies not on the identification of authorship, chronologies or a succession of scenes, images, phrases and ideas, not on the creation of an imitable scheme or the production of a certain form; it is also not primarily about 'right' or 'wrong' and the prevention of mistakes in the process of work and representation. On the contrary, in each process the question arises anew, how the different formative elements are to be handled. Even if they repeat themselves in the artistic process and as a result imply the possibility of defining an identifiable and repeatable corpus, they do not necessarily also permit the definition of more fundamentally valid categories or concepts: they take place in never-ending steps of formulating and reformulating language and movement and generating a choreography of ideas that are the product of being together. In a large number of contemporary artistic productions, form, contents and idea of movement are interconnected, as are likewise various working phases and the tasks involved. The intertwining and the combinatory nature of research, conception, training, production and dissemination in a performance not only has an effect on the shifting positions and demands that artists themselves have to manage, but also reduce the need for a distinction of choreographic discourse from choreographic practice. A dramaturge's material is hence unstable, because he or she is constantly redefining his or her point of departure anew. And it is precisely this moment of insecurity, which sets the body, the voices in motion over and over again. Of course, this is not about formulating a hasty metaphor or images, no false promises of flexibility and hybridity. Instead, I seek to define a dramaturgical mode of thought, which does not focus on efficiency, imitation or well-conducted research. A dramaturgy without a fixed a priori, composed of observations in a constantly transforming texture, within and out of which specifications and decisions must be made; a dramaturgy in which failure is an immanent component and which prevents hasty indulgence in one's own assumptions, preferences and aversions.

To work and think dramaturgically thus covers more than the job description of a single person. It means opening up a divided, usually temporary space of negotiation and the creation and reflection of the evolving act of tracking the diverse traces of what is emerging. It does not mean not making decisions. It is much rather about the shouldering of responsibility with respect to the politics of decision-making. This study affects not only formal definitions and instructions on the level of movement creation, but also questions of proximity and distance, of recognition and responsibility and continues the gesture of inscribing the

social. This concept of dramaturgy maintains a strong relationship to the outside. More than the fixing of movement or the development of a specific aesthetic, dramaturgy writes a protocol of encounters, which develop in the shared period of time, in the contributed vocabulary of the situation. Dramaturgy means thinking about these traces of delegating and sharing, about how information is generated, produced, communicated, rejected, reapplied and finally brought onto the stage – in this respect, it is not about communication and not about the representation of a prefabricated status, but about the contemplation of strategies and processes of community and participation.

Dramaturgy is concerned with the emerging and the moment of emergence, with the fluctuation and not the cementing of positions and perspectives, with the clarification of intentions and the formulation of questions and also means to draw closer to each other in this process and in terms of an emancipated friendship, to become vulnerable, but also tangible. Dramaturgy enters another, shared body, organizes processes between intentionality and non-intentionality, between contradicting movements, bodies and relationships. The associated processes and changes of perspective are thus still connected to observation, even when they abandon the position of an accredited ‘objective’ observer. We are looking here at a practical concept of responsibility for one’s own work, but also for the interaction of all participating elements and the temporary community – for a protocol of human and artistic encounters. The dramaturgical accordingly concerns all areas of artistic work and is not located in an outside sphere, mainly occupied with creating contexts and applying knowledge (cf. Peeters 2007).

The relationship between dramaturgy and choreography is friendly one. Dramaturgy is not aimed at suppressing choreography or forcing it into a specific dance-technical or aesthetic or virtuous form. As a consequence, dramaturgy does not “belong” to anyone. It is a monster – phantasmal, an analysis that in its survey of the conditions and conditionality of encounters accepts and addresses the instability and vulnerability of life as given. As an instrument of perspective, the focus lies not on a specific form, but on the question how decisions are felled, how communication is created, as well as the related experiences of manipulation and imitation, of representation and participation. Dramaturgy traces the permeability of the choreographic process in its various forms and articulations and in this very process of revealing the artistic and social strategies of worldmaking, enables a dialog between artists, the audience and an Outside. A concept of the dramaturgical oriented along such lines and the protocols of encounters can reveal the potential of the choreographic to place the body, the dance as active agents in personal and social conflict zones.

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