# Goran Sergej Pristaš

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With an Afterword by Bojana Kunst

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# 1.

# Encounters

# "How do you work?"

"It's simple. I get up in the morning and start working."
(Cage 1974, 130) This simple answer given by John Cage in
an interview for Croatian theatre journal *Prolog* implies
something complex: artists' working time is all the time.
But it also suggests that the artist works even when he's
not labouring. Interpreted from the perspective of visual
artist Mladen Stilinović's notorious manifesto "Praise to
Laziness", the states of "indifference, staring at nothing,
non-activity, impotence, sheer stupidity, a time of pain,
futile concentration", all these "virtues of laziness" are
important factors in making art (2013, 335). During the late
1980s, when socialist systems were beginning to collapse,
Stilinović found it problematic that artists still pursued
production rather than purposeless work. Unlike Western
artists, Stilinović argued, "Artists from the East were
lazy and poor because the entire system of insignificant
factors did not exist. Therefore they had time enough
to concentrate on art and laziness. Even when they did
produce art, they knew it was in vain, it was nothing."
(2013, 335)

Simply browsing through interviews with freelance artists from the last twenty years shows that the most common answer to questions concerning the modality of artistic work is "I'm working on several projects." Bojana Kunst claims that the "project", or its "projective temporality is the main mode of production in today's art and culture in general. It is also influencing how cultural or artistic value is articulated nowadays, and how, for example, contemporary art and culture are articulating their right to be supported, financed and presented in public." (Kunst 2011, 16)

This constantly *projective temporality* focusses on the production of the new "new", but this "new" never becomes "now", a part of the present. It's either in progress or it's operating in the future anterior. The decisive and articulating marker of projective temporality is the deadline, which divides the time of production as the time before the deadline, from the time of the completion of project. But the time of completion begins just before the deadline and stretches into a time of undead work, depending on the deadliness of the mortal limit. The time of completion is extended by a pseudo-performative interpretation by a performance studies scholar, or by some final reworking of the artwork done by the artist herself. Cosmetic or surgical corrections adjust the zombie-face of the endless, deadless or *undead project* in realms of publishing, documentation or archiving. The paradox of the project is that it exists as long as it is incomplete, but its endless completion is its mode of execution. The project takes the form of proto-work, and has a mythical time-frame defined by "undeadness" because it gains an "uncanny vitality" through too much

pressure. In Eric Santner's words "too much" pressure "produces internal alienness that has a particular sort of vitality and yet belongs to no form of life" (Santner 2001, 36). This vitality, the project's "throwness amidst enigmatic messages" (2001, 36-7) is what constitutes its mythical structure, what transforms the dead project into a promise of artwork. Or rather, the project as a constitutive act of the future and the ideological structure of its temporality inaugurate the drama of legitimating an artistic work in public. Detached from any results, dislocated in the abstract domain of meeting time plans and financial constructions, the artist's work is transformed into labour out of necessity. This kind of labour connects artistic existence with cultural production, but the key to its valorisation does not reside in a work of art whose lifetime might exceed the process of production.[01] Instead, valorisation stems from the direct connection between the artist's labour and its consumption, which takes place in the market itself. The project does not take place in a public sphere, in an *agora* where individual artists, institutions, and spectators might come together. Rather, the project is a process that acquires its "exhibition value" (Benjamin 2008, 25) within an institution, regardless of its level of structuring, whose main social task is ultimately exhibition and exchange, that is, the market.

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# Of Animals and Artists

**"My project is a rendezvous I give myself on the other side of time, and my freedom is the fear of not finding myself there, and of not even wanting to find myself there any longer."**
— Jean Paul Sartre (1966, 73)

But in order to speak from the position of an artist about encountering or finding others, or a community, at the end of your own project's time, a project that primarily concerns the production of forms of life rather than a process of self-formation, it is necessary to assume that your fantastic idea always has its ideal form at the beginning of the process. For, as Marx argues in *Capital,* "what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement." (2007, 198)

Social distribution, however, has often placed the artist on the temporal side of the project, which Marx attributed to animals, and indeed analogies with animals

are not uncommon in narratives idealising work. We only have to remember the famous fable about the Ant and the Grasshopper. Having spent the entire summer making music and calling on the hardworking Ant to join her and have fun and enjoy themselves together, the Grasshopper knocks on the Ant's door with the arrival of winter and asks to be allowed in to get some heat and food. La Fontaine's version features the following dialogue:

> "How spent you the summer?"
> Quoth she, looking shame
> At the borrowing dame.
> "Night and day to each comer
> I sang, if you please."
> "You sang! I'm at ease;
> For 'tis plain at a glance,
> Now, ma'am, you must dance." (La Fontaine, 2008)

One could not find a more convincing populist political metaphor used for artists than that of an animal, whether to criticise artists as elitists or as parasites. In the popular (as well as populist) imagination, the artist is an unconscious being focused on her artistic existence and nothing else. Like Marx's bees, artists are creatures without a project, but also creatures whose survival is important.

Over the past couple of decades the grasshoppers have invested considerable efforts into proving to the ants that art has a positive effect on social and economic prosperity, calculating value and revenue relative to investments in art, overall expenditure of those who consume art and

the profitability of the cultural industries.[02] Nevertheless, this argumentation has only helped the populist ants establish a distinction between their industry and the lazy, self-indulgent grasshoppers whose social and economic contribution ultimately could not be calculated in order to implement a campaign of funding cuts, invoking austerity measures as their argument.

Bojana Kunst has sought to turn this neoliberal perspective upside down, arguing that art should not defend its relevance from the perspective of a socially worthy and useful pursuit, because it thereby confirms the capitalist (and populist) production of value. Instead art must re-identify its material basis and occupy precisely those abstractions that enable the survival of the system and reproduction of capital (Kunst 2015). Kunst seeks to remind art, which has in recent decades ceaselessly thematised and practiced politics, that it has forsaken its own power to relate our capacity for abstraction (in thinking) to categories of real abstractions, to social constructs that have real effects (value, capital, productivity, money, commodities, time, etc.).

Although capitalists claim that their work and growth benefit others, the reproduction of the relationship between capital and labour lies at the very foundations of capitalism. The discourse of neoliberal populism is merely an external modification of this constant, which invariably places capital in a self-serving function (*for-itself*). A responsible artistic practice must therefore avoid defending art's value by referring to other spheres, because otherwise it will remain within the confines of a mutual identification with

capital, where capital refuses to see its reflection in the mirror, its image reflected in art as a practice that produces forms of life by reproducing (critically or relationally) images of real capitalism. Art tends to forget that in Marx's comparison between bees and architects, mentioned above, the ideal image of the architect's fantasy is no less real than capital, the value of money, and so on.

Another important lesson to draw from this is that bees are no longer cultivated primarily for their honey, but also on account of their beneficial impact on the environment. This peculiar ecology, whereby the artist grows less and less present through her artworks and more and more through her labour, survives today thanks to various cultural institutions, whose mission is no longer to produce art but to reproduce a consumerist relation to work in art. Art institutions no longer function as disciplinary instances whose task is to take care of artists and produce artworks, just as the dairy industry no longer exists in order to make good yogurt but only the most desired yogurt. What art institutions produce today are no longer works offered to public viewing and valorisation, but it is valorisation itself that is reproduced and exchanged. "The curatorial turn" in the performing arts – the transfer of management roles at most institutions from artistic directors or/and programmers to curators – has prioritised this point of view over poetic projection. The many decades of concern for the spectator, who went through every stage, from observer to participant and then became an "emancipated spectator" – has resulted in the subjectivation of spectatorship. Whereas the producer spoke of "his

artists", the curator talks of "her audience". The audience is viewed as a model of the public, but today's emphasis on programmed spectatorship is turning into a model of the *ideal spectator*, a function that Schlegel assigned to the chorus in ancient Greek drama: "Whatever it might be and do in each particular piece, it represented in general, first the common mind of the nation, and then the general sympathy of all mankind. In a word, the Chorus is the ideal spectator. It mitigates the impression of a heart-rending or moving story, while it conveys to the actual spectator a lyrical and musical expression of his own emotions, and elevates him to the region of contemplation." (Schlegel 1846, 59) Programmed spectatorship, however, has erased the function of this actual spectator.

Precisely through the institutions – and this is the point where the excessive responsibility of curators comes to light – there opens the possibility of linking the artist's labour as an abstraction not only with exchange value, but with reality. Instead of abstracting the artist's labour, whose use value is then valorised through the service economies thus erasing the difference between art and other kinds of labour, the institution has the opportunity to become his/her transparent material basis, as happens with occupied institutions. This would highlight the political and social, instead of predominantly economic implications of artistic labour, which forms the focus of most institutions today. While the audience is taught to expect art to produce alternative worlds, the artist is expected to improve this particular world. Although at this juncture we should avoid paranoias of power, the difference

that the curator can make in the art work's distribution imposes on her the responsibility of better explaining her policies regarding production and presentation. In this respect she must provide clear explanations regarding her approach to the domain and context of her own work. And here, as Derrida might say, responsibility is either excessive or non-existent (1992, 41). In the performing arts, the facile conflation of presentation policies with the deeply problematic logic of the visual arts' market necessarily leads to an impoverishment of production and the weakening of institutions, which are the last guarantee of the survival of artistic production in the face of the neoliberal populist onslaught. Only by enabling a perspective that does not stand at the end of the process, but on the other side of time, as described by Sartre in his summary of the project of selfhood, may we hope to find someone else than ourselves. That perspective no longer means deferring realisation into the future, but grounding one's individual practice in common needs.

# Producing production

They are, to put it bluntly, enemies of production.
Production makes them uncomfortable. You never know
where you are with production; production is unforeseeable.
You never know what's going to come out.
— Walter Benjamin (2003, 18)

On a morning long ago in June 2013 I'm sitting in a
bungalow, part of an artist-in-residence programme in
a village I'd never heard of before,[03] where I'm writing
these lines. Whilst sipping my first cup of tea, I'm
on Skype with Nikolina, discussing the possibility of
making choreographic video reconstructions for our
new performance (which I'm presently only working on
by correspondence), examining BADco.'s new web page
and sending my comments to Tomislav and Ivana. At the
same time, I'm battling with my new writing software,
downloading a Hawks film I want to see, and, in the
background, listening to music we might use for our
next performance. I've just realised that I haven't even
opened the video files with footage from *Fleshdance* for

an installation in December. I postpone responding to emails about my lecture in Bilbao, which I'm supposed to prepare in two weeks, I'll do that in the afternoon. Before or after my workout. Actually, after I've put together a descriptive proposal for a new version of *Is There Life on Stage?,* which we're planning to move into a public space in autumn (with this, I'm already a month behind).

Nikolina's sent me Tilly Losch's video that I have to watch tonight and I should also finish Marker's film, the second part of which I saw by mistake yesterday, around 1:30 p.m. I should also send my comments on a student work I am mentoring, but that can wait for another day or two. But today I do have to finish the reader for a workshop/lab in Amsterdam. I also need to send the title of my text, just a few words, for the conference in Giessen, they need it for an application. I need to take another look at their call because I'm not sure I got everything right. I've made a little note for a project in Copenhagen next year and I should also confirm the dates for a meeting in January, as a part of an international project about the gaze in dance. Also, I need to figure out how to pay taxes on an international payment and see if I can postpone that until I'm back in Zagreb. It would be really nice if I could finish reading Nancy today so I can finally start reading Sebald. And I need to contact Janez Janša about applying for a project in 2014...

Unrelated to any of that, I'm trying to formulate a commentary about how an artist spends her free time to improve other people's free time. Ultimately, the artist has no time left to practice art. Or, rather, the artist has

no time whatsoever, there is no time at her disposal. At least no time as we know it. What the artist has is an application, a formula, a regime of abstraction that envelopes her work in a relation with capital and concretises it in a project, whose "general equivalent" is projective time.

First of all, the old claim that performance is that which is ephemeral and volatile and subversive of time no longer applies: time has disappeared in an ever-expanding performance. The praxis, practices, residencies (residing, habitation) *qua* work, methods, workshops, labs, exchanges of methodologies and knowledge, consultations, lecture performances, research, newsletters, diaries, documentation, archiving, all of those older forms of production and reflection are ways of performing, dispersing, and miniaturising artistic work today, making it more transparent, organised, and useful. This displacement of the process to objects of practice does not stem from the need to demystify the mystery of artistic creation as much as it enables the rationalisation, quantifiability, and monetisation of artistic work. The fact that discourse on ways of creating (*poiesis*) has been drowned out by a discourse where the boundaries between *praxis* as an act of artistic free will and labour have been erased suggests that the place of poetic clarity has been taken over by economic rationalisation.

Given that art no longer functions outside of the institutional market system, as Stilinović emphasised in his text *In Praise of Laziness* (2013, 335), today neither

Duchamp's logic of "non-work" nor Malevich's utopian laziness have the effect of freeing the work of artists from purposefulness, which lies outside that kind of work. Quite to the contrary, Boris Groys argues, the work of artists has been alienated and instrumentalised through the productive processes of institutions, precisely those processes that Duchamp used to abandon the material labour of producing works of art. Also, the post-Duchampian notion of artistic work has been proletarianised by the material labour of transmission and construction, to which I would also add institutional organisation.[04]

An important shift has occurred here however, this kind of transformation of artists' work or, more precisely, their mode of production into a product, can no longer be simply called "work" or "process". Rather, it concerns a kind of social production, i.e. the reproduction of the conditions and modes of production, involving not only the production of things, but also that of social relations. The tendency to reproduce artistic labour *in lieu* of producing artworks, seeking to destabilise the object *qua* fetish, has actually morphed into a fetishisation of the process and the so-called free, unalienated work of artists has become a commodity to be consumed. Representing processes, institutions of art no longer separate spheres of circulation, but produce and regulate the division of labour concerning the conditions of production and, simultaneously, distribution and references, and ultimately (or initially), desire and consumption.

This is where the final level of the so-called aesthetic revolution, which according to Rancière replaced the regime of representation, manifests itself. Abandoning their representative role, institutions have assumed the role of regulators in the new regime, an aesthetic regime where "art is art to the extent that it is something else than art" (Rancière 2012, 615). Institutions thus become aestheticised institutions, operating in the sphere of the service economy, and their contemporaneity lies in simultaneous production and consumption. The objectification of the aesthetic operation, the processual aspect of artworks, places the work of artists in a position of real abstraction, because it is always displaced into the domain of aesthetic operation, which, paradoxically, makes it more real than the real. Institutions become places where "credit invades art", as Jacques Camatte predicted of the Beaubourg as early as 1977 (Camatte 1997). An institution is a place of promise and not production, and everything is possible, just like in the world of capital. "When execution is replaced by credit, by a blank check, Art finds itself reduced to derisory size and, at the extreme, disappears. It disappears by becoming almost the opposite idea." (Camatte 1997)

An art institution may be an anticipation of politics, society, life, and, finally, an anticipation of art. In such an institution the artist is indebted and fully aware of her debt. But the artist's debt is no longer in the sphere of creativity, but must be verified in that which is its "opposite idea". The labour of artists must be represented, "art has to be produced from art and artists in a manner

amenable to capital. For what matters is to touch the mass of human beings (otherwise there would be no realisation of art) who still haven't internalised capital's lifestyle, who are still more or less bound to certain rhythms, practices, superstitions, etc., and who (even if they have taken up the vertigo of capital's rhythm of life) don't necessarily utilise its image, and therefore live a contradiction or jarring, and are constantly exposed to 'future shock'." (Camatte 1997) The institution must be a factory, but not a factory of works, of ruptures, but a factory of continuity, labour, production, that is, anti-production.

The notion of production incorporating displacement, distribution, and consumption is not new in capitalism, but a symptom identified as early as Marx's *Grundrisse,* while Deleuze and Guattari defined it as anti-production in *Anti-Oedipus*. In Stephen Zepke's interpretation: "Anti-production works through all the mechanisms that prevent or recoup creative excess, whether by refusing funding or support, or by rewards that integrate it into the flows of capital. In this sense anti-production is not the opposite of production, but rather supports and develops it. As a result, the greater visibility, prosperity and integration enjoyed by the arts today does not mean they have more creative freedom. Just the opposite. [...] contemporary artistic practice marks a particular low-point in creativity and insurrectionary spirit, not least because 'resistance' is now aggressively marketed as one of art's selling points." (2014, 56)

Nonetheless, one should distinguish between the institution's ability to co-opt even the most radical kind

of political critique and the most radical artistic excess. In *The Savage Girl,* a novel by the American writer Alex Shakar, the manager of a "trend-spotting" agency presents this great change of trends to his clients. While he describes the Cold War period as one of irony, where the key marketing method was the critique of ideology as expressed in the following equation: CRITIQUE OF A, B, C = PURCHASE OF D, E, F (Shakar 2002, 138) The age of consensus or the post-Cold War or post-irony age is characterised by *paradessence*, the idea that; "Every product has this paradoxical essence. Two opposing desires that it can promise to satisfy simultaneously." (Shakar 2002, 60-1)

The mathematical formula of post-irony is the following: CRITIQUE OF A, B, C, D, E, F... = PURCHASE OF A, B, C, D, E, F... (Shakar 2002, 139) It would be hard to say just how familiar Shakar is with Deleuze, but his line of analysis ends with the conclusion that in its purest form, paradessence is schizophrenia. As history shows, capitalism knows how to handle political excess, freedom of speech, transgression, and individual subversions, and in that regard one could hardly find a better example than the re-enactments of Marina Abramović's performances, which produce a popular consensus today by reconciling radical action and its immediate consumption.

The anti-production model has penetrated deeply into the sphere of art education as well. Art education, primarily via the Bologna Process, has embraced the logic of performance management, finding an adequate model of anti-production in artistic research. In fact, artistic

research is not production, but implies presentability, which enables its academic verification. This is another instance of paradessence.

The aesthetic revolution of academic institutions has made an impact by introducing education *qua* experience. It would be worthwhile analysing the *curatorial unconscious* of today's progressive art education that involves various kinds of workshops, research, and the proliferation of methods and methodological articulations. The classical mode of education, teaching students about different regimes of representation, has been replaced by a parade of experiential art forms and methods, the same one that institutions present to their audiences. And while the classical type of education often resulted in provoking resistance from students, and in stimulating them to find their own modes of expression, today's education is based on the exchange of information, experience and consensus, where even critique serves to maintain the equilibrium. I do not wish to suggest that we need to return to old technologies of education, but I do think that education today rests on a division of labour focused on the student's desires, and so reproduces the anti-productive model of the production of pleasure and its constant deferral.

Artistic, creative excess, the production of relations that have not yet explained themselves, still generates divisions and demolishes consensus. This is especially so if it comes out of collective processes that also entail a re-functionalisation of the very modes of production and apparatuses of representation and becomes an

"existential excess, a 'being there' that immediately spins off on multiple affective trajectories that are entirely singular because they depend on the viewing act itself" (Zepke 2014, 46).

Bringing into existence, creating that excess of existence is precisely the poetic function of art, and artworks are not effective only by virtue of being acts, or exclusively by producing meaning. Their power is that they are always something that works and thereby they, too, *are* something themselves. A work of art is produced, but is not only a product, because its key component remains the fact that it is a work, that it is produced, but also that it does something and even produces something. We are accustomed to thinking and generating discourse about the meanings of signs, texts, and images, but they, too, are always something. As in the famous line of Wole Soyinka: "A tiger does not proclaim his tigritude, he pounces. In other words: a tiger does not stand in the forest and say: 'I am a tiger'. When you pass where the tiger has walked before, you see the skeleton of the duiker, you know that some tigritude has been emanated there." (quoted in Jahn 1968, 265-6)

It is therefore worthwhile to revisit questions concerning poetics (as bringing into existence) that have been repressed into the background of discourses on art by our care for the spectator (reception) and the fetishisation of practice. My primary interest in art is poetic in terms of reflection, as well as suggesting procedures of producing art and knowledge aimed at problematisation and contradiction within the domain of social reproduction;

non-disciplinary procedures of dramaturgy provide a methodological way into such reflections.

# Work, Non-work, Artwork

I want to exemplify the dynamics of artistic production
and its institutionalisation with three manifestations
of choreography and its camera documentation, where
choreography and dance (and the camera) set up or reflect,
respectively, the production of relations, practices of
institutionalisation, and the institutionalisation of a
practice. All three examples hail from a politically and
institutionally intense period, 1943–1951, that is, from
the time of the revolutionary partisan movement and the
national liberation struggle, via the period that saw the
establishment of the new form of government, to the period
of industrialisation and the economic construction of the
new Yugoslav state. My examples are: a 1943 photograph of
Marta Paulin Brina dancing before the Partisan fighters of
the Rab Brigade; *Zastava* (The Flag), a 1949 film by Branko
Marjanović ; and *Tajna dvorca I.B.* (The Mystery of I.B.'s
Castle), a 1951 short propaganda film by Milan Katić. It is
no coincidence that all three of my examples relate to the
photographic or film camera, which records, documents,
and turns the act of viewing theatre into a social product in

a very interesting way, inscribing it into social tissue and memory, the implications of which we will discuss further in the chapters that follow (see, Ferraris 2013).

Marta Paulin Brina was a Slovenian dancer, a graduate of Meta Vidmar's (herself a student of Mary Wigman) dance school who, before joining the Yugoslav Partisans in 1943, accomplished several choreographic stagings described as "a new direction" in Slovenian dance. Jože Petek's photograph shows Brina dancing in her partisan uniform before the thrilled members of the Rab Partisan Brigade (named after the island of Rab, the site of the Italian concentration camp where the members of the Brigade, mostly Jews, had been kept in captivity until the camp was dissolved in 1943). Concerning this dance performed outdoors for her fellow Partisan fighters, Marta Paulin said: "Standing by myself before a crowd of fighters and realising that I would be able to express, with my gift of dancing and my feeble body, that which connected us, that I could master even that boundless natural space, I felt power in my feet, treading the hard earth. My arms could feel the breadth of the woods and climb over the trees. There was no imitation in my dancing, which would stem from formalist moves. I rejected almost all that I had 'learnt' in my dance studio years, I was looking for genuine, fresh dance expression, which stems from the vital human need to move." (quoted in Milohnić 2014, 18)

The photographed scene from Brina's performance shows dance as an act of creation at a revolutionary moment, a moment of social transformation, of a new society coming into existence. The act of performing

modern dance before a group of Partisans, at least in this photograph, which captured her pose as exposing the truth, is *poiesis* in the true sense of the word, the Aristotelian sense whereby *poiesis* is not only an act of will (*praxis*) but also an "experience of pro-duction into presence" (Agamben 1999, 52).

This is also borne out by Brina's memories from her prison days in 1943, which preceded her escape to join the Partisans: "Besides acts imposed by my sense of duty, I was still thinking of my artistic career, of improving my skill, and the act that I was rehearsing at the time... Dance was fulfilling me, it comforted and also protected me. Each time they interrogated me, I defended myself by saying that I was a dancer." (quoted in Šelih 2007, 483)

The film *Zastava* (The Flag) from 1949, directed by Branko Marjanović, opens with a conversation among a group of ballerinas getting ready to perform as part of Republic Day celebrations, about stage fright and the act of performance as an act expressing the fullness of life. The protagonist in the film is a ballerina called Marija (played by Sonja Kastl, later a prima ballerina of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb), who opens the film in conversation with her theatre colleagues about how she joined the Partisans: "Do you think that one shouldn't live with whatever's going on around us? ... A true artist draws inspiration for her art from life. Only thus may she create permanent and valuable works. You see, I was offstage for three years. Does that mean that I did not live during the time? On the contrary..." The film continues with a retrospective view of her life as a ballerina dancing on the

national stage during the occupation, of being courted by an *Ustaša*, and her final loss of all illusions resulting in her flight "into the woods", as she then tells her Partisan comrades: "All that was false and worthless. I know that. But what could I dance here?"

Soon afterwards, we see her dancing a traditional folk dance with Partisans and the film itself ends with another ballet choreography by Margarita Froman, with elements of pantomime symbolising resistance and heroism, giving birth to the new state flag.

Unlike Brina, Marija does not know what to dance among the Partisans, but then opts for that which would come to represent the spirit of brotherhood and unity: folk dancing and mass-games ballet, one linked to the logic of popular identity and the other to the establishment and solidification of the new order and state. For Marija, dance is no longer a question of bringing a new kind of expression into existence, but a representation of life, while the act of performance represents an act of will, an act of living and willing rather than a revolutionary being (Agamben 1999, 52). Her dance is normative – it offers an interpretation. It is not just an act of creating a dance object, but also suggests a clear and "correct" interpretation. It is the moment when art is brought back from the woods to the apparatus, from production to practice, from a movement to the state.

My third example is somewhat obscure, but extremely interesting. It is a film satire, unknown until recently, titled *Tajna dvorca I.B.* (The Secret of I.B.'s Castle), made after a one-act theatre ballet that featured the entire ballet elite of

Zagreb at the time. The film is extremely aestheticised and its first part uses techniques from German Expressionism and pantomime to depict an elaborate scam by a group of Cominform supporters gathered in a castle to devise a secret weapon against Yugoslavia, which had spurned Cominform in 1949 with Tito's so-called big "No!" to Stalin.[05]

Their secret weapon, rising from a cauldron full of all kinds of poison, is called the Resolution, a scantily clad female dancer who uses free dance-ballet movements to seduce workers, first at a construction site, then in a factory, and, finally, onboard a train. What is interesting is that dance appears here as the opposite of work and thereby becomes the visible third degree of the transformation of the political context, where the main roles are played by work, productivity, and economy. Work *qua* process, directly linked with pure biological existence as well as material construction and the progress of the state, is entirely at loggerheads with *poiesis*, with bringing into existence, which is presented as the dominant and reactionary regime of representation.

# The Institutions of Viewing

**1ˢᵗ OBSERVATION**

Reflections on the transformation of the theatrical dispositif have focussed on the boundary between the viewer and the stage for centuries, and explored the possibility of its breech, transfer, dislocation, or exchange of positions. The basic premise of this logic has been the mirroring, reflective logic of theatre; thus, even Artaud's radical intervention has merely been an inversion of the binary relation, since it posited theatre as a generator and the world as its reflection. Thus understood, theatre is an art that shows itself to the viewer, and all attempts at changing this image of theatre have been an attempt at changing the viewer's function, meaning the viewer has always been understood as someone external to theatre. The manifestation of theatre, however, has rarely been discussed: namely, that theatre always already includes the viewers and their viewing, even during the rehearsals, when the viewing is merely supposed and theatre happens before the unborn spectator.

The event of theatre, unlike its show, has a refractive rather than reflective character. And that refraction occurs

precisely on the membrane that separates its two different local manifestations: it is theatre as the **institutional relationship** between the audience (public) and the artists (producers), and theatre as a **poetic set** or **conjuncture** of viewers and actors in performance (living and non-living). Nevertheless, I am not referring to refraction as the effect of one idea passing through two different media or two ideologies. It is more adequate to think of it as a deflection in the style of existence of theatre's agents (the viewers and the artists), resulting from an encounter and its deceleration on the membrane lying between the institution and poetics.

The Department of Dramaturgy, where I studied and where I work today, has always gently referred its students to a nuance in the difference between two terms that, in principle, signify one and the same thing in Croatian – *teatar* and *kazalište* – but offer the possibility of differentiating between individual local manifestations. *Teatar* might be taken to refer to all that theatre might be as an art (the individual and collective poetics and practices of artists, Bertolt Brecht's epic theatre for example), while *kazalište* might refer to the institutional aspect of theatre (e.g. the *Berliner Ensemble* that Brecht founded with Helene Weigel).

In this duality theatre realises its power of refraction: it is now materially factual and thus the world does not see itself only *in* theatre, but also *through* theatre, which makes theatre a polygon *par excellence* for rethinking social objects, its parallel involvement in social processes, and the ways of separating from them. Theatre always resembles other social processes and differs from them at the same

time; nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain this dual status, owing to transformations in the modes of production.

Understanding theatre as a medium *per se* has always been an uncanny thought, primarily because theatre is a place in which the basic disturbances in communication – such as noise, retardation, deceleration and redundancy – play a creative role. Today it may even be of importance to reemphasise the difference between creation and communication. Thereby I do not mean to say that there is no mediation or communication in theatre, on the contrary. If theatre is a place of potential encounters, then the process of theatre is a performance of translation between problematics it puts in contact, coordinate systems, referential frameworks, contexts, discursive universes, regimes of interests, and modes of existence. But theatre, forever immersed in the media environment, is a mediator in the sense in which Latour has differentiated between *mediators* and *intermediaries*.[06]

Understanding theatre as a mediator instead of a mere intermediary implies that it is not a mechanism transferring the interpretation of an external author or authority. Its mode of functioning is interpretation, if interpretation is understood as translation as well as agency (*interpres* – agent, translator), as refraction rather than mere reflection. Such translation implies the creation of a composite of mutually translatable orders of bodies, thoughts and objects (in Diderot's theatre it is tableaux, in Brecht's *gestus*, in Artaud's hieroglyph, and in Beckett's breath), its capacity exceeds, above all, the pure function of translating a clear

message or meaning. In Barthes' words, these composite examples of *découpage* are "erecting a *meaning* but *manifesting* the *production* of that *meaning*" (1977, 71).

## 2nd OBSERVATION

Instituting theatre implies a constant process of articulation, differentiating according to that which is external to it. That process is double: it opens up a new space by "linking different elements" (Marchart 2002) but since theatre is a never fully closed unit, space or system, as a manifestation it never achieves ultimate stability, it is never radically differentiated but tends towards delocalisation. Paradoxically, to establish its situations as a part of its own process of articulation or instituting, it necessarily becomes re-localisation itself. Theatre exposes its images, its appearances to viewing, but these images and reactions to them are mutually indissoluble, they are composites. "Every thing, that is to say every image is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions," (Deleuze 2001, 58) and thus theatre is always part of some immanent appearing. Even though an image is de-localised by being exposed to viewing, "severed" from one network of relations and entering another, the articulation of the new set of relations objectifies and homogenises by way of a "sedimentation", as understood by Ernesto Laclau. Having borrowed the term from Husserl, Laclau has used it to describe stable topographies, spaces created by routinisation and the hegemonisation of practices: "Insofar as an act of institution has been successful, a 'forgetting

of the origins' tends to occur; the system of possible alternatives tends to vanish and the traces of the original contingency to fade. In this way, the instituted tends to assume the form of a mere objective presence. This is the moment of sedimentation." (Laclau 1990, 40)

### 3rd OBSERVATION

Although institutions are stable topographies, sedimentation is not primarily spatial, its link with the material infrastructure is of a secondary order. The institutionalisation of theatrical routines, their homogenisation should be viewed from the chrono-logics of theatre. The concept of *instituare* offers two meanings: 1) to cause to stand or stand up, and 2) the introduction of something new, a break with the past (Levine 2015, 56).

The processes of instituting are above all acts of beginning that assume long durations. Institutions thus constitute newly established ways of organising heterogeneous materials and times, sedimented patterns of duration and repetition through time. Institutions are endurances of certain forms composed into rhythms that compile different time dynamics, patterns, and periods. Every theatre is a conglomerate of time patterns that have acquired a formal organisation of their own – the elements of institutions often link material and immaterial forms of architecture, management, repertoire calendar and schedule, working hours, modes of presentation, technology, the organisation of viewing, design, style periods, etc., which have accumulated in epistemologically and productively

divergent historical periods. Institutions, therefore, repeat the time patterns that make them recognisable, but also juxtapose incommensurable rhythms within the social whole. This is the reason for their problematic relationship with the present; their iterability rests on the performance of routines and norms through practices of work, communication, moving, and phenomenality that are not necessarily or are seldom in synchronicity with the rhythms of more mobile economic, social, and cultural actors (Levine 2015, 57-65). But precisely for this reason institutions also allow us to see the status of the work of artistic production in relation to the dominant modes of production in society. To be able to speak about differentiating the artistic form of work as free work, we must also differentiate the notion of production in art from social reproduction, or what I already described above under the heading of anti-production. A separate question then arises of how to correlate work in art with other forms of work, as well as with the practices that it approximates thanks to the work of institutions. The development of cultural institutions is undoubtedly linked to processes pertaining not only to industrialisation, but also to post-industrial forms of organisation and labour. Due to the division of labour in institutions, artistic work has found itself in a situation where it must synchronise and rationalise with other forms of work, those that constitute the organisational, technical, and support services of institutions. Gradually, cultural institutions have come to synchronise with the factory model, including all forms of regulating, organising, and even protecting work and workers. For, as Marx says,

"Every kind of capitalist production [...] has this in common [...] that it is not the workman that employs the instruments of labour, but the instruments of labour that employ the workman. But it is only in the factory system that this inversion for the first time acquires technical and palpable reality." (2007, 462)

This transformation results in displacing the model of artistic work from that of free work to the fiction of labour as a commodity, culminating in project-based forms of work that enable the quantification and presentation of the price of every part of artistic work for funding systems.

## 4th OBSERVATION

The classical difference between the two basic types of human activity – *poiesis* and *praxis* – has been progressively obscured by the introduction of a third term into the relation – work. Work, relegated to the bottom of the ancient Greek hierarchy, today occupies the central position in our value system and becomes the common denominator of all kinds of human activity. Giorgio Agamben claims in his reading of Hannah Arendt: "This ascent begins at the moment when Locke discovers in work the origin of property, continues when Adam Smith elevates it to the source of all wealth, and reaches its peak with Marx, who makes of it the expression of man's very humanity. At this point, all human 'doing' is interpreted as praxis, as concrete productive activity (in opposition to theory, understood as a synonym of thought and abstract meditation), and praxis is conceived in turn as starting from work, that is, from

the production of material life that corresponds to life's biological cycle." (1999, 70)

Simultaneously, Jacques Rancière argues that the aesthetic revolution overcomes the poetic regime and institutes an aesthetic regime. He reads *poiesis* normatively, as a regime of representation, an "ordered set of relations between what can be seen and what can be said, knowledge and action, activity and passivity" (Rancière 2009, 21). The aesthetic regime is, however, one of irony, where "art is art to the extent that it is something else than art" (Rancière 2010, 118). Such an ironic fate, rising, through negation, on the other side of the nihilism of representation, was described as early as Hegel as "Nichtiges in seinem Sich Vernichten."[07]

*Terra aesthetica* is the desert where man must roam when separated from the origins of the artwork itself, because in the poetic act, "artists and spectators recover their essential solidarity and their common ground" (Agamben 1999, 102). The alienation that separates art from its poetic power erases the possibility of man's encounter with his capacity for acting and knowledge. Man's poetic capacity to bring something into existence, Agamben will say, also invests him with a capacity for *praxis*, free and wilful acting. That power, "the most uncanny power" (Agamben 1999, 101), is given to man through engaging in rhythm, because "in the work of art the continuum of linear time is broken, and man recovers, between past and future, his present space" (Agamben 1999, 102).

In Agamben's interpretation, rhythm causes a break in the linear flow of time that temporally captures

the spectator in time, floating in a suspension of the continuity of a continual series of moments coming from the future and submerged in the past. An artwork puts us in a temporal interstice that is not timeless, but has a rhythmic character, the character of a phase, period, or epoch. Returning to the topologies of institutions, their poly-rhythmic character has a predisposition for "epochal" displacement. Its duration is marked by periods, and new institutions that have a new approach to artistic production, potentially open new periods, new displacements, new reserves that simultaneously hold people together and offer the opportunity of breaking into the present. There needs, however, to be a change in our view of the work of art; its purpose is no longer to accelerate the progress of thought, but to turn it around, to slow it down, to immerse it in the problem, instead of searching for the outcome.[08]

The way down (*kata-*), which entails a period of *katastrophe,* should be rid of the trajectory set by *katastasis*, if we are to find in the problem, through a turn (*strophe*), both the present and its displacement (*ekstasis*).

# Parenthesis on Responsibility

**"...at least let the minority within you have the right to speak. Be poets."**
— Francis Ponge, *Rhetoric* (1979, 73)

Responsibility is about recognising the call; it is about the differentiation between the appeal to conscience and the beckoning that is conscience itself. Responsibility is about knowing who is calling and understanding that this "who" is an "I" enacting indefinite urgency. It is about acknowledging that to engage an "I" doesn't mean to identify with "we", but rather to identify the number of voices that occupy our words among the multitude of outsiders that negate our inner minority's right to speak. Therefore the rights, first of all, have to be reconstituted, because the rights are not calculable. Responsibility has to be vast; it is always excessive, otherwise it is not responsibility; it's incalculable and un-decidable, or as Derrida would say, it is the "experience and experiment

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of the possibility of the impossible" (1992, 41). And what if Derrida doesn't matter? But what if he actually does? What if even art always matters? What if art always has its consequences and not its given chances?[09] If whatever we are and whatever we do matters then our responsibility is to push ourselves over the edge of calculability, to take a stance outside the *stasis* of the neoliberal economy. And then, what if austerity measures do not matter? What if austerity is a rhetoric of "we" for the sake of the rich minority that always presents itself as benefitting the majority, but in the end always cares only for itself and for capital?

A poet doesn't matter anymore. The poet is no longer a valid metaphor for an artist. Being a poet is no longer a metaphor for *flâneurism* and waste just because the poet's poorness is not calculable. *Flâneur*'s radical expenditure is nowadays called consumption. Notwithstanding the prevailing economic perspective, the laziness and slowness of being a poet is a measure of a time to come. The fable about the grasshopper and the ant is replaced by the fable about the tortoise and the hare. *Festina lente*. Incalculability, not being recognised by its rights, but rather moved by its excess, makes the poet a metaphor for the coming community, whatever this may be, one however "that always matters" (Agamben 1993, 1).

In Francis Ponge's poem *Rhetoric, a* poet is not the one who expends words but the one who prolongs the time that remains. The poets here invoked are young ones, saved from suicide by learning the art of how to resist words, how to say "only what one wants to say, the art of doing them violence, of forcing them to submit". To "teach

everyone the art of founding his own rhetoric" (Ponge 1979, 73) is a mode of giving one's lifetime another measure. The consequence of education in rhetoric is not to give people a new power of expression, but a new skill in the politics of conquering time. Finding her own rhetoric is a poet's way to resist rhetoricism, to resist the authority of language, of ready-made wordings and worldings. Founding her own rhetoric is moreover not founding a personal language. It is rather the way of confronting austere rhetoricism by rhetorical austerity. Responsibility is a mode of responding occasioned by the waste of a bit more incalculable time, by bestowing a bit more time on elaboration against the economy of service, and a bit to the repair of a broken society.

# 2.

# The Exploded View

# Chrono-logics of Theatre

Although issues pertaining to the specific role of cultural institutions in the alienation of artistic work have been discussed mostly from the perspective of institutional critique in the visual arts, the real drama of legitimisation is unfolding in the performing arts. These are dominated by debates concerning the status of labour, the work, practice, discourse, and political subjectivation within quite specific temporal logics or chrono-logics that are still fundamentally bound to the collective processes of creating a work of art. To a high degree, the collective character of those productions forces each of its processes to not only deal with the formal modalities of work, but also with those of organisation, which invariably implicate various durations, rhythms, and infrastructures that bind them together.

The despotism of capital over time is clearly shown by Bojana Kunst's wholesale elaboration of projective temporality; however, such a totalising view of time would be incomplete if we also understood it as a comprehensive cross-section of our present. Time flows, but this flow is not a linear one. Our biological time is not identical to our working time, and that is the first place of friction in

the imaginations of time. Theatre always takes place in a measured, as well as experiential time, performances obey certain time schedules, and there are certain imaginations of duration that are performed or reproduced. It is invariably located in a given historical moment, but is always in the present as well. Theatre is able not only to reflect, but also to produce time. It always takes place in an instrumentally determined time, but is itself a temporal operation as well. That machine-like character of theatre, its ability to be a diagram of time, to spend time to present an image of time, to temporalise space, also enables it to produce breaks in time. And breaks are necessary if we want, with a bit of rigid thinking, to attempt to destabilise or at least expose the determining and totalising fiction of a causal relation between our working life and lifetime.

The collective character of producing theatre implies complex structures of time and temporal flows, but in order to survey the capacity of theatre to re-examine and not only represent chrono-logics, we must take a different view of the entire course of its production. That course does not begin by writing your grant application. If there is an application, it already constitutes an implementation of that course in the sphere of economic imagination, as real and as determining as any other segment of the process. If we view the process and its segments in instrumental terms only, as purposeful segments of the project's linear development, the climax of which is the deadline or the première, the contemporaneity of that work is deferred into a future that is primarily determined by the moment of completion.

The chrono-logic that I am proposing rests on rejecting a univocal view of contemporaneity, especially one that would depend on a homogeneous perspective from the viewpoint of the present. As I have already indicated in laying out the dynamic of my own work, the present is dispersed, it follows different kinds of rhythms, curtailments, recapitulations, decelerations, gradual eliminations, unfoldings, etc. These are not exclusively derived from the instrumental purposes of the individual units in the process, but also follow their own operational rationale, as dynamic flows of the unfolding, accumulation, and reversing of the vector of time.[10] Each one of the segments organising the process is a temporal set, a conjuncture, a gesture of time, and has its own operative function or is a consequence of such an operation (viewed from the perspective of form). These sets constitute meta-stabilities of sorts, discrete units that border one another in the same operative territory of time, but together, they also constitute products with their different genealogies, that is, they are consequences of structural causes in a field of problems that features different internal spatio-temporal dynamics and material homogeneity.

Cut through like this, time is predicated not on systemic organisation, but on multiple "unit operations" (Bogost 2006). All of these elements link up with one another, converge, and hold their relations for a while, generate provisional unities, meta-stabilities, whether through logics of development or repetition, but neither development nor repetition determine the totality.[11]

Instead of research geared toward the final completion of the work, the attainment of which would be defined by its presentability, organisational research explores how things come to begin, how, for instance, at a certain juncture in time, the body, movement, and technology came together in the cinematic choreography of workers leaving the factory of the Lumière brothers; or how the banishing of the parallel, artificial gesture in Delsarte's rhetoric coincides with the ideology of natural movement in early modern dance; or how algorithmic tools introduce "inhuman" logics into the movement of performers when performers seek to translate glitches in their performance into temporal continuity; or how industrial mass production and the Taylorist organisation of work correspond with serial choreography in slapstick, etc. Each one of those tiny sets may have its own various dislocations and operative relations with other similar or divergent sets.

The theatre is an apparatus, a special machine made of a "different metal", a structure comprising tiny discrete units, none of which dominates the others, but where no unit is superfluous either. A machine is more complex than a tool or mechanism, which are unidirectional only. This is a machine whose parts are set up according to their clear definitions, comparable to Althusser's description of the apparatus: "the dictionary definition also says that, in the 'ensemble of elements', none is superfluous. On the contrary, all are perfectly well adapted to their end, in so far as all are parts of the articulated whole designated as the 'apparatus' [...]. This therefore presupposes a sort of mechanism in which all the parts, all the wheels and cogs,

work together to the same end, which is obviously external to the apparatus; if it were not, the apparatus would not be 'separate'." (Althusser 2006, 82-3)

Formalised temporally, the theatre is an ensemble of discrete sets that have their own temporal determinants, but whose mutual encounters, swerves, and conjunctions likewise have their own. In the field of art, the theatre is only one such encounter, which may or may not happen, whose swerves may or may not generate series of new encounters.[12]

A wide range of researchers in the discipline of performance studies have claimed the constitutive essence of performance is its ephemerality, its explicit existence in the present and its becoming through disappearing.[13] This view of performance as always already evaporating, however, still rests on the idea of theatre as a reflection, something we may observe only reflectively, always in a present that is no longer here, that is, therefore, in the past. Here, by contrast, we are talking of a theatre of rupture, a theatre that will always evacuate first, generate a void and not ask about the origins, but instead force encounters and survey the symptoms, insist on that which is a trace, a residue that has held on, but could have equally disappeared, the residue that always retains the possibility of turning theatre into a different kind of machine. Such a theatre is a theatre of refraction, a materially factual theatre where one observes the world not only from the theatre, but also through the theatre. This kind of theatre is one of radically slowing down, a theatre where the calendar, clock, working time, lifetime, duration, "time-space compression"

(Harvey 1990, 147), "atemporal time" (Castells 2010, 430), "operational time", "time that remains" (Agamben 2005, 66) etc. are articulations of the operative states and expressions of ruptures in the dominant images of time.

# Post-Hoc

Let's spend some time on the act of looking back, the same one that Althusser uses to finish his written after-thoughts on the Giorgio Strehler performance that he saw in 1962, whose conclusions in a way also announce his radical conception of aleatory materialism. Althusser is looking back in time: "I look back, and I am suddenly and irresistibly assailed by the question: are not these few pages, in their maladroit and groping way, simply that unfamiliar play *El Nost Milan*, performed on a June evening, pursuing in me its incomplete meaning, searching in me, despite myself, now that all the actors and sets have been cleared away, for the advent of its silent discourse?" (2005, 151)

The silent discourse of incomplete work appears in time and not at the place, appears in a form of recapitulation. This is because, if the theatre's object is "to set in motion the immobile, the eternal sphere of the illusory consciousness's mythical world, then the play is really the development, the production of a new consciousness in the spectator" (Althusser 2005, 151). For Althusser, this new consciousness is incomplete, but driven

by incompletion itself, by the distance established, "this inexhaustible work of criticism in action". This operation, too, entails the production of a new kind of spectator, but its work begins when the performance ends, its work of beginning is an act of completion that takes place in life (Althusser 2005, 151). The completion of the performance starts post-hoc, as after-thought, as *Nachdenken.*

An interruption "initiates a different sort of movement: that of the *afterthought*, the disjunctive movement of *Nachdenken*" (Weber 2002, 35). But the afterthought is not only a privilege of the spectator, if we agree that the spectator is always implicated in the performance and that the act of viewing is also interrupted as a constitutive act of performance. A permanent condition of incompleteness thus becomes the general principle of creation by interruption. The afterthought does not rest on the principle of necessity, the principle whereby the individual segments of a theatrical process derive from necessity, but, rather, on a principle whereby they become necessary. Every encounter and therefore every set of relations in the process "might not have taken place, although it did take place" (Althusser 2006, 193). All the encounters are aleatory and their results random, which means that their conditionings may be determined only "by *working backwards*" (Althusser 2006, 193). The domain of this kind of work is the detection of "affinities" (Althusser 2006, 193) that did/would enable a given set to hold on, or made it necessary. And that is what theatre rehearses in its process: the conditions and affinities of its agents that enable a certain set of time, space, and gesture to hold on various levels of existence – among its

agents, in the world of objects, in relation to fictions, in front of its spectators, in the repertoire, in history...

For the artistic act to take charge, to enter the sphere of politics and ethics as an object, as a fact, this artistic act as *res* has to become *res gesta.* as Agamben describes how a simple fact becomes an event.[14] The principle of incompletion implies not a deficit or interpretative relativisation, but a rift, a cut, and to illustrate this I will use two metaphors that are crucial in BADco.'s work processes when it comes to approaching the problem of set and operativity. The first is the exploded view and the second is the interstice.

The exploded view is a technical term that denotes a mode of presenting the relations between the integral parts of a set, whether an object, mechanism, or machine, and we first used it as a metaphor when we worked on our performance titled 1 *Poor and One 0.* This mode of presentation creates the illusion of a small, controlled explosion at the centre of the object with its integral parts frozen in mid-air, scattered in space, at an equal distance from each another. This is precisely the diagrammatic, refractional view that I am proposing here: a mode of presentation that, in synchronicity, shows an "exploded view of diachronic processes" (Medak 2013). Such a view simultaneously suggests encounters and junctures, and highlights the interstice, the space of a rift between the elements (of a set). This space of interruption between two elements is what Goddard (and then also Deleuze) called the "interstice" in montage. "Sometimes, as in modern cinema, the cut has become the interstice, it is irrational and

does not form part of either set, one of which has no more an end than the other has a beginning: false continuity is such an irrational cut. [. . . and this cut is] disjunctive." (Deleuze 2000, 181) That gap separates, but is also factual. It brings together by separating and leaves room for speculating about that which is invisible, abstract, which enters meaning vertically. Every set in a process, its every operative segment, results from a break, not from a climax. Sets are a sort of gesture, separable and independent. In that sense, the première in theatre is not the moment when the process reaches its summit, after which everything is just repetition, but a moment of break, a moment when another set of agents, abstractions, and real effects, or, to put it more precisely, another series enters into a relationship with performance, through a non-relation. Unlike functional analyses, which begin, normatively, by assuming that there are rules whereby sets are organised, our assumption is that once a set is established, its elements play by the rules, obey laws, but those laws are haunted by "a *radical instability*" (Althusser 2006, 195). The perspective of our analysis is not laws but the radical instability of the set, but these sets are always linked through certain patterns and relating habits, such as, for instance, accepting collective spectatorship or affective openness. To Stilinović's conclusion that art always has consequences we might add that one cannot predict those consequences. However, we can always work on the affinities, which is in theatre a key epistemological question.

Perhaps the most accurate phrase for naming this kind of work was offered by Tomislav Medak in his proposal for

a workshop intended to develop an analytical system that would reflect on the poetics of presenting and circulating in the performing arts: **post-hoc dramaturgy.** Medak thereby also gave an *ad hoc* name to the poetical approaches that have formed the backbone of BADco.'s work all these years. I will offer two examples, in the first the process was organised by means of operative derivations from individual performance situations from our shows, while in the second the perspective of observation was set up retroactively, concerning our work as a whole.

In the first project, titled *Post-hoc Dramaturgy*,[15] we asked ourselves the following question: "How does a work work?" To begin with, Ivana Ivković proposed a chronological division involving three general operative stages of the traditional mode of working on a theatrical performance. The first stage would comprise the so-called poetic or productive dramaturgy stage with all the different operations of generating and accumulating the so-called performing material. The second stage, called the dramaturgy of the final cut, would consist of making decisions regarding presentability, where dramaturgical functions mostly relate to montage, reflection in the so-called external eye, checking the feasibility of the main assumptions of the performance, etc. The final-cut has to be understood literally as a cut, as an interruption in the way Benjamin understands the functionality of gesture. The third stage is that of distribution, when the artwork is presented and usually subjected to interpretative analysis, from detecting its authorial intentions to the meanings generated by the work. In this stage, however, our interest

does not concern authorial intentions or the production of meaning but the operative aspect of the performance (how does the work work?), where the main parameters include the identification of the actors/agents involved (performers, spectators, presenters, public, non-human actors, etc.), the procedures for mobilising attention (the atmosphere, intensities of the performance, subjectivation of the spectators, exhaustion, boredom, mediation by means of different media, reading...), performing formats (performance, interventions, durational performance, performance series), and performing units (situations, interventions in the public, micro-events...).

Starting from those parameters, we specified several "objects" or, as I call them here, sets, which in different performances involve different procedures with their own specific spatio-temporal operations. For instance, one of those sets involves technologies and infrastructures, i.e. the material relations of viewing that have appeared in our work in various procedural modes: divided experiences of viewing (intimacy with some spectators, divided attention, various spatially conditioned perspectives...); the economy of attention; the mobilisation of various capacities in the spectator (cognitive, physical/kinesthetic, affective, desires); the asymmetry of insight; rethinking the relations between the traces produced by the performance, the spectator's ability to remember and necessity to forget; affective "leaking" of humour or genre principles translated from popular culture (SF, horror, slapstick, *Schlager*...) into a performance of complex problems; friction in the perception of time and duration; immersion, remoteness, or laterality in relation to the performance, etc.

Another set produces operations in the performance context: contextual translations (involving different cultures, world views, professions…); inscriptions and interventions in various artistic contexts; memory, the residues of the performance in its cultural context; the show's resonance in various contexts (the public, the domain of art, the political realm, media, society…); the attitude to the spirit of the time, etc. Regarding such examples, one could also list some additional sets: feedback loops at various levels, changes in the apparatus, the status and value of the work…

In his "Preliminary Thoughts on Poetics after Production" Medak lists three reasons for the increase in the interest in knowledge production in art. The first stems from the fact that in today's post-political society the space between politics and the base has been evacuated and art seeks to fill it. The second comes from the fact that the processes of de-industrialisation have seen an increased focus on the education of the workforce and that this wave has effected the development and academisation of educational programmes and explorations in art. The third reason lies in the delocalisation of artistic production by way of international circulation. "[A]s artworks have de-contextualised, so has the knowledge production around them, replacing the old morphology of disciplinary knowledge formerly tied to local disciplinary histories and material genealogies giving rise to a new, universal organon reflecting the universal circulation of artworks. The compound consequence of the trans-nationalisation of production and circulation of art and the universalisation

of disciplinary knowledge unfolding through that trans-
nationalisation is that the artist finds herself in an equal,
if not privileged position to produce knowledge about
her work or, tendentially, to switch track altogether and
produce knowledge instead of artwork." (Medak 2012, 7)
Although it seems like an attempt at systematisation, post-
hoc is not meant as a systemic analysis, or to compensate
the production of works with that of knowledge. Rather,
it is an attempt to use an exploded view of the work and
its operation to generate new pragmata primarily pointing
to the poetics of knowledge, as well as, consequently,
to a responsible artistic poetics that would be exposed,
thus disassembled, to changes in the conditions of their
production. This is an important political issue, if not
also a fundamental political assumption in theatre. It is
evident, however, that such an approach should first of all
reject the traditional logic of the chronological division of
the process and instead treat it in terms of recapitulation,
diagrammatically, enabling the process to last as long as it
takes to establish a new image of time, with the situations
of the presentation being only ruptures in their duration,
markers of time.

Running parallel with the insights of post-hoc
dramaturgy (but also preceding its articulation as a
"method") the *Whatever Dance Toolbox* (WDT) emerged as
a software tool that we spent a number of years developing
with our permanent associate Daniel Turing, in several
stages. I will once again call these "sets", because they were
characterised by different collaborative relationships and
various modes of relating to the context and external

actors/agents. Our first encounter with software was in our performance *Deleted Messages*, where we used Daniel's already available motion-tracking software: "Warszaw Pact". Then we invited Daniel to join us for a ten-day public programme titled *Shared Space* to work on developing new software for manipulating video images in time, but Daniel used the programme to develop a presentation titled *What Does a Machine See?* We were intrigued by the idea, completely unknown to us, that software could tell us "what a machine sees" and we accepted Daniel's proposal to continue our collaboration through mutual education, and so we found ourselves on neutral terrain at PAF in St. Erme, France. This collaboration saw some unusual overlaps – Daniel watched our rehearsals and suggested applications that might help us in the analysis and transformation of movements for the performance (changing the speed of video reproduction, using jumps and pauses in time, playing videos in reverse, etc.). At the same time Nikolina, Daniel, and I worked on trying out other applications that would be primarily educational for us – Daniel suggested an application in the form of simple tasks that taught us visual representations of what a machine "sees".

In these collaborations and in communication with other artists at PAF we realised that we actually had three important foci in that process. The first concerned and still concerns the image-processing applications we used in our performance "memories are made of this... performance notes" (2006), work that continued in some later performances, mostly involving the relation between the director and software designer.

Our second focus concerned the fact that in working with software there began to emerge a visible manifestation of what we called "alien logics" in choreography – the expression of internalised decision-making procedures and images of movement that result from working with an external influence, the influence of non-human logics (algorithms, manipulated images etc.). As a result, a key issue in our choreography became how to make visible the process of compositional, improvisational, and dynamic decision-making in choreographic performance, or, more precisely, how to make visible the processuality of thinking in a performance, instead of auto-expression and the choreographic object. Over time specific poetic assumptions crystallised in our choreographic work in procedures that became evident in performance, but were not always immediately intelligible, or at least not self-explanatory, while the complexity of the assumptions with which the performer operated created the impression that the performance was driven by an alien, external logic. Fully aware of their unpopularity in dance, which tends to idealise "naturalism" and the distinction between the internal and external work of expression, we were particularly interested in those external, "artificial" logics precisely because to us, they seemed to be the key mode of correspondence between the performance, performer, theatre and the environment, whether we defined it in terms of the object, context, conditions, or society.

In such a process of performative thinking it was impossible to avoid a key aspect of its objectification and proceduralisation in our environment – algorithm-based

forms of mediation and reflection. Therefore, our third focus was on developing a software tool that might enable us to work in the studio, because it became clear that some applications significantly improve observing the material in real time and reproducing it later, while others suggested the possibility of generating movements and work involving improvisation.

After that, we came up with a dozen or so applications that we all then tried out with other potential users (dancers, pedagogues, therapists, non-dancers, etc.) in a series of workshops.

Upon gathering feedback, we gave ourselves three tasks:

- to develop a tool that we would find interesting in our choreographic work;

- to develop a tool that anyone could use, without imposing the specificities of our choreographic work;

- to develop a tool that might help us to exemplify and disseminate our method of working with movement, improvisation, and issues related to attention.

This gave rise to our collaboration within a wider partnership project with other organisations working on the development of technologies and methodologies, which included the implementation of the tool-development project. The project's time-span was roughly six years, which saw significant changes in the collaborative dynamic between everyone involved. Our interest in new technologies changed significantly and made a crucial impact on our thinking about a whole range of problems, such as the issue of open codes, copyright, collaborative platforms, etc. In encounters between the technological

setup and various aspects of our process (rehearsals, performances, workshops, etc.), WDT produced different kinds of knowledge that were reinvested in the processes and that resulted in a tool that that could be used in our work in various ways, but was neutral enough that others could use it in their own work. There were some failed encounters as well, some applications could not be developed. Although there was professional interest in this, we never found the time to develop a therapeutic application of the tool, etc. Nonetheless, as a whole, WDT links an entire series of different registers in our work and the conditions in which it was developed, although in itself, it is not expressive of that totality.

These two examples point to our primary interest in the operative techniques of theatre. To achieve a change in theatrical technique from sedimentary to operative, from one where the "*knowledge* of the nature and mechanisms of [...] the theater" (Althusser 2003, 139) is sedimented into one where knowledge intervenes, I will propose three procedures derived from Benjamin and Althusser's interpretation of Brecht: literarisation, displacement, and changing the regimes of interest. First, I will briefly introduce and exemplify them and then consider them in relation to the full breadth of my own interests in theatre.

# Literarisation

The concept of interruption as a formative Brechtian procedure is extensively discussed in relation to Benjamin's theory of epic theatre. Let us remember that Benjamin's claim is that epic theatre is gestic. A key feature of gesture, which distinguishes it from other human actions, is that it has a definable beginning and end. "Indeed, this strict, frame-like, enclosed nature of each moment of an attitude which, after all, is as a whole in a state of living flux, is one of the basic dialectical characteristics of the gesture." (Benjamin 2003, 24) That dialectical assumption leads Benjamin to argue that interrupting the plot actually constitutes the main concern of an epic theatre that seeks to have a gestic character.

Gestic interruption is a first step in the process of demythologisation. As I have already said, spontaneous representation of action in traditional theatre happens through a *mythos* created by the dominant worldview. *Mythos* is its manner of representing. This action and that *mythos* is what epic theatre interrupts. This interruption is supposed to cut the temporal flow in its progress, arrest it and suspend it, "fixing" it in a gesture.

But such a gesture defines itself not merely in terms of what it is, but in terms of its potential extension, its virtual separation from itself, its *citability.* The concept of interruption is deeply related to Brecht's concept of literarisation: "Literarization means putting across ideas through actions; interspersing the 'performed' with the 'formulated'. [...] So far as the communication of the subject matter is concerned, the spectator must not be misled along the path of empathy; instead, a form of intercourse takes place between the spectator and the actor, and basically, in spite of all the strangeness and detachment, the actor addresses himself directly to the spectator." (1960, 97-103)

If we push it further, performance turns out to be a collection of gestures, citations, a notebook, it takes a format which questions the need for the stream advocated as such. This entails a kind of performance that produces images of time in various directions, because the interrupted gestures are not stopped but deprived of their spontaneous expressivity and, by way of literarisation, a process of recasting emerges whose temperature is determined by the class struggle, and that opens up to other possible connections. The process of recasting, as Benjamin explained it to Adorno in a letter from 1935 (Benjamin 1994), is not a process of alloying similar to the principles of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, quite the contrary, it is a process of cleansing, whereby the world of dialectical images is protected from all metaphysical objections.

The complexity of the dramaturgy of performance's communication channels, once practiced by Brecht in terms of titles and projections, aimed at removing attention

from the temporal imperative of the stream, allowing the audience to think above, or out of it. "In drama, too, we should introduce footnotes and the practice of thumbing through and checking up. Complex seeing must be practiced. Though thinking *above* the flow of the play is more important than thinking from *within* the flow of the play." (Brecht 1960, 98-9)

The literarisation of the conditions of life in theatre, as Benjamin re-contextualises the concept, is related to another concept elaborated by Brecht and that's functional transformation (*Umfunktionirung*) (see, Benjamin 1970 and 1980), an urge towards a transformation of the apparatus of production through interruptions, gestural suspensions and displacements.

Brecht regarded cinema as the best-suited medium for functional transformation precisely due to its closeness to contemporary modes of production. This is perhaps best reflected in the work of the Dziga Vertov Group, and especially their film *Ici et ailleurs* from 1976, in which the authors revisited their propaganda film about the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, which they shot in Syria but left unfinished. Through a close reading of the modes of production they used to obtain the images from Syria, the situation of their own direction/staging of propaganda film scenes, and their manipulation and functionalisation of the cinematic apparatus, the film's authors use editing and narration to articulate a sort of post-hoc analysis of a film that was never completed. In the scenes added from their everyday lives, which they use to interrupt the analysed material, they find nothing

but inertia; however, they do not show this inertia, but instead, use it to characterise viewing. Counting the recorded images involves re-functionalising them by means of editing, an analytical action that reifies the interstices between the images. In lieu of Vertov's interval the authors supply the view of the authors/spectators, in the literally inscribed conjunction "AND" (ET):

"NARRATOR: There are no simple images anymore. Only simple people who will be forced to remain silent... like an image. Each one of us becomes counted on the inside, but insufficiently on the outside. Little by little, we are replaced... with an unbroken chain of images, which capture one another...
TITLE: (chain of images)...
NARRATOR: Little by little, we are replaced... with an unbroken chain of images, which capture one another... each image in its place, like each one of us, in our own places, in a chain of events that we no longer control at all.
TITLES:
HERE                    (IMAGE)
AND
ELSEWHERE          (SOUND)
NARRATOR: We acted like anyone else would. We took the images and played the sound too loud. To what image, it didn't matter. Vietnam... always the same sound, always too loud. Prague, May '68 – France, Italy, the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The workers' strikes in Poland, tortures in Spain. Ireland, Portugal, Chile, Palestine. Sound, so loud that it almost drowns out the voice it sought to extract from the image."

To stop the flow, pull the brake, move in time, recapitulate, edit, extract from the image, dislocate. And never to forget Chris Marker's question: "Why do images sometimes begin to tremble?" (1977)

# Displacement

*Displacement effect* is a concept suggested by Althusser (2003, 142) as an additional translation of the Brechtian concept of *Verfremdungseffect*, which designates displacements that affect the whole of the conditions of theatre. It is the totality of displacements that constitute this new practice, which is related to the effect of decentralisation.

The primary displacement that Brecht implemented in the theatre, according to Althusser, was the *displacement of the point of view*, or more precisely, "conquering the position of politics", "the place in the theatre that *represents politics*" (Althusser 2003, 142). Following that, we are faced with other displacements: 1) the displacement of "*the theatre in respect to the ideology of the theatre* that exists in the head of the spectators" (establishing a series of distances on the stage and from the spectators) (Althusser 2003, 143); 2) displacing "*the conception of the play*" (decentring the play in order to avoid "the form of a spontaneous representation that the audience has of life and its conflicts") (Althusser 2003, 143); 3) displacing "*the play of the actors* in respect

to the idea of acting that the spectators and the actors themselves have" (Althusser 2003, 144).

Althusser explained this displacement and decentralisation very precisely with the example of Giorgio Strehler's performance of "El Nost Milan" that was previously mentioned, but let me bring it closer to the contemporary performance apparatus, concretely to Marjana Krajač's performance *Manual For Empty Spaces* (2012). To describe it in analogical terms, I would say that this performance is the reverse of Daren Arronofsky's movie *Black Swan* when it comes to presenting the working conditions of dancers. There were several versions of the piece, but in the version that I have seen Marjana Krajač and dramaturge Marko Kostanić place a big video screen in front of the auditorium where they present around an hour of roughly edited footage from the process of rehearsals, research, talks or material for the performance. On the left side of the stage, exactly in the wings, there is a strip of white dance floor, the only place where live performance happens. Obviously, the movement of the dancer is related to the material on-screen, but besides it's arrangement, besides its accomplished light design and occasional blackouts that makes the piece look completed in itself, the connotative aspect of the dancer's performance is completely emptied-out. The actual existence of the performer retains only the "melodramatic veneer" (Althusser 2005, 135) of a dance performance. The only moment when the performer enters the centre of the stage is at the end of the performance when the camera, controlled all the time by the choreographer, leaves the

empty studio and shows a view of the street. We see a few youngsters-immigrants hanging in front of a shop.

The structure of time in the performance very much reminds me of the structure Althusser identifies in a performance in 1962: "The coexistence of a long, slowly-passing, empty time and a lightning-short, full time; the coexistence of a space populated by a crowd of characters whose mutual relations are accidental or episodic – and a short space, gripped in mortal combat." (2005, 134)

There is no mortal combat in the dancer's live performance, but the gesture of suspending and separating her solo position barricades her inside its myth, while simultaneously interrupting it by emptying out the time of its production presented on the screen. And by emptying out the time of production I mean exactly what Althusser saw in the scenes of life of proletarians in Strehlers piece: "a time in which gestures have no continuation or effect, in which everything is summed up in a few exchanges close to life, to 'everyday life', in discussions and disputes which are either abortive or reduced to nothingness by a consciousness of their futility. In a word, a stationary time in which nothing resembling History can yet happen, an empty time, accepted as empty: the time of their situation itself." (Althusser 2005, 135-6)

The empty space of the studio gets its gesture by extending itself through the emptiness of time in the same way as a dancer stretches her body, to use a favourite metaphor of Benjamin's. The stretching produces articulations and tensions at the same time.

This show has to be strictly differentiated from a number of recent shows that try to bring the process of artistic production onstage, but starting from the assumption that you can conceptually superimpose production (or process) and product to bring out a common logical outline, namely to stage "becoming". This tendency shares the fantasy of staging becoming and even dogmatic Deleuzians, like Brian Massumi, claim that "When this procedure is followed, product and process appear as versions of each other: copies. Production coincides with reproduction. Any potential the process may have had of leading to a significantly different product is lost in the overlay of what already is." (2002, xviii)

We may conclude that this concerns a threefold kind of displacement along the lines of Althusser's modulations of Brecht:

1. The displacement of choreography in relation to the prevailing ideologies of self-expression and service economy where production and consumption coincide.
2. The displacement of choreography in relation to dance; the choreography is not danced out; it even doesn't become the dance piece; with the presence and movement of a camera the dancing body slows down and becomes more static.
3. The displacement of the choreographer's/ cinematographer's function in relation to the organisation of movement for viewing/camera.

# Regime of Interests

When it comes to practices that displace the viewer's expectations, Lars von Trier's film *Dogville* is frequently associated with Brechtian theatre. A feature that significantly distinguishes that film from theatre, however, is a difference in what we might call, following Levi Bryant, the *regimes of attraction.* A symptom of that difference is the "local manifestations" of the characters in relation to the regime of representation. In the long shot showing Grace lying huddled in the apartment where Chuck has just raped her, the camera retreats from a close-up to a long-shot showing the entire village from a high angle. Although the two-dimensional geographical view of the village ostensibly suggests a dislocation of the cinematic regime of representation, the regime of attraction that pertains to film does not permit anything else to happen in any of the remaining houses that might divert the spectator's attention away from Grace. The regime of attraction imposed by cinema's visual narration allows other characters only a limited range of local manifestations and thus turns the inhabitants of the village into an indifferent environment, a human landscape.

By definition, regimes of attraction are "interactive networks or [...] meshes that play an affording and constraining role with respect to the local manifestations of objects." (Bryant 2011, 205) Depending on the set of objects or systems under observation, "regimes of attraction can include physical, biological, semiotic, social, and technological components." (Bryant 2011, 206) Regimes of attraction may include hierarchies that, in subgroups of the network, disable individual local manifestations of objects. Local manifestations of objects are not their "qualities", but what they "do". Let us assume that every theatrical setup is regulated by a certain regime of attraction that sets up relations between all the people, living beings, and inanimate objects whose local manifestations are at that precise moment determined by the mutual relationship of performance, viewing, viewing from the performance, and the performance of viewing. The manifesting of theatre, however, is likewise determined by the temporal-evental structure that defines local manifestations of classes of people and things by their intrinsic relations. This is described by Althusser in "El Nost Milan" (2005), where he examines the difference in the intensity of action between a melodramatic story and a presentation of workers' everyday lives.

These levels of intensity are regulated by a *regime of interests*, which may be viewed as an inversion of the concept of the regime of attraction. What concerns us is how to locate the intrinsic logistics of tensions or operative level of the *problematic* within a certain regime of attraction, the law or framework that includes or excludes from the

problematic field certain concepts, local manifestations, and even objects and people, and engages all implicated actors/agents in a given field of problems (performers, spectators, objects, technology...). The population of beings and things brought out before the spectator is mutually connected to, for example, a fiction determined by their disposition, or to an image that gives them a certain perspective that includes some of their qualities, but excludes others. These levels of importance are determined by the regime of attraction. Problem relations, however, are determined by the internal logic of their interests, which defines their related problematics. This logic in theatre involves not only the population presented to the spectator, but also the spectators themselves, that is, the whole of the theatrical apparatus and what it interpellates. By *regime of interests* I understand a set of conditions that define *the field of the problem*. The proposition of a new problem shifts the regime of interests and vice versa, while a shift in the regime of interests renders a new problem visible. We should distinguish here the idea of shifting regimes of interests from Althusser's shifting of the point of view because there is no privileged point of view implied. There are some localisations of the view, but these are equally "problematic", as is everything implicated into the field of problem.

As I have argued, the spectator no longer has the privileged position of an objective viewer because he's already enmeshed. Althusser-as-spectator claims that; "We have the same dawn and night, we skirt the same abysses: our unconsciousness. We even share the same history –

and that is how it all started. That is why we were already ourselves in the play itself, from the beginning – and then what does it matter whether we know the result, since it will never happen to anyone but ourselves, that is, still in our world. [...] The only question, then, is what is the fate of this tacit identity, this immediate self-recognition, what has the author already done with it? What will become of this ideological self-recognition? Will it exhaust itself in the dialectic of the consciousness of self, deepening its myths without ever escaping from them? Will it put this infinite mirror at the centre of the action? Or will it rather displace it, put it to one side, find it and lose it, leave it, return to it, expose it from afar to forces which are external – and so drawn out – that like those wine-glasses broken at a distance by a physical resonance, it comes to a sudden end as a heap of splinters on the floor." (2005, 150)

A regime of interests would therefore be the aggregate of conditions applying to a specific *set of actors*, human (performers, authors, spectators, technical staff, curators, funders, the public, etc.) and non-human (the props, cameras, stage, screens, algorithms, the city, capital, etc.), extracted either as an *artistic formalisation* (choreographic procedure, intervention, action, triptych, camera motion or angle, film sequence), or *formal organisation* of bodies or objects in space (dance, collective and social choreographies, gestures, protest or combat formations, sequential organisations of bodies and objects, etc.), which in various performing modifications, linkages with other sets, problematics, and regimes of attraction appear in new material and immaterial manifestations of real abstractions.

The shifting of regimes of interest produces problems that are trans-individual, de-centred and they produce new stances (new modes of existence), new *Zustand*s, even di-stances, which is to say, configurations that are not simply stable or self-contained but above all *relational*, determined by the *tension* of its *ex-tension*, by its relation to that which it has interrupted and from which it has separated itself (Weber 2002, 35).

The interruption of pre-established relations shifts attention, but the shifting of regimes of interest produces new exposure, which Maeterlinck already considered the secret of poetic mastery: "Let but the chemist pour a few mysterious drops into a vessel that seems to contain the purest water, and at once masses of crystals will rise to the surface, thus revealing to us all that lay in abeyance there where nothing was visible before to our incomplete eyes." (Maeterlinck 1903, 110)

The problems are singular because they are a sharing as such, but the difference between actors in the regime of interest is in the degrees of freedom an actor possesses with respect to their conditions. What opens up, to quote Petar Milat, "is a space of reciprocal provocation, on uncertain grounds where no single instance has a privileged access to procedures of metamorphosis" (2011, 17). That's why the fourth displacement is needed – the displacement of the spectator to the position of viewing from the side, to make the spectator into "this distance itself, the distance which is simply an active and living critique" (Althusser 2005, 148).

It's very unfortunate that Althusser never completed his text on Brecht and Marx that I'm referring to. The interrupted chapter is the one on risk of fire in theatre (Althusser 2003, 146-8), which functions very well as a metaphor for the regimes of tensions in the traditional theatre. It's not easy to predict where that metaphor on the pleasure of playing safely with fire in the theatre would lead, first, because it's on stage and second, because it's always in a neighbour's house. But what has changed in the meantime is that the audience no longer sits next to the fire on-stage, but always at the places safely lit by green exit signs. The fire doesn't happen on-stage because it is forbidden, the fire doesn't happen at our neighbour's place because he is in the audience, but on-stage too. So the question is, where is the fire?

# Operation

Here is a model reconstruction: Zagreb, early May 1945. German and *ustasha* troops are retreating from the city. Several filmmakers, most of them pioneers of Croatian film, participate in saving film equipment and material that the occupation forces intended to take with them. A part of the equipment has been transported from the former building of state production into private homes, but it is impossible to hide everything. Therefore, the cameramen grabbed the cameras and came out into the streets, filming the retreat of the German and *ustasha* convoy from Zagreb. In order to avoid suspicion, they camouflage some of the cameras behind windowpanes or behave as if they were fleeing themselves. Sometimes they even ask the retreating soldiers to help them transport the equipment to a filming location. The whole action is coordinated by film director Branko Marjanović, who is based in the city centre and plans the locations. On 8 May, the partisan forces enter the city, but the filming goes on. Mistrustful partisans occasionally stop civilians carrying cameras, but the cameramen tell them the agreed password: "Florijan knows

everything!" Even though Florijan does not exist and the cameramen have invented the password, a name behind the action helps regulate the situation. The cameramen are left alone. In this way, a historical document is created that is now known as the "Liberation of Zagreb" (Škrabalo 1984, 109).

So what is there to be reconstructed? Everything has been filmed, documented; the object of the cameramen's attention is permanently available, evidencing the fact of a rupture, a revolution, an "event" of truth (Badiou), a breakthrough in the situation, from the way things were. The film, like the fake password naming "Florijan", re-situates and names the event, de-constituting the community in decline and establishing another on the rise. Still, the story narrated above is indispensable for the "truthfulness" of the filmed material.

The film is apparently neutral, void of all agency. The main difference between the shots made before 8 May 1945 and the later ones is the fact that the documentation of the retreat are voyeur-like, filmed from behind windowpanes, clandestinely or with great caution: they have been made by cameramen with a mission. The shots of partisans entering the city indicate uncertainty, but also show the enthusiasm of the cameramen, their camera running with the momentum of the moment, the filming operation now becomes an action. The footage was presented in the first issue of *Filmske novosti*, a cinema journal created by our filmmakers. Prior to 8 May 1945, they were employed in the production sector of Hrvatski slikopis, an institute producing propaganda film journals for the puppet regime

of Croatia. The day of the liberation of Zagreb also brought changes in the production staff. The material made by the staff of Hrvatski slikopis became the material of *Filmske novosti*, first released on 21 May 1945. The idea behind the documentary operation became the "thought of a founding fiction, or a foundation by fiction" (Nancy 1991, 53). In this way, our story has been transformed into a myth, since that fiction is the operation as such. To say it more clearly: the operation is no fiction, but its fiction (the way our story goes, the notes on the making of the first post-war film material in Croatia, the history of Croatian film that includes it, or the narrative in the margins of the film) is an operation. The story about the operation accompanying the documentary has transformed its own fiction into the "foundation or into the inauguration of *meaning* itself" (Nancy 1980, 53).

Paradoxically, the film does not document the story of the operation, but the very embeddedness of that story in the film, that is, before it has become a narrative, presents the "*living heart of the logos*" (Nancy 1980, 49). The myth of an operation being *the* operation as it is lived and living because it was created on the very spot of the event, at the site of its origin. It was created at the site where one cinematography was declining and another emerging, at the site of birth, of innovation – both social and aesthetic.

What makes this operation interesting however, is also the fact that it was an operation of saving one's bare life. But saving one's life did not consist in retreating or hiding – rather, it meant investing one's life in an action that was ideological and corresponded with the mimetic aspect of

the film. If a political decision merged the documentation of the operation of retreat with the action of saving the equipment, it was ideology that galvanised the enthusiasm of the cameramen and the entry of partisans into the city. It was the ideology of the codename (Florijan), of situating the whole thing in vagueness, that homogenised the two social choreographies (Hewitt 2005):the organisation of the filming according to the flow of refugee convoys and the enthusiasm of confronting "the new" in the flow of history.

# Interruption of Myth

But we are still preoccupied with the question containing the word "reconstruction": Why reconstruct? The third stage of liberation in the story of our cameramen is their rehabilitation with respect to ideology. Thus, if we wish to help them into the field of the aesthetic, we will have to take the action upon ourselves, to accept that our action, the one that would reconstruct the whole thing in the mode of a repeated performance, will be a representation of the immanently political in the narrative of Operation Florijan. Let us assume that we have production facilities that enable us to engage a sufficient number of performers, vehicles, weapons, and old equipment – the operation will still fail. The best we can accomplish is a re-enactment or staging of the adapted narrative, rather than its reconstruction. Why is that so? Because a situated narrative such as that of Operation Florijan requires a previous interruption of myth, a sort of Brechtian literarisation, the interruption of the originating speech, of mythological operations, of communication that no longer establishes a community but points to the performers that now have nothing in common

with those who must fight for their bare lives, however aestheticised their social choreography may be: "This literarisation of the theater, as indeed the literarisation of all public affairs, must be developed to the greatest possible extent." (Brecht 1960, 98-9)

The literarised theatre is a theatre in which footnotes and observations help us look left or right, beyond the homogenisation of the situation or narrative by the aesthetic ideology.[16] In this respect, we must distinguish the reconstruction of performance from the re-enactment of action, which we receive in the form of myth or narrative. The narrative's action presupposes that our film on the Liberation of Zagreb can substitute for Operation Florijan or serve as its metaphor. The fact that I have called it Operation Florijan means that it is possible to use the narrative about shooting the first post-war film as a *blueprint* for the performance of a social narrative by an undercover agent. The re-enactment of such an action therefore has its recognisable performative scheme, its social choreography, in which Operation Florijan is only a metaphor for the birth of a new cinematography. The reconstruction of performance, however, presupposes that the artistic performance is a possible "*blueprint* for thinking and effecting modern social organization: it is not only a secondary representation but also a primary performance of that order" (Hewitt 2005, 14).

This means that we have three possible procedures and a single goal: 1. Creating an artistic performance as a *staging* of the narrative (Operation Florijan) or a *re-enactment* of the action; 2. *Reconstructing* such a performance as literarisation

or interruption of myth, even if the performance has never existed, since its operation is its fiction; 3. *Reconstructing* the situation, that is, *acting retrospectively* in the field of political action and seeking to re-enact the situation of the Liberation of Zagreb from another enemy. The interest of our artistic plan stays in the field of reconstruction, primarily because re-enactment includes restarting the mechanism of the aesthetic ideology of action. "On this limit, the one who exposes himself and to whom – if we listen, if we read, if our ethical and political condition is one of listening or reading – we expose ourselves, does not deliver a founding speech. On the contrary, he suspends this speech, he interrupts it and he says that he is interrupting it." (Nancy 1991, 68) Reconstruction presupposes a new approach to construction, in which we will find a place for the voice of those who speak non-constitutively, at the brink of muteness, at the brink of becoming literature.

# Reconstruction

We have to make one more differentiation between the concepts of reconstruction and re-enactment. The practice of re-enactment comes close to the practice of reconstitution, especially in the case of a re-enactment to which the author or performer of the original performance is invited. Instead of de-mythologisation and non-identitarian presentation, such re-enactment mythologises the performance by placing it operatively in non-time, on the level of permanently possible rather than potential. Such practices do not reach the brink of presentation in non-identity, since they establish their origin and identity in time.

Reconstruction opens up the possibility of bringing mythologized performance back into the field of affirmation, into the field of the politics of emancipation rather than identification – by literarising it, as Emil Hrvatin has done on the basis of *Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilička*, a mythical Slovenian performance from the 60s. Whereas originally it was performed by artists that were "illiterate" in terms of acting and dance – poets, musicians, and students – Hrvatin re-enacted it with a

team of performers that were too literate for that – and this generated an entirely new relational frame and created a new performance, while its contextual and referential aspect was transferred to the presentation machinery of Power-Point, running in the background. The reconstruction consisted of a complex set of questions, suppositions, re-enactments, footnotes, quotations, original shots, etc. There was, however, a point at which the entire performance reopened onto the field of myth, and that was the mise-en-scène of the Law, the scene in the reconstruction where sacrifice as a constitutive act of Western society was presented. The original performance of *Pupilija* ended by slaughtering one of the seven hens that freely roamed around in the scene. With no ritual whatsoever, the end of the performance ended the life of the hen – the *Gallus sacer*. By interpreting performance as a state of exception, a state of illusion, the act of subversive affirmation erased the identity of someone completely, and gave them a new identity, the identity of a performer. Until the moment of death, the moment of restarting the reality. And in that reality, the reconstruction of *Pupilija* ends with a *mise-en-scène* of the Law: the version that I have seen ends with a video clip in which a lawyer explains the legal repercussions of killing an animal in a public place. In another version, the audience votes for or against killing the hen. Eventually, the hen is not killed, as the legal consequences are drastic, while the fictional relationship between the law and violence gives a new fundamental power to Hrvatin's reconstruction, the power of the community of those who, deprived of their identity, expose themselves to one another at the brink of the scene, on the margins of the law.

If, however, if we understand politics as the brink of the scene (rather than mere obscenity), the place where the subject is radicalised in performance, the procedures of reconstruction will open up numerous other issues – from redundancy in art, to the metaphor of art as a state of exception, to the constitutive role of artistic experiment in the community or the problem of social invention in post-vanguard art.

In the performing arts the majority of referential investigations or reconstructions focused on the 60s and on those authors whose work, among other things, did not set disciplinary limits to their own artistic practices, but rather offered the possibility of participation to those who were illiterate in art, and even the possibility of becoming illiterate in the process, e.g. Yvonne Reiner, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, etc. It is difficult to say whether it is the immanent politics of social choreography, or the impression that all artistic practice in the 60s was steeped in the political tensions of the time, which is so attractive to researchers interested in the political aspect of performance. What is certain, however, is that the mythology of the 60s deeply influenced the performing arts of the time with the myth of politicality, which indirectly corresponds to the aestheticised policies of today. For this reason I am interested in the performance of *Majski i ostali rituali.* [*Rituals of May and Other Rituals*] from 1970 (which was actually interrupted by lowering the curtain and never performed completely), in which a group of filmmakers gathered under the name of PAN 69, among them Mladen Stilinović, and re-enacted some selected

events of that historical month, such as the celebration of 1 May – Workers' Day, the Youth Baton, Tito's birthday, the student protests, the speech of President Tito addressing the students, the expulsion from the Party, admittance to the Party, etc. These events are just as interesting as those from 1945, since the student protests of 1968 remain equally unreadable from today's perspective. It is generally known that there were protests and that they were an echo of those happening all over Europe, and that they occurred after the student demonstrations in Belgrade. It is known that they were organised and even the names of the leaders are known. Very few people, however, know the real proportions of the protests, whether the organisers of Operation 1968 fought purposefully, with the aim of achieving more communism, less socialism, or whatever. Thus, what we know about 1968 in Zagreb is a myth and we need to reconstruct a whole series of events in order to obtain a real picture of the politics behind the protests. This is especially so because many of the participants were later active in the Croatian national movement of 1971, which had a significantly different ideology from what we know about the myth of 1968.

Seen from today's perspective, the events of 1968 have, unlike Operation Florijan, their own construction in the performative body of the happening of *Majski i ostali rituali*, which opens up space for investigating the blueprint of socio-political relations in the artistic community of Zagreb in the 60s.

*Majski i ostali rituali* is a little known happening and there is very little evidence that it has ever been actually

performed. All that we may discover or state about it today is actually constitutive of and fundamental to the group that performed it and for the community in which it was created, as well as for those interested in historicising a living artistic act. Someone might observe that these are only historical facts, just like any other facts in today's art of archivable data. But that is not quite correct. What distinguishes a mythologized performance from an article about that performance, photographs from the past, or remnants of the action is precisely the fact that a performance, precisely as an encounter, is a specific mode of political or social production. Roland Barthes says: "There is [...] one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man as a producer: wherever man speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image, wherever he links his language to the making of things, metalanguage is referred to a language-object, and myth is impossible. This is why revolutionary language proper cannot be mythical." (Barthes 1972b, 146)

Each performance might establish a new potential set of relations, a system that we may not understand at first, but if it offers the joy of production it will certainly open up the possibility of a new social or communal organisation. Here we must go beyond the framework of the production of meaning or context, beyond all interpretations indicating that it is possible to read what we call our present from those performances. It is precisely such interpretations that mythologize performance and identify production with foundation.

# On Translation

– six frictional scores for the performance of translation

### 1. COORDINATE SYSTEMS

— Extract one cinematic object, a sequence of condensed space, time, and information from a movie and translate it into a black box performance situation. Start with Michael Snow's *Back and Forth* or any other structural film. How does the theatre have to be transformed for the object to become visible? What change in viewing has to happen for the performance to happily domesticate the same sequence of condensed space, time, and information?

— Move it now into a white box, minimise the distance between the objects of viewing and the beholder and stretch the image by introducing interstices of white wall between its elements (as in Francis Bacon's triptychs.)

### 2. MODES OF EXISTENCE

— Occupy a deserted factory, organise a film set there: bring the cameras, lights, performers...
— Stage a shooting of the scene of a strike in the factory.
— Pay film extras to perform as an audience watching this shooting of a performance of filming, together with a regular audience watching the shooting announced as performance.
— Shoot it all with a camera from the side.

### 3. DISCURSIVE UNIVERSES

— Grab a quote from *A Thousand Plateaus* on the book as an assemblage and perform the *détournement* by replacing the word "book" by the word "performance".[17]
— Mix it with the Brechtian concept of lateralisation.
— Or, simply presume that by the end of performance communism might come.

### 4. REFERENTIAL FRAMES

— Walk.
— Take the stairs up and down.
— Bump into the revolving doors, or other people. Repeat it again and again.
— Do it the Buster Keaton way (watch the elevator crane scene from *The Cameraman*)
— Repeat the same movements without the stairs, objects and people – on flat ground.

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— Make a collective serial choreography out of it.
— Cover the space with cameras and do a live editing of the material in the manner of Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera.*
— Subtitle *The Eccentric Manifesto* over it.

**5. CONTEXTS**

Reconstruct a performance art piece from Eastern Europe, e.g. one of Julius Koller's anti-happenings or Tomislav Gotovac's cinematic performances on stage, cover it with cameras and lights. Alternately switch regimes of visibility on stage and the projecting screen:
— record with an overhead camera and mix with footage taken live in another public space
— record live in total darkness with night-shot cameras in the manner of hand-held porn
— add different frames and backgrounds to the live image screened: baroque portal, peephole, prison bars, TV studio auditorium...
— subtitle it with different texts: *Open Score* by Robert Rauschenberg, Alexey Gastev's *Poetry of the worker's blow*, a dialogue between Alexander Kluge and Heiner Mueller...

**6. REGIMES OF INTERESTS**

Choose a small white box. Replicate one wall with a plaster wall but do not connect it to the ceiling or the lateral walls – it should look as if cut out. Make a door in the fake wall. Put a strong red light behind the wall, fix the door ajar. Make peepholes on the wall with displays inside.

Make another replica of the same wall and fix it in the space as if the original fake wall was geometrically translated through the white box. Cover the "negative space" between the two fake walls with cameras (overhead, frontal, shot reverse shot...). Create a live video editing system which could screen visitors in the watching-scenes:

— mix the overhead shot of visitors' movement with previously recorded choreographies in the same space
— digitally erase some visitors from the image in real time
— subtitle the clips with Sci-Fi narratives

# 3.

# "He is in the Orchestra Seats. He's the Wise Man."

# Cinematic Modes of Viewing

Denis Diderot had a dream of the theatre as Plato's cave, which ended with his awakening – he dreamed that he was sitting with his arms and legs tied, one among many, his face turned towards the depths of the cave where a huge projection screen extended from side to side. (Diderot 1960, 188-98) Most of the men, women, and children were eating, drinking, laughing, and singing. Behind the audience, small colourful figures were projected onto the screen with the help of some sort of magic lantern, while assistants behind the screen were lending them voices, which created a terribly convincing illusion of actuality. Those that were projected were kings, ministers, priests, doctors, apostles, prophets, theologians, politicians, villains, charlatans, illusionists, and other merchants selling hopes and fears. Plato's allegory of theatrical illusion was condensed into Diderot's parable of cinematic viewing. From his dream, we awaken into the beginning of the modern period, the present time, where we know that our viewing is always cinematic, that our dreams are always edited, and that the joy of an emancipated spectator is always the result of an illusion created by reasserting rules and instructions.

Diderot's dream, however, leaves open the possibility of another participant, the one that escaped from the cave, came back, and – kept silent!

That is the institutional distribution of places. The relations are set and petrified. But how are images viewed and to whom are they shown? Does the charlatan project them for the spectator or for the king? Someone once said that art was not meant for either the spectator or the artist, but is there a third party!? In soccer, as we know, the situation is far more complex. Is the match meant for the spectators? There are two groups of spectators in soccer, and the game can even be played without the spectators, since it becomes official when it is universalised by the referee. The role of the spectator at the stadium is affective, because it increases the intensities on the field through sound, as Massumi would say. (2002, 71-82) What is interesting, however, is the role of the spectator at home. Media transfer domesticates the event and brings it home, turning the television set into an inductor – an object that provokes new affective reactions: joy, disappointment, aggression, etc.

One may ask whether Diderot's rebellious and runaway spectator would have returned to the cave had he had the option of seeing the screened projections at home. The history of media convinces us that he wouldn't: cable television, home cinema, digital video rentals, mobile telephones, etc. prove precisely the opposite, namely that home is where the cinema is. To be sure, the role of the cinema is different from that of soccer, and although watching soccer and seeing a film are both acts of affectivity,

one may say that cinema also educates the senses because it trains the spectator to watch, turning it into a sort of work. We may eat, drink, laugh, and sing in the cinema, but "with all the images of daily life in motion, the cinematic mode of production orchestrates the mise-en-scène for the production of consciousness and the consciousness of production. We cut, edit, produce, and direct; we watch, we process, we wait. You think all those movements, all that time, is your own consciousness, even though what plays on the screen in your theater comes somehow from beyond you." (Beller 2006, 80)

In Diderot's dream the spectator returns to the cave with the experience of another space. His return does not mean coming from home to another place, but rather coming back from another world to the cave in which he feels at home. Diderot advises him to keep silent about what he has seen outside. What he sees inside is theatre, although not a cinema theatre that shows projected images, but rather a theatre that shows cinematic production. His theatre is a film set, a series of stages that show all possible elements of the world on one side and their construction on another. While some people are watching the show, he is watching the theatre; while they are watching the projection, he sees the construction. His spaces overlap – the theatre is not 'as if' it's home, nor is home 'as if' it's the theatre. He has a choice and he chooses both. His theatre is *as not* rather than *as if*.

The topic of the link between film and theatre may be broached only by digging into Diderot's theatre (one of the first *masters* who had a real experience of cinema

in his dreams), the type of theatre that was the *formal cause* of cinematic modes of viewing. This section of the book will provide an extensive treatment of his thinking on theatre, by which materialist thought made its way into theatre in the first place, but I have no intention of claiming Diderot as our contemporary, or warning about his unfairly neglected position in contemporary theatre research. Rather, what concerns me here is the *perspective* of Diderot's theory of the theatre, the *coulisses* with which his discourse narrows or shortens the horizon of research in order to make more things visible, and the *reconstruction of thinking* about theatre as a strategy of viewing and expression. I will therefore attempt to unpack the main terms of Diderot's theory of theatre (and not only drama), which resonate with today's need to think theatre as a place where the world is not only reflected, but also refracted: event, situation, tableau, pregnant moment, energy, interest, etc. A deeper insight into the tectonic changes that occurred as a result of Diderot's introduction of the notion of image into the theory of theatre, in particular the domination of cinematic modes of production and viewing, will enable us to consider possible interventions in performance and theatre based upon them.

# Concerning the Image of the World

On the horizon of every theory of theatre there is a problem that Diderot somewhat casually summarised as follows: "… there is nothing that happens in the world that cannot take place on the stage" (1954, 169).

The thinking behind this logical, yet paradoxical statement opens onto an endless field of theatrical actions, which are of the world as much as of the theatre. It would be difficult, however, to establish a clear image of the world or a suitable (theatrical) representation that would allow us to encompass the problem of the relationship between the world and theatre. For, perhaps the world came closest to theatre precisely in Diderot's time. *The world came closest to theatre*, let me emphasise, because realism, being an affirmation of only one image of the world and only one perspective, later seemed to reverse Diderot's phrase: "… there is nothing that will happen on the stage that could not have taken place in the world". Up until the emergence of the new thinkers of the event, Artaud and Brecht, the theatre sought to present a regular image of the world and

of things that could already happen in the world. In realistic theatre, a world picture was reduced to a scene from the world, exposing the action behind the "fourth wall", the invention of which is attributed precisely to Diderot, who, instead of his famous dictum: "Act as if the curtain never rose" (1954, 136) seems to have said: "Act as if you were somewhere where there was no curtain at all." That is precisely why it would be wrong to understand Diderot's wish to retain the fourth wall, the un-raised curtain, as simply an announcement that all potentialities are still open, given that the tendency of realism was to show only that which was actually possible and only in the way in which it was actually possible.

Before we turn to Diderot's individual concepts it might be a good idea to consider the relationship between classicism's game of **representation** and language, as this will clarify how the world in Diderot's time became the language of theatre. In his analysis of the classical *episteme,* Foucault claims that representation in language does not mean "translating, giving a visible version of, fabricating a material double that will be able, on the external surface of the body, to reproduce thought in its exactitude" (2005, 86). The game of representation is instead a double game, "...language represents thought as thought represents itself" (Foucault 2005, 86). It is a game of immanence, not imitation, "...nothing is given that is not given to representation". In this game of representation "that stands back from itself, that duplicates and reflects itself in another representation that is its equivalent," language is not parallel to the thought it seeks to express, but caught up

in the web of the power of representation. Language "does not exist. But [...] it functions: its whole existence is located in its representative role, is limited precisely to that role and finally exhausts it." (Foucault 2005, 87) Language is not "an exterior effect of thought, but thought itself" (Foucault 2005, 87). A representation turns into speech, while words, although separate from things but nevertheless entangled in a new web of mutual construction, acquire the force of things. Language and thought play a constant game of folding and unfolding each other.

Such a language is in constant relation with representation, language serving as a framework, as the theatre of thoughts. However, the internal innervation of representations enables the birth of sense. Sense is not borrowed from the world, because representations are not "rooted in a world" (Foucault 2005, 86). But the world and its representation are in a homological relationship.

In Diderot's work, such a world picture is revealed as the theatre of thought. The fact is that in almost all writings by this classicist pantophile, whether philosophical, critical, or scientific, we either find a derivation from theatre or derive general ideas that are reflected in his writing on theatre. Within his thought the theatre and the world play the same game of folding and unfolding, and if in the theatre everything is language, then the world, too, is the language of theatre. The theatre is a statement of the world, but the world likewise expresses itself in the theatre. This is not about weaving signs or abstractions, but about "common notions" as Spinoza calls them, affects that rule motion and rest. It is a language of encounters and

affects, not one of representation. This language is less a language of fictions and more a language of compositions. The world is thought by means of tabular or geometrical methods, because the truthfulness of characters and bodies depends on the autonomous power of thought and not on its object. Characters and bodies do not stem from objects themselves, but from compositions, from relations and circumstances. A geometrically conceived world is still a world of fictions, but those fictions increase our understanding of the composition of the world. We compose that world ourselves and assume the power supported by "the law of energies and interest" (Diderot 1954, 233). We must not understand that law as a regulator of power, but as the direction of development. In the game of understanding, the decisive role is played by the game of folding and unfolding, the explication of the implicit, the game of expression. There is no primary meaning – a representation represents itself. In that sense, language is to the represented world "what algebra is to geometry: it replaces the simultaneous comparison of parts (or magnitudes) with an order whose degrees must be traversed one after the other. It is in this strict sense that language is an analysis of thought: not a simple patterning, but a profound establishment of order in space." (Foucault 2005, 91) The same applies to the genetic character of theatre – "subsequent creation of a fiction around an initial datum, which is always of a gestural order" (Barthes 1972a, 29).

The establishment of order, composing, contrasting, thinking in multiplicity and in depth are the main features of Diderot's plans for the theatre. Diderot

necessarily implements those plans successively, rather than simultaneously, but does not abolish the world of simultaneity in favour of succession. Indeed, when planning a performance, he is not interested in "what" is in the world, but rather "how". He is not interested in planning **what** will take place and in what order, but **how** it happens. Centring thought in the mode of happening also opens an endless possibility of developing events, whereby the focus moves to the quality of the event itself.

# Situation, Event

To shed light on Diderot's notion of the event, we must first survey the inseparably linked concept of **situation**. As Vjeran Zuppa argues in his *Uvod u dramatologiju* (*Introduction to Dramatology*): "Denis Diderot is undoubtedly the first theorist of drama who gave the situation the meaning of the *necessary idea* of a dramatic work." (1995, 80) Further, Zuppa says, the situation is "the very *act of the being of drama:* it 'connects everything to some main idea'". In Diderot, however, the situation has an *explicative* character (Zuppa 1985, 81), unlike its *formative* conception in another great theorist of the dramatic situation and later also a key source of inspiration for actor-network theory, Étienne Souriau (see, Souriau 1982). Diderot's notion of situation is not just an *ensemble of functions*, an outline of the forces of an *a priori* Situation, nor the *ground of all combinations*, nor does it exhaust its field of operation as a structural figure (Zuppa 1995, 80). It is invariably a set of relations, as well as **circumstances** (another important concept in Diderot). A situation is already an *a priori* set of circumstances wherein relations are born, relations that are *necessarily* contrasting. At work is

always a double game: "contrasts of character and situation" and "contrasts of interest and interest" (Diderot 1954, 139). Indeed, for Diderot, the third contrasting variation is banal: the contrasts between the characters. A situation, therefore, does not emerge from a contrast of characters, but of their **interests**. Nonetheless, the most interesting facet in this line of reasoning appears to be the contrast between the situation and the characters, a contrast that points to the fact that the situation exists beyond the combination of the functions of the actants, beyond the combinatorics of dramaturgical functions. Although one might compare interest to Souriau's dramaturgical functions or even vectors of desire, and project into the situation contrasted with the character something of Greimas's psychological or ideological triangle, we cannot exclude from the situation the element of circumstance, the link with the world that turns an environment into ideas, that is, images. This is not to diminish the significance of formalising the dramatic situation as a structural figure, but I would prefer to leave that to the theory of drama. I find the notion of situation that includes the circumstances crucial for exploring some other specificities of theatre as an environment, for example, the relations between subject(s) and objects in a performing situation. In a similar way, Barthes views the situation as a fact of the externalisation of an utterance, along with bodies and objects, the resultants of the explosion of the utterance into substances (Barthes 1972a, 26).

Diderot's situation in drama is "a set of circumstances and relations that [...] explicate its contents" (Barthes 1972a,

81), but the *a priori* of those circumstances and relations lies in an incident or **event**. The situation explicates what is implicit in the event. For, "[s]ince it is traced, named, and inscribed, the event outlines in the situation – in the 'there is' – both a before and an after" (Badiou 2005, 61). In that (non)time (between before and after), "the event 'works' through a situation as the truth of that situation" (Badiou 2005, 63). "An event is precisely what remains undecided between the taking place and the non-place [*entre l'avoir lieu et le non-lieu*] – in the guise of an emergence that is indiscernible from its own disappearance. The event adds itself onto what there is, but as soon as this supplement is pointed out, the 'there is' reclaims its rights, laying hold of everything. Obviously, the only way of fixing [*fixer*] an event is to give it a name, to inscribe it within the 'there is' as a supernumerary name. [...] The name is what decides upon the having place." (Badiou 2005, 61) The situation is therefore the "truth" of an event, its proper name. Perhaps it would be better to redirect our thinking in the direction of a "materialism of the incorporeal" (Foucault 1972, 231). For Foucault, an event is "neither substance, nor accident, nor quality nor process; events are not corporeal. And yet, an event is certainly not immaterial; it takes effect, becomes effect, always on the level of materiality. An event has its place and consists of a relation, coexistence, dispersion, verification, accumulation, selection of material elements. By no means does it constitute an act or property of a body; it occurs as an effect of, and in, material dispersion." (Foucault 1972, 231) An event is always in an expansion of matter, it permeates and selects its own material elements.

It is physical, but not corporeal. It is enclosed in its own logic, in a place where clarity is generated, a clarity that does not actually exist.

Diderot's position (in his *Discourse on Dramatic Poetry*) on the circumstances that generate dramatic tension is as follows: "Like most of those who have written about the art of drama, I am so far removed from the notion that the denouement should be kept hidden from the spectator that I would not consider it above my faculties to write a drama where the denouement would be announced right at the beginning and where the greatest tension of dramatic excitement would stem precisely from that circumstance." (Diderot 1954, 132) This kind of programmatic stance places him among the pioneers of modern thinking on theatre. This focus on the circumstances seems to prefigure what Maeterlinck, years later, would seek in "motionless tragedy": "The mysterious chant of the Infinite, the ominous silence of the soul and of God, the murmur of Eternity on the horizon, the destiny or fatality that we are conscious of within us, though by what tokens none can tell – do not all these underlie King Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet? And would it not be possible by some interchanging of the roles to bring them nearer to us, and send the actors farther off? [...] I have grown to believe that an old man, seated in his armchair, waiting patiently, with his lamp beside him; giving unconscious ear to all the eternal laws that reign about his house, interpreting, without comprehending, the silence of doors and windows and the quivering voice of the light, submitting with bent head to the presence of his soul and his destiny [...] – I have grown to believe that he,

motionless as he is, does yet live in reality a deeper, more human and more universal life than the lover who strangles his mistress, the captain who conquers in battle, or 'the husband who avenges his Honour'." (Maeterlinck 1903, 98-106)

Nonetheless, one could not say that artistic production preceding Diderot had not created the conditions for the birth of "non-teleo-genetic" thought. Already in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama the mystery of the plot is not hidden from the audience, but the characters are in the dark. The "teleo-genetic" quality of the plot is reflected in the fact that "the revelation transforms the elements only for those within the play, and not for the observers" (Davis 1987, 210). The teleo-genetic plot remains a trait of the early-modern world ruled by "divine events which cannot be changed" (Davis 1987, 215). Diderot throws away all techniques of complication that aim to attract the spectator's attention and curiosity. He is interested in the event, an event that has its own laws and belongs to "the Course of human events", a course that "is made by people and can thus be changed by people – although the attempt must not be imprudently done. But the point is that it can be done" (Davis 1987, 215). This idea of the "course of events", close to Aristotle's notion of the "composition of events" and characteristic of a (pre)revolutionary philosophical context, there is a whole range of possibilities opening up for Diderot regarding the "organisation" of events: in historical drama, the author *selects* the events, in tragedy he *adds* to history, while in comedy he *makes everything up*. What distinguishes the tragic from the comic is the

circumstances (Zuppa 1995, 81). As a result, "plot events become significant not simply for their own participation in the story, but for their symbolic and signifying power" (Davis 1987, 220). This might seem to some like a theoretical move rejecting theology and introducing history instead. Unusual events are possible, but must be "redeemed by ordinary circumstances" (Diderot 1972, 122). But history is not enough either. A dramatic author must have sufficient imagination in order to arrivemove from abstractions and general sounds to "sensuous representations", whereupon he becomes "a painter or a poet". Then he creates an illusion, "a permanent value that equals the number of *expressions,* some of which are positive, the others negative, whose number of combinations may differ infinitely, but whose sum total is always the same. Positive expressions represent *ordinary circumstances,* while negative expressions represent *extraordinary* ones.". (Diderot 1972, 122) Illusion therefore belongs in the class of expression. The ordinariness or otherwise of events stems from the character of expression, explicated in ordinary or strange conditions. The formulation sounds paradoxical, but Diderot himself floats between opposing philosophical positions and his theory is, in fact, a theory of paradox.

# A Paradox within a Paradox

Diderot often resorts to using society as a metaphor to describe the organisation of theatre, arguing that in performance, like in any well organised society, "each individual sacrifices himself for the general good and effect" (Diderot 1954, 50). The laws of society apply in the theatre as well, indeed in bourgeois drama a certain social construction of reality begins to petrify, later reaching a maximum of artificiality in realism. Bourgeois theatre, however, was not an invention of Diderot's, even though it could be seen to derive from his political unconscious. What drove Diderot was the classicist pursuit of truthfulness, of the faithful imitation of nature, but for him, the true was not the same as the natural. "Were it so the true would be the commonplace." Veracity onstage means "the conforming of action, diction, face, voice, movement, gestures, to an ideal model" (Diderot 1954, 48). Veracity evidently lies in composition. Furthermore, "[T]he great actor watches appearances; the man of sensibility is his model; he thinks over him, and discovers by after-reflection what it will be best to add or cut away."

(Diderot 1954, 61) Sensitivity, however, is not what an actor assumes from his model, his mimicking is "passion well imitated" (Diderot 1954, 99), which in theatre is far more effective than passion itself. What is the difference between sensibility and sense? Sensibility is "that disposition which accompanies organic weakness, which follows on easy affection of the diaphragm, on vivacity of imagination, on delicacy of nerves, which inclines one to being compassionate, to being horrified, to admiration, to fear, to being upset, to tears, to faintings, to rescues, to flights, to exclamations, to loss of self-control, to being contemptuous, disdainful, to having no clear notion of what is true, good, and fine, to being unjust, to going mad." (Diderot 1954, 68) Or, to use Spinoza's vocabulary, to suffer from the passions. An actor, however, must command "a deal of judgment", "penetration and no sensibility; the art of mimicking everything, or, which comes to the same thing, the same aptitude for every sort of character and part" (Diderot 1954, 40). This similitude, "which comes to the same thing", includes not only skill in reflecting or imitating, but also an ability to participate in developing the characters and roles, which also involve a certain quantity of affects, which are controlled by reason.

Let us bring the body back into the game and attempt to pry open the notion that prompts Diderot to say that sensitivity is the feeling of "having no clear notion of what is true" (1954, 68). It seems inevitable here to return to Deleuze's close reading of Spinoza. He argues that under the natural conditions of perception we only have ideas that represent *what happens* to our body, the actions of

another body on our own, i.e. a mixture of two bodies, and that such ideas are necessarily inadequate. "Such ideas are images. Or rather, images are the corporeal affections themselves (*affection*), the traces of an external body on our body. Our ideas are therefore ideas of images or affection that represent a state of things, that is, by which we affirm the presence of the external body so long as our body remains affected in this way [...] Such ideas are *signs;* [...] they do not *express* the essence of the external body but *indicate* the presence of this body and its effect on us." (Deleuze 1988, 73)

An image of an affection invariably gives rise to a feeling, a new idea of that affection. The problem with these affections, that is, inadequate ideas, is that we are not their cause. Inadequate ideas are affects caused by external bodies, and so we are not an adequate cause of that feeling, which Spinoza calls a passion, a passive, suffering feeling. Our capacity to be affected by passive affections is our *capacity to suffer*. Our overall capacity to be affected is fixed, what changes is the ratio between our capacity to suffer and our *power to act*. Only active force is positive and affirmative, whereas passive force creates nothing, expresses nothing. Passive force is a limitation of active force, while active force is the result of reason and is formally explained by our power of judgement. That force is also the force of being. Affections that give rise to positive, active feelings stem from our being and are shared with bodies that are agreeable to us. This allows us to grasp common notions, which are shared affects that enhance our power to act.

For Diderot, these bodies are models. These bodies are those of Tartuffe, not *tartuffe* (Diderot 1954, 64). The bodies of generalities, names, general moves. Diderot is not interested in the production of affections in a natural relation with other bodies. He is not interested in the performer's body *en soi* because he cannot see what such a body could possibly do. He is interested in adequate encounters with other bodies, in the bodies of models. What kind of bodies are those? They are bodies stemming from the materiality, as well as the immateriality of the event. An event that, within the general expansion of matter contracts into a relation, a relationship, a situation whose main law is the "law of energies and interest" (Diderot 1954, 233).

But we must not fall into the trap of idealising theatre and searching for an idealised world within it, which would be antithetical to Diderot's anti-Cartesian philosophical position. Theatre solves nothing. It will not lead us to adequate ideas. Theatre is a prism for theorising the world, an amphitheatre of explorations in anatomy wherein the world is decomposed, but also recomposed, because Diderot views pure anatomy as a dangerous body of knowledge "that should be forgotten" (Diderot 1954, 200).

Let us return to the model. A model is ideal. Models are beings of reason, ideas that measure an actor's affective work. Characters are realised, successfully or not, according to a model, which gives it an operative function as well. In fact, the model is the fictive cause of what we see in the theatre, an operational reference that stimulates non-representational thoughts and affects in the performers. It

belongs to the reflective and synthetic thought of theatre, but the theatre itself is refractive, analytic. The theatre analyses its own image, its own representation.

May one speak, then, of the model as an "impossible body" – Bojana Kunst's term for the *ideal body* (1999, 11) – the ideal model of everyday bodies that has accompanied theatre all the way from the Cartesian automaton? May one speak of the tightly controlled, physiognomically shaped body of a character in the context of later tendencies towards the mechanisation of the body in theatre? Classical rationalism defines such a view as the "tendency to make nature mechanical and calculable" (Foucault 2005, 63). Such a conclusion may be reached only if we reduce all notions of classicist theatre down to the pursuit of a natural language, that is, a natural sign. "A sign may be natural (in the sense that a reflection in a mirror denotes that which it reflects)." (Foucault 2005, 63) However: "The sign encloses two ideas, one of the thing representing, the other of the thing represented." (From *Logique de Port-Royal,* quoted in Foucault 2005, 70) The sign represents something, but as well representation is represented in it. Thus understood, the sign refers us to the concept of the image in Diderot, which also corresponds with the fact that the first example of a sign in the *Logique du Port-Royal* is a spatial and graphic representation – an image. An image has no content other than what it represents, but this content is visible only by means of representation. Such a representation is an indication and an appearance at once. In Diderot's theatre, the sign is an image that shapes the relation between the one who represents and the represented, but equally it is a sort of manifestation itself.

Diderot's treatment of the body should be viewed in the context of establishing **order** in representation. A model is not a mechanism but an abstract machine, a representation within a representation. Although it exists as a model, it is not an ideal body. It is only a referent of an external representation, it establishes and constitutes an image. Diderot's focus on how bodily manifestations explicate expression should therefore be understood in the context of a monistic – rather than a dualist-mechanistic – notion of the relation between the body and spirit. For him, in general, expression is an "image of a feeling" (Diderot 1954, 220). The body is in a constant game of explicating the implicit in an incorporeally material model. According to Leibniz, expression is the congruence of *habitus* between two things, and there are "two main types of natural expression: those that imply a certain similarity (for example, a drawing), and those that involve a certain law of causality (for example, a projection). But it seems that in each case one of the terms in the relation of expression is always superior to the other: Either because it enjoys the identity reproduced by the second, or because it involves the law that the other develops. And it in each case 'concentrates' in its unity what the other 'disperses in multiplicity'. [...] what expresses itself is 'endowed with true unity' in relation to its expressions; or, which comes to the same thing, expression is a unity in relation to the multiplicity and divisibility of what is expressed." (Deleuze 1988, 328) The superior character of the identity of an ideal model (carved out of the "dim area which surrounds it" (Deleuze 1988, 328) is dispersed in the multiplicity of

expression, and to identify a single segment, such as the body, with the notion of an ideal model would reduce the complexity that is concentrated in its unity to a sign. In Diderot, the body appears precisely in a rupture – on the one hand, the body speaks in the language of action, a language that is not only a reflection of another pre-representational world or reality, while, on the other hand, the body is a segment within the multiplicity of an image whose unity is brought together only by the spectator's mind, enlightened by perspective. The eventality of theatre (in the sense referring to the Latin verb *evenire*, to come out) lies in the fact that theatre is constituted on the principle of the event, and is constantly breaking out of itself. An event is the moment of shedding the skin of the world from time, space, objects, and the body. In an event, nothing is stable, least of all the human body. The openness of the body to a constant possibility of change (where death is the definitive change, bringing eventality to an end), its openness and instability towards different worlds make it entirely ready for eventality. For, as we said above, an event is incorporeal, which means that the body, too, becomes permeable to new worlds. An event, however, does not occur in the world, but a new world opens up through an event. This dynamic, which is fundamental to the constitution of theatre, is revealed, in fact, as a spring, as the essence of eventuality. Tension emerges, however, between eventality and the impossibility of unpredictability, which stems from our need to give meaning to the event, to name it. The event is situated, becomes an object of consciousness, and is objectified. This process of objectification applies

to objects and human beings alike, with the decisive role played by the spectator. The event, which disembodies the presence of bodies, objects, time, and space, which exposes energies and interests to the gaze, is legitimised and reified at a pregnant moment that expresses the event and its conception through an image.

Here we face another one in a series of theatrical paradoxes: the body floats from the visible into the invisible, but: "Theatrical practice is 'materialist': it states that there is no thought without the body. Theatre is body, and the body is primary, demanding the right to live." (Ubersfeld 1999, 190) Theatre is an object "that is composed not of images but rather real objects and beings – above all, the bodies and voices of actors" (Ubersfeld 1999, 190). On the one hand, the material disembodiment of an event, and on the other, the body as the matter of theatre.

Our uncertainty as to whether the body can do anything by itself (see, Deleuze 1990a, 217-234) is radicalised in theatre. It would be facile to conclude that the body is only a medium altered or transformed by an extraneous thought or power. In order to express – and the body is revealed in showing itself and expressing – the body "must in the last analysis **become** the thought or intention that it signifies for us" (Merleau-Ponty 2005 230, emphasis added). The body in expression is not a sign of thought – it embodies thought, it is thought itself. Meaning coalesces in the body, it comes out by expression, by explicating the implicit. It is our experience of the body that enables the transfer of meaning from a given body into the wider space of objects (the space of presencing, re-presentational

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space), that recognises the potential of expression in all other objects, in our environment. The body thus opens thought onto the sensuous world, while interest locates its circumstances in the environment. If the body becomes thought, it does not represent it but pro-duces, it brings it forth. The body here is not only that point in a perspective that compensates for the invisible with the visible. The body struggles with its objectness – it comes out, but does not present concepts. Clarity will only be established by analysing the technique of production, the "physics" of expression or "semiotics of affects". Such an analysis must be pursued because the mechanisms of a performance are referential only within their own enframing, which lies at the essence of the technique of production, of poetics. Here, technique of production does not imply creating a copy, repeating a pre-representational world or reality. It concerns revealing, it concerns various techniques that reveal the enframing of the world performed. The technique of production, where the body is concerned, will be revealed in the physics of expression whereby thought, inhabiting the body, is manifested.

In thinking expression we are no longer looking for the laws of production, for bringing forth, but for those of its performance. The "semiotics of affects" is therefore not a study of equivocal signs to be interpreted by our imagination. It concerns explicating expressions that we may experience only in an immediate conjunction.

In order to make theatre clear one usually looks for a formalisation of interpretative signs, "signs of superstition" (Deleuze 1988, 107). Apart from the indicators, which are

signs of bare presence, one also looks for meaning outside the opaque body, one looks for a fission of bodily cores to render the already present body transparent. Such a semantic "radiation" is not imperative, these signs do not prescribe meanings or emanate the power of meaning; they are interpretative and only permeate the body. They demand the body to act, to do. Since the body cannot do that on its own, one must give it a gesture that will indicate it, as well as a *gestus* to absorb it, a stance that interprets. That is why the age that discovered the physics of expression also saw the creation of universal and imperative theories of affects.

It is interesting that the study of gesture and its suitability originated in rhetoric, with Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* as the best example of an original source. His descriptions of the *decorum* of gesture are not essentially different from classical accounts of gestures in theatre. The overall interest in gesture in rhetoric comes down to the study of the pertinence of an action or gesture to a character and their circumstances (see, Roach 1985, 23ff). Later discussions of gesture focus on its suitability, on prescribing gestures in a production, and on their interpretability in performance. Explorations in physiognomy also influenced theatre by formalising gesture and attempting to create an alphabet of sensibility, with the work of Bulwer, Le Brun, and Engel being the most influential.

Diderot, however, sees the spectator as continuing the production of meaning, and not as a reader. He allows the spectator a perspective, as well as being a participant in the production.[18]

# Indifference

The 18th century is replete with all sorts of taxonomies of gestics, catalogues of the passions, and mechanistic views of nature. Let's look at how Jean-Georges Noverre, a contemporary of Diderot and *maître de ballet* at the Paris Opera, considered ballet, an art that at the time based its physical expression on pantomime: "What is a Ballet but a piece of more or less complicated machinery, which strikes or surprises the beholder by its various effects, only in proportion as those are diversified and sudden? That chain and connection of figures, those motions succeeding each other with rapidity, those various forms turning contrary ways, that mixture of different incidents, the ensemble and harmony which mark the steps and accompany the exertion of the dancers; do not all these give you the idea of a mechanism most ingeniously contrived?" (quoted in Roach 1985, 76)

In another letter, Noverre criticises contemporary dance for its, in his view, mechanical performance:

"I will admit that the mechanical execution of that art has been brought to a degree of perfection which leaves

nothing to be desired; I will even add that it often has grace and nobility; but these represent only a portion of the qualities which it should possess.

Steps, the ease and brilliancy of their combination, equilibrium, stability, speed, lightness, precision, the opposition of the arms with the legs – these form what I term the mechanism of the dance. When all these movements are not directed by genius, and when feeling and expression do not contribute their powers sufficiently to affect and interest me, I admire the skill of the human machine." (Noverre 1966, 19)

From today's perspective, it looks as though the complaints against ballet by early 18th century utopians of free dance were all inspired by Noverre's criticisms of dance of his own time. Noverre too, although related to Diderot in terms of his ceaseless comparisons of dance with painting and the *tableau*, as well as his quest for an ideal model in nature rather than in other performers, felt the same tension between technique and expression.

If we take it for a fact that the present body is located at the intersection of at least two subjective points of view (the performer's and the spectator's), we may conclude from the quotations of Diderot and Noverre above that we are always speaking of two "faces" of the body – the subjective body and the objective body. Or, the body of a subject and the body-object. The body of a subject is that of the drive, the body of potentiality and the event. The other body, the body-object is an instrumental body, that on which the subject acts, the body with which we enter the world.

Where are those two bodies, in fact? Can we speak of the equal presence of two bodies in the space of performance? Hardly. That other body, the body-object, emerges only by breaking out of the body of a subject, from the body-repository it becomes exposed by a technique of presence or, more accurately, with the aid of a technique of production, *techne poietike*. The French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy does not view presence in terms of the quality or feature of things, rather presence is about breaking a thing out of its repository, out of its enfoldment in the relations constituting reality. The body is not doubled, but a new spatialisation occurs in it. Another possible body is placed into the body, a transitional body, a space of transition. Just like theatre is spatialised in the world, expanding within the space of the world, which is constituted by "the indefinite reference of all its points between themselves" (Nancy 2000). What lies buried in the world comes to presence, "that which is outside the world" is placed into the world. (Nancy 2000) This discharge puts the subject in a new situation, it brings the cause into a new repository, a new order. Theatre may be an art of representation only if "[p]oetic technique is devoted to presenting this present" (Nancy 2000), meaning that what we call "representation" is not performing something again, or copying, since there is nothing to copy, but is a way of foregrounding, putting forth, re-presenting.

It is interesting that such an immanent "technicity" of presence, which typically concerned the physical aspect of performing, caused a sciencification of poetics and redirected several practices back to acting techniques

or techniques of performance. Already in Aaron Hill, who founded *The Prompter,* a theatrical journal from the 1730s, we find a critique of Quintilian's prescriptive notion of gesture in favour of a natural gesture produced mechanically. In his elaboration of the art of acting Hill programmatically lists the main types of feelings and their expressions. There are ten of them: "joy, grief, fear, anger, pity, scorn, hatred, jealousy, wonder and love" (Carlson 1993, 139), but Hill warns that actors must not simply reproduce them, but rather they must be generated by the imagination, as forcefully as in nature. Such an impulse then mechanically inscribes a natural gesture and expression into the body. What is interesting about all this is that Hill claims that his postulates are actually grounded in science and the laws of nature. And indeed modern studies of mechanical passions brought about an important turn in the contemporary theory of expressivity, which had previously rested on conventions and codes.(Roach 1985, 78)

Hill intended to develop a universal system that would offer a complete inventory of the representations of an actor's mechanism, and was itself based on "natural foundations". The technique was developed and divided into two stages:

"1st. – The *imagination* assumes the idea.
2dly. – Its marks and characteristical impressions appear first in the face, because nearest to the seat of imagination.
3dly. – Thence, impelled by the will, a commissioned detachment of the *animal spirits* descending into

the dependent organization of the muscles, and
swelling and adapting them in its progress, bends
and stimulates their elastic powers into a position
apt to execute the purpose (or to express the warmth
of) the idea.

4thly. – Thus the look, air, voice, and action proper to
a passion, preconceived in the imagination, become
a mere and *mechanic necessity*, without perplexity,
study, or difficulty."

(Hill in *The Prompter,* nos. 118 and 140, quoted in
Roach 1985, 80)

Until the 1760s Diderot was an adherent of the mechanist
theory of sensibility. In theatrical theory, sensitivity first
appeared in Pierre Rémond de Sainte-Albine's *Le Comédien*
(1747) as the actor's "individual capacity for spontaneous
responses to feeling" (Roach 1985, 99). The term acquired a
more precise meaning in the English translation of Sainte-
Albine, where sensibility and sentiment were first clearly
distinguished. As Roach puts it: "Sensibility is a capacity or
inherent disposition: the readiness to respond to stimuli,
the capacity for emotion as distinct from cognition or
will, sensitivity to the pathetic in art and literature or to
the feelings of others [...] Sentiment means [...] a thought
or feeling prompted by a passion." (1986, 99) Diderot's
earlier works are deeply immersed in the significance of
sensibility not only in actors, but also in other types of
artists. A radical twist will occur in the *Paradox of the Actor*,
where sensibility is subjected to a harsh critique, and finally
dismissed as a hindrance to the work of an actor: "It is that

being sensitive [*sensible*] is one thing and sensing [*sentir*] is another." (Diderot 1954, 92)

Diderot adopts a twofold model of expression – on the one hand mechanistic and on the other vitalist. In his writings on physiology Diderot attached importance to sensibility: "Sensibility [...] is more powerful than will." (quoted in Roach 1985, 130) Pain, pleasure, passions, imagination, instinct, the functioning of the organs, and especially habit, "all give orders to the machine" (quoted in Roach 1985, 130). In the theatre, however, an actor must submit to a wholesale system of exercises and gain experience in order to master his own sensitivity and improve his capacity for sensing.

An actor/actress is like a sublime being – she (like the famous Clairon (see, Diderot 1954, 42)) becomes double, "she is the informing soul of a huge puppet, which is her outward casing, and in which her rehearsals have enclosed her. [...] she can, following her memory's dream, hear herself, see herself judge herself, and judge also the effects she will produce." (Diderot 1954, 42) Thus, again, a cathetic effect – the actor separates from his own body and materiality through "internal" work, and is able to fill his body and his surroundings with emotional qualities and energy.

A condition for the success of a technique is indifference, "a rational use of emotionality in acting" (Batušić 1995, 549) that results from the objectivisation and **objectification** of emotions and commands. This has great significance for Diderot and Lessing alike: "Sangfroid must bring the fury of enthusiasm to its bearings." (Diderot 1954,

42) For, "theatre is like a well-organised society, where each individual sacrifices himself for the general good and effect. And who will best take the measure of the sacrifice? The enthusiast or the fanatic? Certainly not. In society, the man of judgment; on the stage, the actor whose who will have a cool head." (Diderot 1954, 50) An actor "may be blessed in such a high degree with all the gifts requisite for dramatic gesture, that he may appear animated with the most intense feeling when he is playing parts that he does not represent originally but after some good model, and where everything that he says and does is nothing but mechanical imitation. Beyond question, this man for all his indifference and coldness is more useful to the theatre than the other." (Lessing 1905, 241)

In his writings Diderot indirectly institutes a different approach to gesture, a notion of gesture that should be restrained, controlled, and not produced following rules. His explicit rejection of the academisation of physical expression and his liking for the Italian art of physical improvisation are nonetheless bound by a search for an overall harmony. We need to remember that his idea of the beautiful stems from relations, just as relations also defined the passions in the philosophy of expression. Still, this turn of his is not caused by sudden changes in styles of acting. Rather, it concerns a fundamentally different reception of the impulse that gives rise to gesture.

In his *Discourse on Dramatic Poetry,* Diderot asks why Italian actors act more freely than their French colleagues, why there is something in their acting that is "original and uncontrived", noting his preference for that "drunkenness"

over "stiffness, weight, and rigidity". There are two answers: "they improvise" whereas French actors "act by imitating others, [...] having before their eyes some other theatre and other actors" (Diderot 1954, 167-8). Diderot then moves on to the issue of *pantomime* in theatre and identifies its uses: to complement an image; to lend power or clarity to speech; to link dialogues; to characterise; to be decisive in understanding fine acting, whose sense could not be divined without it; to be used instead of an answer, "and almost invariably at the beginning of the scene" (Diderot 1954, 170).

Again, Diderot finds a tension between improvisation, which supplies originality and genuineness, and the need to plan the actor's movements and gestures in advance. However, although *pantomime* may complement, lend power or clarity, connect, aid understanding, and even supplant speech, gesture has the function of inserting sense into the world represented onstage. It generates the impression of coming from an authentic world, the sense expressed by the body seems authentic. But in the body thought acquires genuine authenticity. In simplified terms, thought thinks up and the body embodies, it gives thought a reference in the inscribed world. If the body in speech imitates "some other theatre and other actors" sense still emerges, but it stems from another context, and so seems contrived (at least in theatre with realist aspirations), too technical. It seems artificial. That there is room for pantomime "almost invariably at the beginning of the scene", before the scene becomes something in itself, suggests its potential to open up a world, while, as we saw above, gesture blends with the inscribed world.

Gesture in *pantomime* "cannot be taken away in performance from a play where there is pantomime, nor can it be supplied to a play that has none" (Diderot 1954, 170). Diderot links the audience's vision of the actor's physical expression with the vision of the author. *Pantomime* is nothing but an "image that existed in the poet's imagination whilst writing" (Diderot 1954, 176). The material may therefore be offered by the author, but if it is not, we may resort to improvisation, to the potentiality of an actor's body. This potentiality has no clarity, but generates an original movement and sense in the represented world. At this point Diderot persists in his comparison of theatre and painting, while a similar link between gesture and "mode of living" will be emphasised in his "Essay on Painting": "In society every level of citizenry has its own character and expression; the artisan, the noble, the common man, the man of letters, the robe, the judge, the military." (Diderot 1954, 222) The "material" with which a level of citizenry is expressed is double. There is the character, but as we know, for Diderot a character is determined by her circumstances, which means that physical expressions are likewise determined by a situation. This is why Diderot supplies detailed descriptions of expressions depending on the character's position in the social hierarchy, as well as their designation within the system itself: what distinguishes a savage, a republican, a man of monarchy, and a man of despotism.

A gesture springs forth, the potentiality of the body as an instrument breaks through, and since the body is involved in a set of circumstances, so a gesture, too,

is determined by its circumstances, by "techniques". Considered in this way, the theatre is the practice range of discourse, but of those modes of discourse that also permeate the body itself, i.e. pragmatic modes (Elam 1980, 139). If the body is both an instrument and a potentiality, if it both plays roles and is prone to originating, subjected to interest and driven by energy, we will be confronted by a whole spectrum of its phenomenality, from *gestus* and gesture to action and even a pure activity.

We find in Diderot a remark that was quite unusual in earlier considerations of not only theatre, but also of painting, with which Diderot liked to compare theatre so much: "An attitude is one thing, an action is another. Attitudes are false and petty; actions are all beautiful and true." (Diderot 1954, 202)

# The Law of Energies and Interest

When it comes to reading Diderot's work one must pay attention to his turn from the teleogenetic "what" to the performative "how". The performative "how" is not only a question of the structure of action in a theatrical performance, because for Diderot every performance contains a multitude of events meaning that the question of "how" also emerges through the materiality of an actor's performance. Unlike many earlier theories that prescribed specific modes of responding to dramatic stimuli, Diderot trained his actors and raised their level of preparation for the performance: "To take in the whole extent of a great part, to arrange its light and shade, its forts and feebles; to maintain an equal merit in the quiet and in the violent passages; to have variety both in harmonious detail and in the broad effect; to establish a system of declamation which shall succeed in carrying off every freak of the poet's – this is matter for a cool head, a profound judgment, an exquisite taste, – a matter for hard work, for long experience, for an uncommon tenacity of memory." (Diderot 1954, 92) From this we may derive the following two axes of performance,

both of great importance to Diderot, thought and work. In other words, acting as an embodiment of thought and its implementation through work. What and how. Interest and energy.

Eugenio Barba has devoted a lot of attention to the problem of energy. The notion of energy, Barba argues, seems inoperable in an analytical theory of theatre, because "*energy* means nothing and everything at the same time" (quoted in Milohnić 2000, 21). But the concept of "energy" that Barba suggests in his book *The Paper Canoe* is constructed through the logic of the economy of imagination, although Barba himself warns about its inflationary tendencies. Barba does not search for the source of energy in psychological terms, because he is not interested in the libidinal character of energy. What Barba attempts to do with this term is similar to what Diderot did with his notion of the ideal model – to open the possibility of imaginative thinking about/in *the process of internal work* in theatre, in the technology of theatre.

"For the performer, energy is a *how*. Not a *what*." (Barba 1995, 49) That *how* incorporates a number of those *whats*: "*How* to move. *How* to remain immobile. *How* to make her/his own physical presence visible and *how* to transform it into scenic presence, and thus expression. *How* to make the invisible visible: the rhythm of thought." (Barba 1995, 50) However, that *how* is not only a matter of learnt behaviour or technical solutions to problems, but also of work, of a practice. The performer always finds in herself a *what* that is either modelled in psychologising terms or physically treated. In the case of psychology it will be called *selfhood,*

while in the case of bodily expression, it will be called *energy*.

To be able to count on energy we must first have it, so it is already there in the enframing. Barba draws a parallel between energy and the concept of *kung-fu*. Among other things, it denotes "that imperceptible something which is worked on and guided by means of the exercise, by means of a design of movements, by means of a pattern of behaviour or well-fixed scores of actions". (Barba 1995, 51) Such an "imperceptible something" is also the energy of a performer, and to have it means to find a way to control it, to harness it, to channel and express it, to give it external appearance and so to make it clear. But until we begin to release it we may speak about it only in terms of potential energy, the zero point of content, an empty set that is nevertheless operative. When Barba argues that energy implies "a difference of potential" (Barba 1995, 55), such vocabulary, borrowed from physics, seems forced. He finds a difference of potential between intention and action, but that difference does not "generate" energy, it locates its point of accumulation. The difference between the potentiality of intention and the potentiality of action releases energy in an event. But that place of tension, that gap between intention and action is filled with exercises, and so is the place of technique. More accurately, what seems from the outside like working on the body or voice is actually an intimate kind of work, work on an inner flow, a system of dams and releases, canals and fields flowing with that "imperceptible something", the thought power to perform a certain action. An ideal model exists in advance

and defines interest, while energy is there to enable interest to direct and "squeeze" matter into specific shapes. The ideal model is the limit and energy is not scattered beyond it, but the process of modelling entails a disproportionately high dissipation of energy in relation to the material effect of work. Like Diderot then, for Barba the performer's body resembles an automaton, but this is not an automaton guided by thought but one that, conversely, operates by means of thought. Or, to quote the title of the chapter where Barba broaches these problems: "Energy, or rather, the Thought".

First of all, the imagination is what locates the source or repository of energy in the performer in the first place. Then, the thought is what may objectify that "imperceptible something" and turn it into a "what", giving it its own body. In this way the thought finds a way to its own enactment. The notion of energy therefore needs to be thought prosthetically rather than generically, because energy is what turns the thought into an act and brings it into the enframing of reality. Energy has no magical effect. We see it only when we observe our own body pervaded by power, by control. When we think our body in expression the theatre insists on control, as if the body were the locus of a possible escalation of unwanted meanings. Therefore, we use the body not only to produce, but also to control what is already produced. That is why it seems that the language of the body is a language of potentiality.

We have already said that for the performer, to have energy means knowing how to model it. We can also conclude that what we mean by energy is actually modelling,

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enacting sense in the body. As a type of discipline this modelling has a technology of its own, its purpose is to reveal sense in the body (Barba 1995, 52). Thinking in the body, recomposing it, opening space in her body for new compositions, the performer constantly combines potentialities – intention and action. In that regard, Jouvet is even more precise: "*The actor's intelligence* is his vitality, his dynamism, his action, his predispositions, his energy, a living feeling which provokes within him, to a certain degree, almost by habit, a deep examination, a *condensation* of his sensibility, a consciousness of himself. It is the *thought-action*. [...] Meaning, which sets words in motion, also impels the thought and text to vibrate simultaneously [...] The actor thinks by means of a tension of energy." (Jouvet 1983, 204, 206)

The techniques of controlling "energy flows" are wide-ranging – from absorbtion and cumulative techniques (where a broad set of preparatory actions are reduced to a specific utterance) to so-called techniques of relaxation and release (which are dominated by dance techniques, primarily used to break free from earlier techniques). But these all invariably bring about a certain change in behaviour, that is, the opening of a different style of being, behaving outside or different habits, "extra-daily" behaviour. Milohnić has disagreed with Barba's interpretation of energy and its techniques in terms of Marcel Mauss' concept of body techniques (Milohnić 2000). Mauss extracts his concept of body techniques from the idea of "habitus", which he considers more precise than that of habit because it incorporates "*exis*, the 'acquired ability'

and 'faculty' of Aristotle" (Mauss 1979, 101). For Mauss, body techniques must be *effective* and *traditional* (Mauss 1979, 104). By contrast, Barba speaks of extra-daily body techniques, and of the theatre as precisely a place of such styles of existence. Critics of Barba, however, argue that there is no significant difference between those techniques because both belong to tradition and are subject to social influences. Nevertheless, such a difference may be found both in Mauss and some later interpreters of Barba. Mauss distinguishes between the traditional effective action of body technique and traditional effective symbolic action, arguing that the former is of a "mechanical, physical, or physico-chemical order", which means that he views the body as an instrument, a technical tool.

Precisely in these terms Grotowski warns that extra-daily techniques are, in fact, amplification techniques, techniques of amplifying socio-biological phenomena. In this way Grotowski also removes the old misconception that Barba's theory is scientific, calling it instead pragmatic. Barba's pragmatic laws "are those which tell us how to behave in order to reach particular states or particular results or particular necessary connections. They do not tell us that something works in a specific way; they tell us: you must behave in a certain way." (Barba and Savarese 2005, 236) Barba therefore views extra-daily techniques not as using the body as a tool, but as its amplification, bringing his theory far closer to theories of production than to analytical theories. What Barba borrows from Mauss is an important component in accepting and mastering every technique – training. In Barba, however, training

does not have the same meaning it does in Mauss. For Barba, training denotes the building of a stance, an almost Brechtian *Haltung*, an "intersection of technique and ethics, of physical engagement and ideological taking of position from a performer" (Barba 1995, 110), an intersection of extra-daily behaviour and social interaction – an interest.

Barba's conception of technique is therefore closer to its conception in rhetoric, returning some concepts of theatrical theories of production to their sources.

Understood in this way the process of preparing an actor and performance is a continual flow of becoming and of coming into existence, enacting. Training and amplifying the body are constant processes of occupying stances and attitudes, regarding both one's own self and new styles of existence. A performer is an elaborate example of the *rhetorical self* (Vivian 2000, 312), if we view rhetoric in its broadest sense or, as Aristotle defined it, as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle 2004, 1355b, 25), although in this case it would concern self-persuasion as well.

To conclude. Thinking energy and technique in theatre is actually a way to step out of psychologising, out of "the quasi-psychological connections between an imagined stimulus and the response it elicits" (Watson 1993, 57), and turn to technical problems of control, enabling the performers "to engage and give expression to their energy" (Watson 1993, 57).

As we see, energy in Barba has a naturalising role in dealing with the *how* mentioned above, but we wonder what happened with the *what* played by the performer.

It is constantly present in becoming, and, with a little formalisation, it will become a character/figure through the accumulation of expression. While Barba speaks of energy as a prerequisite for activity and action, linking it to *dúnamis*, in order to reveal the energy of the *what* we must also think energy differently. We must come closer to the sense in which Aristotle used and forged the concept itself, which is "actuality". But any such discussion of the problem of *what* would force us to think subjectivisation and the subject, which we do not intend to do at this point.

# Scene, Image, Plan

Diderot's entire theory of theatre is accompanied by his insistence on the identity of the theatrical scene and the painting. This was later discussed by Barthes in a key text for understanding the concept of representation, titled "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein". There were four key concepts that Diderot enlisted for the purposes of his theory of theatre as one of the "dioptric arts": the *scene*, the *tableau*, the *pregnant moment*, and the *law of energies and interest*. A *tableau* is "a pure cut-out segment with clearly defined edges, irreversible and incorruptible; everything that surrounds it is banished into nothingness, remains unnamed, while everything that it admits within its field is promoted into essence, into light, into view" (Barthes 1977, 70). A tableau only becomes an image when one defines the scene in it. Painting and theatre are always about selecting the scene. A scene is defined by a set point

of view, which determines not only what we see, but also what remains invisible. What is it that determines what a scene will incorporate in its field? Judging from Barthes and, for that matter, Diderot, this will not be the topic. Topics are only mediated by images/tableaux. What the scene incorporates into its field is chosen in relation to the main idea, which "must reign like a despot over all others" (Diderot 1954, 239). The scene in theatre would simultaneously be the activity of choosing and its result, the operation of a certain perspective as well as its own content. Staging on the mimetic level involves "both the generative embodied activity of representing (including improvising in music and dance) and a (true) representation (of a model)" (Diamond 1997, v). The contents of a scene rest on alternations between motion and stillness, agitation and serenity. That's why its relations must be regulated by the *law of energies and interest*, because organisation only by means of techniques and knowledge results in turning a scene (in painting, for instance) from "a street, a public square, a temple [into] a theatre" (Diamond 1997, 233). In Diderot's view, the best critique of contemporary theatre is the fact that not a single "tolerable painting" has ever been made based on a scene from contemporary theatre (Diamond 1997, 233). What that theatre lacks is a geometry of energies and interest that would overcome dramatic geometry. What contemporary theatre lacks is a moment that one could enjoy regardless of the whole. What is lacking is a unique and total pregnant moment. Is this the moment where we "do not have to find what is significant; the selection has been made – whatever is

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there is significant, and it is not too much to be surveyed *in toto*. [...] It is with characters as with their situations: both become visible on the stage, transparent and complete, as their analogues in the world are not" (Goffman 1975 , 144). This passage from Goffman, which is not directly related to Diderot but does analyse the theatrical framework, is an extended description of the *pregnant moment*, unnatural because it is complete, because in it the present, past, and future, or "the historical meaning of the represented action", all come together (Barthes 1977, 73). Such a moment is that which, as the presence of all absences, gathers bodies in dispersion. The pregnant moment is the principle of the expression of an event, and the state of all presences, the situation, would be its utterance. The situation explicates the contrast between the legitimised energies and interests, whereas the pregnant moment is an auto-correlation of the energies and interests, the sense of the tableau/image (the subject being irrelevant). The pregnant moment implies what is explicated in the event by the situation, but it is also a representation of the event.

The pledge of Diderot's theory rests primarily on the level of operationalising the concepts of **situation** as the intersection of discursive multiplicity in theatre, the **event** as a discharge from the situation, the **pregnant moment** as a conjunction around the initial data (Barthes), and the **body** as the intersection of discursive and non-discursive practices in theatre.

The concept of situation *qua* utterance is wrapped in the notion of event. In theatre, the event is expressed by means of a pregnant moment, the moment when

time bursts out, showing the effect of the multiplicity of the relations between discursive and non-discursive horizons of production. Those relations are not manifested processualy (which is a characteristic of the situation), but in the composition of the pregnant moment. Whereas the event is an ejection from the situation, the pregnant moment is its effect, relation, accumulation, coexistence on a material level, re-compressed in a new situation. Diderot is an *ethologist* in theatre, he is interested in the relations, the **compositions** of different and equally worthy elements in theatre, not their organisation. Diderot's monistic experiment cannot separate man (or situation) from his relationship with his circumstances, with the world. Composition is what leaves things on the level of experiment, the level of immanence, what naturalises them. Every dramatic form is an attempt to stabilise the level of immanence, to give it a stable form of interrelations (not in the domain of the plot or on the surface of the bodies, but in terms of more complex bodies – those of society, politics, family, etc.).

Although the concept of pregnant moment, the moment of total absorption, accumulation of interests, and dispersion of the central (represented) idea (of the initial data) in the entire system of circumstances appears in Diderot's theory of painting, the notion of multiplicity in composition is found in Diderot's theories of both painting and theatre. A key role in the expression of energies and interest in the pregnant moment is played by the presentation of the body, that is, the bodily expression of the condition. With the procedures of the perspectival

composition of bodies in space (with regard to the absorptive centre of the scene, that is, the initial data), in painting and the stage *tableau* alike, Diderot advocates the highest degree of objectification of the body. Only thus may it enter a relationship with the circumstances, that is, become dispersive – materially, but incorporeally. Only a body pervaded by discourses may be operative in theatre.

The tensions within the multifaceted – spectacular and verbal – character of theatre have likewise determined the constitution of stage expression as well as dramatic poetics. Although up until the Renaissance the verbal component of dramatic theatre prevailed over its spectacular component, over time, theatre legitimised itself as an art that one goes to watch and not listen to (which still applies to opera, in some languages). Already within the immediate visibility of the objects and the performers themselves, in their presence onstage, we encounter a visual phenomenon that produces a selection of objects of attention. Beyond the very significance of the characters within the *mis en scène,* at the phenomenal level itself, we direct our attention at objects that are moving, that are using their body rather than letting it rest in the world of objects (see, States 1985, 136). The organisation of meaning, perception, and directing attention is achieved by establishing order within the "informational polyphony" of theatre (States 1985, 192), both on the internal level of an individual scene and that of linking scenes together. To establish order in the polyphony means to give it a shape, to formalise it. To gain expression, sense must also be stated and disorder must be turned into a scene.

All of this leads to the conclusion that beside the formal, geometrical organisation of the image/tableau in the theatre – perspective – there is also an aesthetic strategy in the text of the image/tableau beyond its correlation with the depicted reality – composition (see, Uspensky 1976, 17). Composition commanded a special place in Diderot's theory of the tableau as well. For Diderot, composition is what keeps things together, what gives sense to the order of things, the sense which is then translated into a painting. Sense is therefore guaranteed by composition and instituted by the law of energies and interest.

The composition of a scene conditions the selection of what is important and the discarding of what is redundant, just as the composition of an entire work imposes certain limits in terms of time, place, and action. The whole politics of the theatrical scene boils down to the economy and selection of what is present. The more there is that is lacking, the greater the portion of the world that is hidden behind the scenes, and the more is connoted. However, theatre also leaves open the possibility of a composition showing the spectator several different scenes at once, letting her choose which one to focus on. Instead of just one, she may choose several scenes, semantically linked in time and space.

Different ways of composing scenes also determine the style of performance, which is evident from the following quotations:

"In a dialogue [the actor] should try to direct the mouth as much as possible toward the audience, and not totally toward the one with whom he is carrying on the dialogue. The gestures, however, should be directed to this latter person, but, again, not the face. ... All of this makes it totally clear that the words of the speaker are addressed to his collocutor on the stage, even if he does not have his face fully turned toward him. [...] The movements of the hands and certain movements of the body should be directed toward his collocutor, and the speech and the face, at least when delivering a line, toward the audience."
F. Lang *Dissertatio de Actione Scenica* (quoted in Uspensky 1976, 74).

"the head slightly turned toward the person to whom one is speaking. But this should be done only slightly so that three quarters of the face is always turned to the audience. [...] Whoever stands on the right side should act with his left hand, and vice versa, so that the chest be covered as little as possible. [...] Whoever makes his entrance for a soliloquy toward a person already standing on the stage will do well to move diagonally, so that he reaches the opposite side of the proscenium. [...] He who comes downstage from the rearmost wing to join a person already standing on the stage, should not walk parallel with the wings, but should move slightly toward the prompter."
Goethe, *Rules for Actors* (1803)

"Whether you compose or act, think no more of the
beholder than if he did not exist. Imagine, at the edge
of the stage, a high wall that separates you from the
orchestra. Act as if the curtain never rose"
Diderot, *Discourse on Dramatic Poetry* (1954, 136).

"The light onstage does not come from the spotlights;
it is the light that you make, like the sun, that breaks
through the clouds and for an instant illuminates
a branch or a window... Fight against the central
perspective... Distance the spectator artificially and
keep him out of your hair, a) mentally by the force with
which you assume the character and b) physically by
your beauty/power; c) i.e. with both these things force
him to keep at a distance from you, because you wound
him, you are dangerous..."
Einar Schleef: *Ten Points for Actors* (1993, 178)

However one thinks about it, the composition of a scene
has an integrative function, regarding not only what is
presented, but also the spectators. The power of a tableau/
image is not confined to the stage. One of the main
strongholds of dramatic self-destruction and perhaps the
most interesting utopian dramatic situation in Handke's
*Offending the Audience* lies in the confrontation between
interest and tableau:

"You see no picture of something. Nor do you see the
suggestion of a picture. You see no picture puzzle.
Nor do you see an empty picture. The emptiness of

this stage is no picture of another emptiness. The emptiness of this stage signifies nothing. This stage is empty because objects would be in our way. It is empty because we don't need objects. This stage represents nothing. It represents no other emptiness. This stage *is* empty. You don't see any objects that pretend to be other objects. You don't see a darkness that pretends to be another darkness. You don't see any light that pretends to be another light." (Handke 1969, 10)

It is also perhaps paradoxical that quite frequently and especially in the 18th century, theatre established its own paradigm of perspective, one that allows us to view the strategies of the stage not only in terms of organised visibility, but also in terms of the hierarchy between the characters. In 18th-century opera, "the soloists are lined up in the foreground parallel to the footlights; the comic personages are arranged in the middle ground, in the center, while the chorus is placed in the background, or along the side of the stage. Moreover, the actors within the first row are positioned according to a descending hierarchy, depending upon the functional significance of the personages from left to right (in relation to the audience), that is, the hero or first romantic lead placed first from the left, after him comes the player next in importance and so on." (Uspensky, 75) Since theatre is not only viewed, but also observes, this kind of central perspective gives rise to a reverse perspective as well, opening out toward the conductor or spectator.

This kind of formal organisation is in fact the establishment of a necessary order, an order before an "immobile eye". In theatre, however, would this be a perspectival view of space or a real perspectival construction?

The twist brought about by Diderot's instructions regarding the "fourth wall" has deep roots in the tension between gazes, the gaze of the spectator and the gaze of the performer. But despite all the symbolic or political attributes of perspective, perspectival viewing should be reconnected to Diderot's penchant for *tableaux vivant*, as well as his instructions in the *Paradox* regarding the thinking actor. The thinking actor is a typical subject of Classicism, the subject of the *cogito*, a subject who comes to comprehend herself through her own representation. He is an "I who thinks" and not an "I who am". An actor onstage has a lack of being and it is not desirable that he be shown like that. The game of lacks should be moved aside to make room for a game of thoughts. Translating this to the language of perspectives, one should abolish internal perspective, the one in which the gaze is directed by the author or actor, and place the game at a distance. Central perspective organises the view from a distance, but a distanced gaze also organises a perspectival vision of the space. On the one hand, this grounding of the idea of viewing and representing gave rise to a realist game, the game of observing the world from a distance that reinforces and gives legitimacy to the world thus observed, but on the other hand, it also planted the seed of manipulating perspectives, horizons, and viewings, which means that

the multiple perspectives of epic, anthropological, and even post-dramatic theatre find their origin in the idea of foreclosing representation by distancing the spectator from the observed. Let us also ask: how?

Bert O. States defines three modes in which the actor relates to the audience:

1. I (actor) – Self-expressive mode
2. You (audience) – Collaborative mode
3. He (character) – Representational mode (States 1985, 160)

In the self-expressive mode the actor seems to be performing on his own behalf. The collaborative mode, even though it imposes coming together in the form of "we", incorporates the self-expressive mode as well, because "we" includes "I" and "you". Only the third mode seems entirely representational, because the actor is closed off in the character he seeks to project. The projected character, however, could not exist unless it were determined in relation to an "I", whether that of the actor or that of the audience. As a result, the self-expressive mode does not threaten the representational mode, while the representational mode is in turn conditioned by the collaborative mode, because it must satisfy the conditions of perception. Thus even the most rigid kind of realism may require a certain amount of self-expressivity, because there has to be a mediator between the character and the audience. On the other hand, even the staunchest tragic representation that in terms of empathy entirely isolates the

spectator in the audience again remains within the confines of the collaborative mode, at least in terms of its cathartic effect (States 1985, 171). Even in these "primary" forms of drama, there are kernels of multiple perspectives, provided we understand perspective as a way of viewing. This kind of multiplicity is certainly closer to the psychological effect of the system of inverted perspective in painting, which shows "formal fractures of every sort, the distortions of forms in comparison with what we would see from a single point of view" (Uspensky 1976, 32). A radicalised reverse perspective, familiar in painting from the poetics of icons, may be followed in its migration to theatre in the constructions of Meyerhold, Brecht, and later Handke. "In the system of direct perspective, on the contrary, it is essential to convey the impression a viewer has at a given moment and from a fixed viewpoint." (Uspensky 1976, 33) In the system of inverted (reverse) perspective, the essential thing is *what* the represented object *is* (a more pronounced version of the self-expressive mode), while in the second case the essential factor is what it *seems to be*. (Uspensky 1976, 33) In theatre, the attempt to arrive at the subject "as it is" has more recently grown to prominence with the birth of man onstage. The subject "as it seems to be" is far more present in theatre that employs highly developed illusionistic procedures, primarily realism, which is not subversive regarding its own subject, but rather affirms it within a reified image of the world. The theatre of the subject "as it is" has an analytical character, because it works "from the whole to the part", whereas the theatre of the subject "as it seems to be" acquires its synthetic character precisely by unifying the image represented around its detail.

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In his *Semiotics of the Russian Icon* Uspensky quotes V. Pjast's description of Meyehold's attempts in his staging of *Calderón* to reduce depth and create surface images: "for the 'mass' scenes a bas relief appeared, Meyerhold's idée fixe. [...] To achieve the effect of a bas relief, huge rolled-up carpets were used, placed on the floor at the very back of the stage, toward the wall, and when the actors stood on them, they became higher than those in front of them, and their shoulders could be seen behind the heads of those in front." (Uspensky 1976, 79)

Although the result of this procedure was an illusionist emphasis of reverse perspective onstage and, in fact, the creation of a tableau within a tableau, Meyerhold's need to highlight units that would, in a central perspective, remain in the background suggests a link between the poetics of icons and the iconic character of a theatrical image. Given that in theatre, perspective figures not as a purely spatial construction but in terms of perspectival viewing, the reversal of perspective amplifies the actor's position in relation to the world of the stage. The *mise en scène*, and primarily "conditional theatre" (to use Meyerhold's vocabulary), is not meant to be "a copy of a certain isolated real object [...] as much as a symbolic indication of the object's *place* in the represented world" (Uspensky 1976, 34). Amplifying a position or, more precisely still assuming an internal orientation in the space, projects "an independent micro-world, on the whole similar to the larger world" (Uspensky 1976, 34), like a hologram. Depicting a character would be analogous to depicting an individual object in the world. That is why concentrating the *mise en scène* from

the stage to the spectator and not from the position of the spectator always makes the image of the world more fragmented, and the author's poetics seem less analogous to the real world.

We must therefore view this theatrical game of the gaze as a wider phenomenon than simply a one-way transmission of messages, because with the body's entry into the space of the performance what is observed becomes "oriented in relation to the body that inhabits its boundaries" (Garner 1994, 46). Such a re-orientation produces new "layers of perceptual givenness to the components of mise-en-scène" (Garner 1994, 47). Objects onstage have double phenomenality or, more precisely, they are involved in a game of "rival phenomenality" (Garner 1994, 47). Already in the initial kernel of theatre the audience is not protected from the actor's gaze, because a body that surrenders to an image is constantly "an object of vision that can itself look back" (Garner 1994, 47). The very construction of theatrical spaces already expresses the importance of caring for the spectators, the orientation of their gaze, and the organisation of space as an object being viewed. Here, the strategies of returning the gaze are employed to deconstruct it, in order to "rethink the very notion of spectatorship" (Barbara Freedman quoted in Garner 1994, 48).

Hence Diderot's need for "closing" the fourth wall or, more radically still, for *tableaux vivant.* Not only does he seek to adhere to Horatio's maxim that the spirit that enters through the ear excites less quickly than the one that lies before the eyes, faithful witnesses..., but he also radicalises

it: "Your characters may be silent, if you will; but they make me speak to myself and hold forth with myself." (Diderot 1954, 238) If we view theatre in terms of Diderot's laboratory of the world this kind of demand works as a good premise for a scientific experiment. The spectator herself is the measuring instrument that dictates the orientation of the vector of the world's expansion between the stage and the auditorium. In an implicit order, however, the instrument also has its place and influence on the explicit order. Nonetheless, even this demand of Diderot's harbours subversive attitudes regarding linear mediation in theatre, because such a silent character is clearly positioned by her energy and interests, and it is these flows that will become important for later reorientations of the gaze and the movements of theatrical fluids.

Besides, we must not forget that Diderot's *image/ tableau* dates from a period of seductive *vision.* His notion of the spectator has traversed, up to the present, that long path from a vision to a view to an observation. Diderot's theatre does not belong in an order where theatre runs behind television (whose image also precedes the world). His theatre does not refer to reality at all. It is a laboratory for examining our objectifications and habits. But in Diderot's theatre there is also no notion of the virtual, or idea of the spectre. It is instead situated at the beginning of the transformation of the body into images of the body. Its images do not hide what they present, they present what is hidden. They open the depth of the world, they explicate what is implicit.

As Deleuze puts it: "A frightened countenance is the expression of a frightening possible world, or of something frightening in the world – something I do not yet see. Let it be understood that the possible is not here an abstract category designating something which does not exist: the expressed possible world certainly exists (actually) outside of that which expressed it. The terrified countenance bears no resemblance to the terrifying thing. It implicates it, it envelops it as something else, in a kind of torsion which situates what is expressed in the expressing." (1990a, 307)

This passage from Deleuze is actually an elaboration of the monistic conception of expression. The possible is always present in the theatre and our difficulty in identifying the expressed thing with that which expresses it constitutes the foundation of the persuasiveness of theatre. Diderot clearly realised this and demanded the highest degree of elaboration of expressions in theatre, but only to the limit of expressing the possible. His theory of indifference from the *Paradox* demonstrates that what is possible does not exist outside of that which expresses it, that the pain of a character neither must nor can be a pain in the world. But the represented world nevertheless rests on a possible world that encompasses our mutual relations and locks them into an explication we undertake ourselves, in accepting such a world. In that context we may also speak of Diderot's politics, which are aware that the world we inhabit is not natural, that it is not a given out of necessity. The world we live in is an actualised, accepted possible world governed by the law of energy (actualisation) and interest (power). The theatre lends expression to that

world, but we experiment with it. In the theatre, that world is decomposed and composed anew. In it, there is no priority of the body over thought or vice versa. A change in thought brings about a change in being and we cannot know for certain what the body can do – we may only speak of its potentiality because the body is made up of elements, like other more complex bodies. What we can think about is motion and stillness, the dynamics of theatre, event and situation.

To speak of Diderot today means to rediscover a theatre of dynamics, potentiality, and actualisation. On the one hand, this is an ecological theatre where the body is in a constant relationship with its circumstances and environment, while, on the other hand, it is also a materialist theatre where ideas become things (and theatre becomes a Leibnizian spiritual automaton). Diderot's theatre thinks in terms of events and acts by means of strategies. This theatre is thought in pregnant moments and realised by situations, compositions, objectifications, and stances.

The theoretical work of Denis Diderot is the last comprehensive theory of theatre, a theory that addressed theatre poetically, but also established the fundamental elements of the analytics of performance and theatre (image/tableau, situation, the body). Theory will probably never again dare to approach theatre in such a comprehensive way, just as it lost the courage, long ago, to deal with problems of poetics. Today, that courage should be sought in theatre.

# Similitude

"Sensitive creatures or fools are on the stage, but he is in the orchestra seats. He's the wise man." (Diderot 1946, 402) With this statement Diderot opens a new paradox, a paradox in his own theory of continuity. In *D'Alembert's Dream*, from where the quotation comes, we find Diderot's clearest explication of his monistic worldview. Diderot sees matter in constant movement and expansion. Like the constant vibration of the invisible threads of a spider web, matter continually expands and is in constant movement, from molecules to the passions. Human beings are mere expressions of matter – the organs are "only the basic developments of a network which is formed, grows, extends itself, and throws out a multitude of imperceptible threads" (Diderot 1946, 376). And "the spider is lodged in a part of your head [...] the meninges" (Diderot 1946, 377). The "great" rational man is the one who controls the disorder caused in the network by impulses. He strives "to make himself the master of his movements and to see that the centre of the network maintains all its imperial power" (Diderot 1946, 401). He sits in the orchestra seats and does not yield to his

passions, does not allow himself "to surrender to feelings too much". He feels pure pleasure and he does not breathe heavily when the primary feeling of pleasure has passed.

Diderot, obviously, uses theatre as an experimental ground for his own philosophical platform. Diderot sets up a theory of subjectivisation inside theatre that establishes articulations and order among monistic dispersals. But, remember, one of the more important instructions in his *Discourse on Dramatic Poetry* reads: "Whether you compose or act, think no more of the beholder than if he did not exist. Imagine, at the edge of the stage, a high wall that separates you from the orchestra. Act as if the curtain never rose." (Diderot 1954, 136)

What is evident is Diderot's aspiration to separate the scene from the spectator, to increase the distance between them, because "the impressions grow weaker in proportion to the distance they travel" (Diderot 1946, 377). Hence Diderot's enthusiasm for *tableau vivant*. For Diderot a living picture, an "arrangement of those characters on the stage, so natural and so true to life that, faithfully rendered by a painter, it would please me on canvas" (Fried 1980, 95), is a place of repose for reason. That is where the poet discards words that reflect the movement of matter. Making time stop, the spectator is separated, freed from the impact of action. Then she has time and space to work on the affects offered, to order them properly and construct her own rational reaction. In the theatre however, the spectator is constantly tested by her own power of judgement. In the theatre the spectator is exposed to theatricality, a framework that keeps veering between one's chosen point

of view and an affective course that befuddles the mind. Knowing that the theatre is worldly, for "there is nothing that happens in the world that cannot take place on the stage" (Diderot 1954, 169), Diderot must find a framework wherein theatre will test the spectator's ability "to see that the centre of the network maintains all its imperial power" (Diderot 1946, 401). It will be realised by positing a double reflection of order – by perspective and composition. The vector that cuts through the continuity linking the world and the spectator follows the trajectory outlined above: **event – situation – image – model**, and Diderot's conception of theatre might probably be located at this vector's vanishing point. Diderot's theatre, at the moment of its own elaboration, found itself in the final moments of the universalist conception of theatre. After that, only isolated visions, methods, or techniques compose the foundations of individual modern poetics.

It was the 20th century's phenomenology of theatre that inherited Diderot's rational thought. Bert O. States' reading of Shklovsky, for example, sets out from the claim that art is "a certain perspective on substance" (States 1985, 38). States sees the perceptual change that worldly objects undergo as a consequence of their "being uplifted to the view. [...] an object becomes a signifying, exemplary image only in a consciousness" (States 1985, 35-6). We observe the world's objects (and beings) imaginatively, not indicatively. States views the history of theatre "as a progressive colonization of the real world. [...] theater ingests the world of objects and signs only to bring images to life. In the image, a defamiliarized and desymbolized object is

'uplifted to the view' where we see it as being phenomenally heavy with itself." (States 1985, 36-7) Theatre neutralises the objectness of the object and makes it *similar* to itself. "Essentially it is the same process that occurs when a painter portrays an image of his dog on canvas, except that in the theater there is no ontological difference between the image and the object." (States 1985, 35)

But what is the character of that similitude? What is it that generates the impression of similitude in different viewings of a substance? Similitude in expression may be viewed in two ways. First, it may be primary, stemming from the model being in constant tension with its emanation, that is, the explication of the thingness of things. But more interesting is to consider similitude from a more general point of view, as what brings the whole into play and generates the impression of unity in otherness. This is a similitude in the "composition" of things, the similitude that seeks out that common ground between the human body and other bodies, other objects. If that general similitude may be sought in nature and expressed through object's naturalness, then one may find it in theatre and in theatricality, in the permeation of its elements with the same power, in their obeying the same law. There opens, therefore, a mechanism, a spiritual automaton, which devours the world and is expressed in theatricality. There is no great theatre without that devouring theatricality that is explicated in the exteriority of the body, objects, and even situations. Such a permeation does not distinguish between individual bodies, which begin to look alike in their disembodiment. That is why Diderot classifies

three models in theatre that exist on an equal footing: "nature's man, the poet's man, and the actor's man" (Diderot 1954, 95). These three models exist in different materialities, but are always in a similitude that exceeds the bounds of embodiment. Paradoxically, this explosion in substance will occur in the body. But that body will also be dissembled and re-assembled in a new, artificial body. "Artificial but not artful", Barthes emphasises (Barthes 1972a, 27). This artificiality is different from that found in stage design or furniture. The body enters the mechanism of physicality, but also of disembodiment. The body is "frozen by its function as an artificial object" (Barthes 1972a, 27). Such a body is ready to enter the image, to be similar, and the theatre is precisely a place of various techniques of amplifying the body and the technologies of disembodiment.

# Hieroglyph

In his study *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* Michael Fried shows how Diderot's conception of the unity of the scene (which includes the unities of action, place, and time) aspires to create in the painting an ultimate fiction that generates the impression of the total elimination of the spectator's presence. What is necessary here, and was already mentioned above as a necessity in drama as well, is a single viewpoint where the spectator will be accommodated at a later point, but there must be no other trace of the spectator in the image/tableau. Any kind of presentation intended to establish contact with the spectator directly, or acknowledge her presence in the space of the scene (or before the scene), compromises the integrity and unity of the tableau: "A scene represented on canvas or on stage does not suppose witnesses." (Fried 1980, 97) In his critique of expression, Diderot warned that one could also often read this presence in the physics of the performers' expressions or those of the characters depicted in the painting, particularly in *grimacing*, or distorting one's face: "Grimacing should

not be confused with passion; this is a point about which painters and actors are apt to be mistaken. To make them feel the difference, I refer them to the ancient *Laocoon*, who suffers but does not grimace." (Fried 1980, 98) Grimacing, exaggerating, caricature, and politeness were Diderot's main objections to tasteless painting, not by virtue of their own character, but on account of their implying an "awareness of an audience, of being beheld" (Diderot 1954, 224). "If you lose your feeling for the difference between the man who presents himself in society and the man engaged in an action, [...] throw your brushes into the fire. You will academicize all your figures, you will make them stiff and unnatural." (Diderot 1954, 224) The opposite of the mannered is the naïve, "the thing, but the thing itself, without the least alteration. Art is no longer there" (Fried 1980, 100). For, "[a]ll that is true is not naive, but all that is naive is true, but with a truth that is alluring, original, and rare" (Fried 1980, 101).

Naivety and truthfulness, however, are established within the order of the image and not in relation to nature, the outside world, or the beholder. Diderot therefore sought to separate theatre from the spectator as much as possible, as we already saw in the preceding chapters. But this type of separation was not only illusionist in character, it was not only thought through the question of the characters' interest as presented in the action, excluding the interest of the spectator. Rather, it is a matter of *interesse*, being in between. This kind of enframing opens space for a certain kind of parallelism, a multiplicity in the perception of human beings and objects, that is, a profound

objectification. The scene-spectator relationship turns into the *object*-beholder relationship, and leaves the object-subject duality on the side (Fried 1980, 104). In that context, Diderot's choice of *tableau vivant* over *coup de théâtre* seems clear and pragmatic.

It would be facile and simplistic to conclude that Diderot's operative notion of theatre is exhausted in an image that acts absorbingly, that, eliminating the scene's awareness of the spectator's presence, draws her into the scene itself. Diderot's understanding of the work of theatre as a whole is compositional or, more precisely, composite. The spectator is not only perceptually drawn into the scene but theatre, above all, connects to her viewing, because the spectators do not come to the theatre as an inert mass. The spectacle is not on the stage, moving the spectator, rather the machine of moving pictures is in the spectator herself: "Our mind is a moving scene (tableau vivant), which we are perpetually copying. We spend a great deal of time in rendering it faithfully; but the original exists as a complete whole, for the mind does not proceed step by step, like expression." (Diderot 1972, 124)

If we wish to unpack the toolbox with which Diderot explicates the connection between the beholder and the beheld, we must bring into play another term that he used in his description of the language of visual expression, his analysis of the mutual similarity between the representational arts, and his analogical comparison of the work of art and the spectator's perception. That term is the *hieroglyph*, which after Diderot, as we will see, did not disappear from theoretical discourse on theatre.

In describing the notion of the pregnant moment we already touched upon its origins in Diderot's requirement of unity, not only of action, but also of space and time. In the pregnant moment, a painter (or director) depicts all that he can encompass at once, he depicts that unique and total moment. In his *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* from 1751, Diderot posits that the languages of painting, music, and poetry can be compared. Seeking to find an adequate language for translating one's impression of an image into written language, Diderot turns to his own mechanism of perception, or more accurately the dialectics of the mind, the dialectics of *contact* between visual perception and imagination: "In the growth of language, decomposition was a necessity; but to *see* an object, to *admire* it, to *experience* an agreeable sensation, and to *desire* to *possess* it, is but an instantaneous emotion." (Diderot 1972, 124) Here too, we encounter simultaneity in unity, or multiplicity, but it is important to appreciate the parallel between the multiplicity of expression and the multiplicity of impression. "I don't want clever maxims on our stage, but impressions." (Diderot 1954, 107) Diderot expresses the character of this multiplicity by the notion of the hieroglyph: "It is the thing itself that the painter shows; the expressions of the musician and the poet are only hieroglyphs of it." (Diderot 1972, 150)

The first thing one should highlight is Diderot's recuperation of a specific quality that words have lost. That quality has remained in the origins of words, making representation nihilistic for Diderot, because representation always assumes absence or negation (see, Lyotard 1976).

That is why Diderot is interested in the emblematic power of words: "Over time, however, we have become used to, accustomed to words, which we judge like pieces of money assessing them not by their face value, but by their form and weight: the same applies, I tell you, to our treatment of words; we no longer take the time to evoke the image or idea which accompanies the word, but stick only to sound and sensation." (Diderot 1972, 155)

But where do those words acquire their value? If we grasp Diderot's view of the spectator's perception, we shall quickly get an answer to that question:

"What is this spirit? I myself have sometimes felt its presence; but I know no more of it than that it is the cause whereby things can be spoken and represented simultaneously, so that the mind apprehends them, the soul is moved by them, the imagination sees them, and the ear hears them all at once and the same time; so that the language used is no longer a succession of linked and energetic terms expressing the poet's thought with power and nobility, but also a tissue of hieroglyphics, all woven inextricably together, that make it visible. I might say that all poetry is, in this sense, emblematic." (Diderot 1972, 132-3)

And further: "Our soul is a moving picture after which we continuously paint: it takes us quite some time to render it with some degree of fidelity, but it exists in its entirety and all at once: the mind does not proceed step by step like verbal expression." (Diderot 1972, 124)

A scene is a multiplicity that univocally acts upon our sensations. With its multiplicitous nature, the soul adopts that tissue and processes it in contact with its imagination.

The imagination, however, is only a supplement to expression, with which it is only in *touch*: "The imagination creates nothing, it imitates, it composes, combines, exaggerates, expands, and contracts. It constantly deals with similarities." (Diderot 1972, 153)

The link between the beheld and the beholder lies in a continuity that requires no mutual appellation whatsoever. De-emphasising continuity is experimental in character because it (theoretically) disrupts the immediacy of the connection between the beholder and the beheld. Nevertheless, continuity remains in the equivalence of theatre as a spiritual automaton and spirit as an engagement of imagination. And yet, what links the elements of a hieroglyph? If we accept the claim that the theatre is a place of dissimulation that dissimulates only to show more, then dramaturgy too, as a strategy of dissimulation, lies at the foundation of the law that governs the relations of energies and interest (see, Berri 2000, 13).

The idea of theatre as a spiritual automaton was radicalised by Antonin Artaud, who likewise used the hieroglyph as an emblem of the scene. Like Diderot, Artaud's writings caused a real avalanche of theoretical writings, but Artaud also influenced a large number of production theories. What is crucial about these two authors is their re-examination of the problem of representation. Although Diderot, when compared to Artaud, is often considered a less radical theorist of theatre, and is accused of being a bourgeois thinker, we cannot deny that his ideas concerning theatre as an art of images made a whole range of later radical modernisms

possible. A reader unfamiliar with Diderot might easily misattribute the following lines to Artaud: "But there is another impression to make, a more violent one, which you will readily understand if you are born to your art, if you are aware of its magic, and that is to make your audience feel ill at ease. Their minds will be troubled, uncertain, distracted, and your spectators be like those who in the presence of an earthquake see the walls of their homes rock, and feel the earth yawn before them." (Diderot 1954, 107) And now Artaud: "To make metaphysics out of a spoken language is to make the language express what it does not ordinarily express: to make use of it in a new, exceptional, and unaccustomed fashion; to reveal its possibilities for producing physical shock; to divide and distribute it actively in space; to deal with intonations in an absolutely concrete manner, restoring their power to shatter as well as really to manifest something; to turn against language and its basely utilitarian, one could say alimentary, sources, against its trapped-beast origins; and finally, to consider language as the form of *Incantation*." (Artaud 1958, 46)

Artaud, a monist, places the same demand on theatre as Diderot did: "I am adding another language to the spoken language, and I am trying to restore to the language of speech its old magic, its essential spellbinding power, for its mysterious possibilities have been forgotten." (Artaud 1958, 111) In his *First Manifesto*, Artaud will put that wish in an even sharper focus: "Once aware of this language in space, language of sounds, cries, lights, onomatopoeia, the theater must organize it into veritable hieroglyphs, with the help of characters and objects, and make use of their symbolism

and interconnections in relation to all organs and on all levels." (Artaud 1958, 90) Just like Diderot, Artaud sees the entire tissue of theatre connected in a single univocal whole, which makes it difficult to distinguish between these two authors in terms of intent. Their difference remains in their *episteme*.

Diderot admires the dialectics of spirit, a swing of imagination that must find its adequate counterpart on the stage, in the locus of the scene. His theatre is not an image of the world as *natura naturata*, but an image of consciousness, of the world as a construct, an image of the operation of imagination that is as closed as the stage of dreams. In his theatre the spectator (or the beholder in painting) is not directly addressed, but indirectly implicated and encompassed "in a perfect trance of involvement" (Fried 1980, 103). Diderot's spectator does not physically participate in the performance, but his stillness is his experience, like the experience of a person dreaming.

In her stillness, the dreaming person "lives" in the dynamics of her dream. That is also how Diderot's spectator "lives" in the scene depicted onstage, but the scene is not directed at her. Interestingly, Derrida finds a comparison between Artaud's hieroglyphs and Freud's templates for interpreting dreams, but also warns: "It is the law of dreams that must be produced or reproduced" (Derrida 1978, 242). Artaud is not interested in the psychology of dreams: "Cruelty is above all lucid [...]. There is no cruelty without consciousness and without the application of consciousness. It is consciousness that gives to the exercise of every act of life its blood-red color,

its cruel nuance, since it is understood that life is always someone's death." (Artaud 1958, 102)

This weaving of quotations could be extended in threads running through the poetics of Brecht, Beckett, and other great dramaturges, which I will do in the following chapters. *Tableaux vivant*, hieroglyph, *gestus*, breath – all are introduced by these authors as composite formations that entail new configurations of the ecology of performance and spectatorship. These configurations are synthetic units that encompass in the process of viewing actors, environment, and objects in various ritualised oppositions.

# Objectification

The space of performance defined as the relations of the body and the space outside it, is determined by internal action, it is *de facto* a field of action. Diderot's theatre, however, is a *materialist theatre* where, as in Artaud, the stage becomes a *site of passage* (see, States 1985, 109) from ideas into things. "It seems, in brief, that the highest possible idea of the theater is one that reconciles us philosophically with Becoming, suggesting to us through all sorts of objective situations the furtive idea of the passage and transmutation of ideas into things." (Artaud 1958, 109) All things are equally important, but have yet to gain "the importance they have in dreams" (Artaud 1958, 94). The theatre as a field of action and site of passage is originally a *site of integration* of remembrance, knowledge, and sensations, with no primacy or hierarchy whatsoever; all operations are operations within the matter of theatre. This is reflected not only on the level of performance, but also in the space of fiction. Characters are inseparable from their circumstances, and only exist beyond the confines of their own play or performance when circumstances

are similar. As States shows, there is no Hamlet or Hamletism without Claudius and "a certain relational equation, or closed field, between man and the world, or between a capacity and a demand" (States 1985, 149). If the circumstances and relations are already in the situation, the personage (or character) will emerge in contrast to the situation, that is, in the contrast between an interest and interest. A conflict between different beings-in-between is actually one of integration, and within it we cannot separate the characters from the circumstances, the circumstances from the relations, etc. The objectivity of all phenomena of integration in theatre is what keeps it between "dream and events" (Artaud 1958, 93). This is not about Diderot's or Artaud's stylistic aspirations. Rather, it concerns that specificity of performance acts that enables what Diderot sought to use to separate theatre from the world, from the actuality of its construction of reality, and turn it into a complete art – illusion. Illusion not in terms of a series of perceptual deceits, but illusion as integration, as the impression of a different style of existence, illusion as the shimmering of an event and a test of reality. That specificity manifests itself in both an increased openness of people to things, where everyone sacrifices something, and in people's in-folding, in their being-in-between.

Theatrical modernism exploded in various attempts to eliminate the performer's bodily individuality in order to objectify her, often through her concatenation or enfolding within another language, such as Appia's musicalised body, the work of living art. In Léger, as well as in Schlemmer, we find the plastic body: "The object has replaced the subject,

abstract art has come as a total liberation, and the human figure can now be considered, not for its sentimental value, but solely for its plastic value." (quoted in Garner 1994, 58). Witkiewicz almost completely submerges the performer into the "matter" of theatre: "The actor as such is not supposed to exist; he should be an element of the whole like the colour red in a given painting, like the note c-sharp in a work of music." (1985, 186)

The body is what we share with the world, as well as what grounds us in it (Beckett interpreted this literally in *Happy Days*). Things, as well as people, are prone to merge, as Shklovsky says: "After we see an object several times, we begin to recognize it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it." (1965, 13) The thingness of the thing that is the performer's body may disappear in a total abyss of meaning if we make an effort to erase its most characteristic traits. That allows us to observe the body of an actor as that of a character, or the body of a dancer as a moving body, ignoring that it is the carrier of the signs whereby we recognise that same actor or dancer and accommodate them in the world in which we, too, are buried. Perhaps this is also because their style of existence pertains to another world. At the same time, let us not forget that the body never becomes entirely artificial, never a complete object, as we have already learned from Barthes. Instead, the body undergoes a peculiar deictic-cathectic operation, and while the body is releasing itself towards the circumstances we invest it with emotional intensity or psychic energy. That is perhaps why the body in performance is a "transitional object" *par excellence* (see,

Winnicott 1989), "at once a living body deriving from a trivial nature, and an emphatic, formal body, frozen by its function as an artificial object" (Barthes 1972a, 27). Such a reduction of the body is accompanied by a reduction of the world to phenomena, where this deficit of the world is replaced by a non-present surplus, a surplus that stems not from the facts of constancy (of existence) but persistence (of insistence).

Interestingly, another problem is that of the existence of theatre between dream and events, which we only briefly indicated in Artaud. We will not delve into the problems of the dramaturgy of dreams at this point. "Now, nothing is more contrary to dramaturgy than the dream," Barthes says, because "the surreality of theater objects is of a sensorial, not an oneiric order." (Barthes 1972a, 27) The objectness of things and ideas in theatre, however, still brings us closer to the objectness of words and things in dreams. We may resort to Nietzsche's abstract but still precise view of the tragic artist, whose "oneness with the innermost ground of the world, reveals itself to him *in a symbolic dream-image*" (Nietzsche 1999, 19). Nietzsche too, sees in the dreams of the Greeks not only a sequence of scenes, but a "logical causality of line and outline, colour and grouping" (Nietzsche 1999, 19). To argue that this inter-materiality of theatre, this being in-between the worlds of objects and ideas, might actually constitute being in the world of signs would be as sacrilegious as reducing dreams to a world of reified signs and symbols, and would negate the dreaming person's right to a "real" experience while being wrapped in her dream. Our experience in dreams and in the theatre

cannot be reduced to any other interpretation, although interpretation is implicated in their very existence.

# Up to Brecht and Cinema

Points of contact between Diderot and Brecht have already been highlighted several times, and similarly significant was Brecht's foundation of a "Diderot Society" (the "Society for Inductive Theatre") in 1937. One of the most interesting theoretical parallels between these two great theatre dialecticians is explained in Barthes's text "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", where he draws from Brecht the long-neglected and sometimes ridiculed concept of *gestus*. According to Barthes, the notion of gestus is an extension of Lessing's concept of the *pregnant moment,* that was then elaborated by Diderot. Likewise in Brecht gestus denotes a sort of totality that may encompass an entire social situation. Such a totality of gesture in a scene is an image (as the "presentation of an ideal meaning"(Barthes 1977, 74)) that "guides meaning towards its ideality" (Barthes 1977, 75). However, Brecht also sees gesture in language itself: "Gestus is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes. A language is gestic when it is grounded in a gestus and conveys particular attitudes

adopted by the speaker towards other men." (Brecht 2014, 167) A gestus is therefore almost a rhetorical figure, and its persuasiveness rests on different discursive and non-discursive practices coming into contact. Like a diagram, a gestus is a figure where data and expressions of different material and non-material values come together. In it, we may find conventional and non-conventional gestures, conventional and non-conventional attitudes. Gestus therefore also brings to theatre certain conventions of acting, which leads us to think about an interesting new rift:

— is posture (*Haltung*) an explicated interest and is interest related to knowledge?
— how can convention compellingly express interest in theatre?

Elin Diamond argues that gestus not only opens the very vision of things, but also provides an *insight* into them; "what the spectator sees is not a mere miming of a social relationship, but a *reading* of it, an interpretation by a historical subject who supplements (rather than disappears into) the production of meaning." (Diamond 1997, 53) Gestus does not submerge the performer, rather it amplifies her and adds yet another perspectival segment, a vector of interest oriented by the actor's knowledge (but not merely by showing her acting skills, as Barthes warns) (Barthes 1977, 74). Brecht's concept of gestus as an upgraded version of the pregnant moment departs somewhat from Diderot, but not by denying his principles, but by using a discipline that the French philosopher installed himself – the knowledge of perspective.

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Brecht retains the Italian box and, unlike many of his contemporaries, does not fight the classical stage. He cares about the image and frame because he is interested in a theatrical performance as a sequence of scenes rather than a continuity. Brecht locates his apparatus not in the architectonics of the space but in the image itself, in the perspective and its functionality, which will influence Benjamin's interest in the image and its apparatus in the sequence of theatre – photography – film.[19]

Within an image or scene Brecht builds totality by means of gestus. The material of gestus comprises gesture, word, activity and *tableau*. Presenting by means of an actor directly addressing the audience, immersed in his own skills, in his rhetorical qualities, is not appreciated, just as it wasn't in Diderot. The rift or break occurs instead through showing the actor's familiarity with the idea of the situation, his knowledge of his social conditioning. Brecht here resorts to something that Diderot did not need. In Diderot, an actor must stage, enact an ideal value, "it is sufficient therefore that he 'bring out' the production of this value, that he render it tangible, intellectually visible" (Barthes 1977, 75). Brecht needs de-familiarisation (estrangement, alienation; *Verfremdung*), because "he represents a tableau for the spectator to criticize" (Barthes 1977, 75). That still does not mean that the actor will show the image to the spectator. He will reveal its mechanisms, while the spectator will remain Diderot's wise man in the darkness of the auditorium.

With his estrangement effect Brecht rediscovers the *bi-spectacularity* of theatre, without violating Diderot's ban

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on orienting the fictional plot toward the spectator. The spectator is not addressed by the characters, with their dramatic interests, but by an actor with her social interest. But the regular perspective is broken and replaced by the actor-spectator-character triangle. The character-actor dynamic is translated into the dynamic of the spectator's consciousness: spectator-character and spectator-actor. Distance remains an important part of representation because it is necessary for building an illusion, as does reflection.

Interestingly, at the root of Brecht's thinking about estrangement we encounter another term from Diderot – *naivety*. In his text 'Is It worth Speaking about Amateur Theatre?' (Brecht 2014, 238) Brecht is interested in that childish and immediate need for theatricality that is a necessary part of every kind of education in everyday life. Children, without unduly immersing themselves, learn proper behaviour at para-theatrical occasions (weddings, funerals, and the like). Brecht seeks a mechanism that will connect convention with representation in amateur theatre. His conclusion is that representation is not a matter of taste, and that it exists even when expression is not borne out by skill. Conventions are enough to situate behaviour, and opening many spaces to their critique. As well, conventions play an important role by virtue of their ability to establish, already at the iconic level, a relation between the performer and a representable referent, which will also become the subject of discussions in numerous feminist studies. One of the most interesting is *Unmaking Mimesis* by Elin Diamond, who notes in her reading of

Brecht that "by alienating (not simply rejecting) iconicity, by foregrounding the expectation of resemblance, the ideology of gender is exposed and thrown back to the spectator" (Diamond 1997, 46).

This play with identities is, again, multiplicitive. Beside exposing an identifying, iconic convention, it also plays with potentialities, and partakes of imagination by indicating those possibilities that are withheld. Apart from conventions, possibilities are also announced, not as virtual plots, but as layers of a higher order.

* * *

At the end of this discussion of Diderot, which we began with a note on his dream of cinema, it should be evident that his spectator is an anticipation of the cinema spectator, because cinematic perception is realised on the basis of Diderot's idea of the soul as a *tableau mouvant*. In cinema, the tableau/image, the dream (as projection – Freud), and the mental image come back together. At this point, let me just briefly refer to Jean-Louis Baudry's excellent analysis of the medium in his text *Plato's Cave and Cinema*, where he claims that, like a dream, "taking into account the darkness of the movie theater, the relative passivity of the situation, the forced immobility of the cine-subject, and the effects that result from the projection of images, the cinematographic apparatus brings about a state of regression. It artificially leads back to an anterior phase of his development." (Baudry 1980, 56) Film stimulates the desire to return to an earlier stage of development. It

is a "return toward a relative narcissism, and even more toward a mode of relating to reality which could be defined as enveloping and in which separation between one's own body and the exterior world is not well defined" (Baudry 1980, 56). The fact that apart from Brecht, Barthes also considered Eisenstein a follower of Diderot (and allegedly invited him to join his Diderot Society) is interesting not only for the reason indicated in his text – the integrity of individual film scenes whose mutual proximity makes cinema. It is also interesting that Barthes doesn't find traces of Diderot's thinking in painting (or photography, for that matter), but in theatre and film. Perhaps that suggests the significance of the appearance of the pregnant moment (gestus, plan) in a lineage where its eventality, its totality, becomes apparent, after which nothing can remain the same. We can observe this in the continuity, course and astrological structure of a sequence of inevitable events, the significance of which we may perceive in two ways. We can situate them and discern their meanings and circumstances, but we may also observe them in individual totalities (multiplicity) and, in revealing their internal laws (of energies and interest) discern their ideas.

Of course, Brecht is interested in anything but the cinematic spectator, a spectator in a "state of artificial regression". It is precisely his "capability of regression" (Diamond 1997, 51) that is under attack, so that what is *shown* can be revised by means of the spectator's own critique.

And the character of that shown and showing itself may be found in Brecht's poem "Showing has to be Shown":

"Show that you are showing! Among all the varied attitudes
That you show when you're showing how people act,
Still forget not the attitude of showing.
At the basis of all attitudes should be the attitude of showing.
[...]
Thereby you show
That every evening you show what you're showing now, that
You've already shown it before, many times,
And your acting acquires something of the weaver's weaving, something
Craft-based." (Brecht 1987, 341)

Like Diderot, Brecht sees no reason to turn the spectator into an actor. His showing of the action to the spectator is not meant to draw the spectator into the plot, or to insert her into a space of fiction. Showing with the attitude of showing has the character of a craft, it is almost a technical procedure, or, we might say, rhetoric.

## INTERSTICE:

# Breath

"Of all performing arts, the theater stinks the most of mortality.," Herbert Blaue wrote in his methodological recapitulation, *Take up the Bodies*. Breathing, coughing, laughing, screaming – all of them constitute breaches of the organic presence of an actor in the space of performance. In Blau's radicalised statement, all those constants of man's life onstage actually remind us that the actor might also die on there, and that he "is in fact doing so" (Blau 1982, 83).

Samuel Beckett's theatre is replete with signs of death, provided we accept Blau's reading of the signs of life. Breathing, muttering, coughing, all kinds of difficulties in performing vital functions are among the most typical of Beckett's stage directions. If we wish to say that Beckett brought his characters to ineffectiveness, we must note that he replaced acting and action with activity, and moreover, with exhaustion (Deleuze 1995). Beckett's characters, however reduced they might seem – less than the world and less than life – must be supported, paradoxically, by an

even greater vital investment from their performers. The more vitality there is, the less life.

That entire strategy is radicalised in his short satire titled *Breath* (which he, most interestingly, wrote for an erotic magazine). Briefly, as though the play itself were not already brief enough, the following occurs: 5 seconds of faint light on a stage littered with rubbish; a brief cry of a newborn baby; 10 seconds of inhaling with light going up to 70% of maximum; 5 seconds of silence; 10 seconds of light decreasing to the original level; exhale; the same brief cry; 5 seconds in semidarkness; the end.

When the script was first published, the publisher changed one stage direction from "Faint light on a stage littered with miscellaneous rubbish" to "Faint light on a stage, littered with miscellaneous rubbish, *including naked people*", complete with a photograph of naked bodies lying onstage among the rubbish (Bair, 1990, 603). What kind of difference might result from the physical presence of bodies onstage as opposed to their absence?

Numerous analyses of Beckett have focused primarily on reading and attempting to define the world of his plays. The hermeneutics of Beckett's plays (from Esslin on) mostly describe the absurdity and meaninglessness of being in the world and language. The boundaries of his characters' worlds are those of their languages. This type of analysis and its circular conclusions gave birth to today's commonplace discourse on the theatre of the absurd. Another circle of theorists see a philosopher in Beckett and either attempt to place him within a philosophical tradition or regard him as the Merleau-Ponty of theatre. Yet another

circle of theorists analyse Beckett's reductionism (from the perspective of phenomenology), and the most interesting work there seems to be Keir Elam's analysis of the play *Not I*, where he reads that reduction as a rhetorical procedure (Elam 1986, 124-148). But to see only reduction in the visibility of a mouth onstage in *Not I* means to ignore the vitalist charge that the organ brings to the stage. In *Not I* Beckett merely spatialises convention, and so invests space with the fullness of an event. The Auditor, who is the other character, communicates only by means of gestures. What is spoken does not acquire a naturalness in the speaker's gesture. The mechanism of utterance was consistent all the way up to rationalist drama: all that comes from the body are rhetorical gestures, all that comes from drama is implicated in the text. The mouth as a detail, however, the Mouth as a character, becomes the space of performance. The mechanism of speech and rhetorical gesture are radically separated from that with which the Mouth acts, and that is its organicity, not as a speaking organ but as the natural space of speech. It is therefore entirely logical to find "outbursts of the real" (Hrvatin 1996, 208) in the mechanicity of the Mouth's speech – screams. A scream cannot be imitated, Hrvatin says, but only recorded in order to be imitated (Hrvatin 1996, 206). A scream is an organic cry and is not communicable without the other, because it gains its meaning only with the other's response. And that response is missing. A scream is therefore the perfect expression.

In *Breath* the title itself harbours another such expression. Still, what does a breath need to become an

expression? Similar to a scream, one cannot entirely mimic a breath. There are three possibilities: one can materialise it (as Nekrošius does metonymically in *Pirosmani, Pirosmani*, where a painter uses his finger to draw on glass fogged up by breathing onto it); amplify it (as Beckett does in *That Time*); or record it (as in *Breath*). If a breath is imitated, if it does not belong to "anyone", like in *Breath*, then we cannot speak of a reduction of someone's expression to merely a breath. We can only speak of adding. If, as in that added photograph mentioned above, we had bodies present in the space, we might again speak of reducing to, as well as separating breath from, the body. The breath in *Breath* is a pure indicator of someone's presence, the presence of one that is absent from the space. The cry before and the cry after the breath is a thematic investment, and the increase in light with inhaling and the decrease with exhaling takes the breath into spatialisation. This work that is seemingly the most unconventional of Beckett's plays is, in fact, almost purely convention, if by theatrical convention we mean dissimulation and reduction for the sake of representing excess. The one thing that is not convention is adding. His world is not an imaginable, "full" world, from which one must subtract in order to explicate it. His world is a ruin under construction. Does anything really happen in that play? Can anything really occur without the physical presence of an actor?

1. Under faint light, we see some rubbish. Like any other stage design, this one would have little to say about itself if we just kept looking at rubbish onstage for ten minutes. It would quickly evolve into just rubbish onstage.

2. If light just went up and down there would be a certain visual experience, but without any change in the terms of its reference.
3. The sound of crying indicates someone's potential presence. A possibility is added to the game.
4. The breath and light, coming and going with each other, realise that possibility by spatialising, objectifying an indicator of the presence of a human being.
5. After that the rubbish is not the same rubbish anymore. Something happened. The rubbish is a situating circumstance. Everything else is just an event, and theatre was there while there was possibility.

*Breath* is an ideal tableau. Everything is restrained and confined to the stage. A possibility is realised at the minimum of the visible, but the visible is added, not reduced. As a result, we may view Beckett's theatre as a theatre of images where everything is on a high level of objectification and exists only inasmuch as it can be objective. The same procedure will be found in every play by Beckett, from *Godot* to *Breath* – a precise, consciously established configuration of objects and organisation of space, as well as bodies in space. The performers and objects are in a constant process of becoming present, of constantly making us aware of their elementary presence in the space and of their objective necessity of being in space. Once objectified, a human being has no end in dramaturgy, in the plot. She may have it only in what is emphatically humanly present – her vital functions, such as death.

Beckett's characters die much less than those of most other playwrights, but their mortality is inscribed in the very structure of the performance, their mortality resides in their vitality as a supplement, because they were never born in the first place. That is why Beckett's drama so deftly avoids choosing the point of view of society, struggle, or meaning. His images are a counterpoint to life. Those who opt for them are indifferent, without intent, dead, death itself. Only a human is alive anyway.

# 4.

# Notes on Viewing

# Composites

As we have seen, the evening after reading Plato's parable of the cave Diderot dreamed about sitting in front of a screen filled with moving shadows (Diderot 1960, 188-98). His conception of moving images undoubtedly corresponds with the way he translated his notion of painting into a new mode of watching theatre, a type of viewing that became the formal cause of the cinematic medium. From Diderot on, theatre could not be separated from the image, from the shaping and conditioning of viewing and, consequently, from cinematic ways of organising the gaze. The chronicle of mutual influences between film and theatre would become a history of accelerating and decelerating the body, of the choreography and obstruction of the gaze/view, as well as of the absorption and subjectivation of the viewer. All this would undergo various changes in compositional or, rather, composite logics, and in what follows I intend to describe some of these changes, as well as some of those compositional logics I was involved in, or attempted, always working with others, to reconstruct.

* * *

There is the first film ever made: *Workers Leaving The Lumiere Factory In Lyon*. 800 images, 50 seconds. That film marks the invention of moving pictures.

There is the second take of the first film ever made: *Workers Leaving The Lumiere Factory In Lyon*. It seems that for this take the Lumiere brothers, who owned the factory and were the first makers of cinema, ordered their workers to move more vigorously in front of the camera in order to emphasise the effect of moving pictures. That film has neither logical beginning nor end.

There is the first film ever directed: *Workers Leaving The Lumiere Factory In Lyon*, or the third take of the first film ever made. In that film all the workers manage to leave the factory on time, without unnecessary movement, in 50 seconds – the length of the first reel. The film starts with the door opening and ends with the door closing. This is the first film ever choreographed.

Cutting out the unnecessary movement, the "shadow moves" as Rudolph Von Laban calls them (Laban 2011, 257), was the first method of editing, the first organisation of fabulation, the first addition of a narrative to film. In this way the event of workers leaving the factory was framed and situated as an image. In his book *Cinematic Mode of Production* Jonathan Beller relates the techniques of early cinematic montage to the behavioural psychology of Ivan Pavlov, and to his theory of how reflexes were conditioned through the introjection of the formal organisation of

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manufacturing into the nervous system. Similarly, Beller argues, cinema had links to the management science of Frederick Taylor, who analysed labour practices in order to isolate the most efficient gestures, and then imposed them on workers through disciplinary training, and through the configuration and cadences of the machines which they were to serve. Filmic editing was the representational and affective analogue of this Pavlovian and Taylorist reconditioning of human labor (see, Farocki 2002). While working on our performance 1 *Poor & One 0*, and researching the topography of the first film, the beginning of a new type of art, as well as the place where moving images and work are transposed from industry to the camera and back, we were intrigued by the industrial picket line as a fact, as the place of separation where, as Harun Farocki says, dispersion begins and workers become individuals in whom narrative film only then begins to show an interest. If after leaving the factory the workers don't remain together for a rally, their image as workers disintegrates. "Cinema could sustain it by having them dance along the street; a dance-like movement is used in Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) to convey an appearance as workers." (Farocki 2002) Another important manifestation of corporeal organisation at the factory gates is the strike, the deactivation of labour and the flow of goods, which was likewise the subject of a large number of early films.

While developing a choreographic re-enactment of the Lumiere images for the purpose of our performance, we were looking for their opposites, for images of deactivation of the choreography of rushing out of the factory. We

found them in Sergei Eisenstein's movie *Strike*, Werner Hochbaum's *Brüder* and Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Deserter*. But an attempt to restage the crowd and push-and-pull of strikers and strike-breakers at the factory gate collapsed into another unwilling and unwanted image – an image of a contact improvisation jam. That brought us to another set of speculations that later became a part of the performance text:

> "Contact Improvisation was a true child of its age – of early post-industrialization in the Western developed countries in 1970s – the age of the factory closures and demise of industrial work. It implicitly resonated with some important changes in society at the time: most prominently the moving away from the conflictual forms of social interaction based on class struggle to post-conflictual, post-conventional forms.
> Throughout the industrial age the labor remained hidden behind the factory gates. But now it started to enter into other segments of social, cognitive and physical life. The society was becoming the factory. Accordingly, Contact Improvisation worked against the definition of dance through a regime of visibility, external representation of what the dancing body should be doing, and it worked to reveal the hidden work of two dancing bodies in contact."
> (Text written and spoken by Tomislav Medak in *1 Poor & One 0*, BADco., 2008.)

As early as 1975, Paxton viewed contact improvisation as a "way of activity", an internal work on the part of dancers oriented primarily towards the mutual working of bodies as a "social system" of mutual relations and recognitions, rather than towards the external formations and figures that it produced (Paxton 1975, 40-2). This was an important moment because for the first time, the dominant factor of dance was not in the image, figure, or product of moving, but in experience. As the community grew, however, there was increasing differentiation between "contact improvisers" and dance professionals, as well as their respective formalisations of knowledge and practice, and today contact improvisation is an established technique. Contact improvisation has increasingly come to include movements that are neither "pedestrian", nor stem from the dialectic of activity and passivity, demand and response. The moment when the internal work of dance entirely left the factory of the body and became an image was with the return to narrative dance in the 1980s. This acquired its formal synthesis specifically in relation to video dance, a form that in the work of authors such as DV8 or Wim Vandekeybus found a correspondence between cinematic narration and dance through contact improvisation. Thus contact improvisation completed its journey from a bodily practice, via a technique, to a regime of representation.

Contact improvisation became an image, and very often an image of conflict in narrativised forms. From this it became evident that the analysis of the aesthetic organisation of movement as it operates at the very base of social experience is insufficient to understand its

political unconscious. To analyse the work of images we have to turn our gaze from social and aesthetic concerns towards the cinematic mode of choreography. Of particular importance is that the appearance of camera-vision not only changed the regimes of attraction and attention, but also, as Jonathan Beller argues, the dominant mode of representation, the cinematic, became the dominant mode of production. Or, to push things further: first the process of a body at work translated into serial images; then the serialised images accelerated into the (serialised) body of slapstick; then the choreography of the camera passivised the bodies in front of it; and finally the internalised work of the active/passive contact of bodies produced a further dissemination of vectors of attention into discontinuities, which activated a new, schematic spectating and a transparent image.

* * *

If we return once more to the scene of the first film, the Lumière factory in Lyons, we see that cinema had already set the frame of the shot, borrowing it straight from the factory gate. Soon enough, that frame would make its way into the film studio, as the stage portal surrounding the choreographies and *mise en scènes* filmed by the static camera of early cinema. Our view of industry would become (the) industry's own view. From studio choreographies such as *A Trip to the Moon* (*Le Voyage dans la lune*) to the extremely accelerated movements of bodies in slapstick, cinema would transpose the rhythm of serial production

into gestic chains. Even in Soviet cinematography from the period of industrialisation and the New Economic Policy, the utopian ideas of creating a new man were shaped by the ideal model of the accelerated movement and the montaged, hyper-efficient body of slapstick. While, on the one hand, Aleksei Gastev and Vsevolod Meyerhold applied the experiences of Taylor's scientific management in the development of biomechanics, filmmakers from the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (Trauberg, Kozintsev, Yutkevich) exclaimed: "We prefer Charlie Chaplin's arse to Eleonore Duse's hands," and shot constructivist slapstick comedies about Soviet bureaucracy (e.g. Kote Mikaberidze). Everywhere the new mode of production was becoming the new mode of representation.

The turning point in the relationship between viewing and the image was not the discovery of moving images, but moving the camera, moving the point of view. If, as Benjamin tells us, "photography reveals in this material physiognomic aspects, image worlds, which dwell in the smallest things" (1999, 513), then film or the video camera not only reveals worlds of images of movement, but also writing before language, choreography before dance. In fact, the moving camera embodies the historical variables of choreography. Marko Kostanić claims that the crucial point in the development of cinema, far more relevant than the introduction of sound, is the moment when films no longer functioned as a technological documentation of the theatrical dispositive (see, Kostanić 2011). The discovery of moving images resulted, as we saw in the very first film, in an increased intensity of movement, which developed from

a pronounced gestics , via burlesque, to slapstick. Films such as *A Trip to the Moon* placed a static camera in front of a spectacular show , whose only divergence from theatre was the possibility of spatiotemporal discontinuity, that is, the cut. Only thanks to authors such as Griffith and Kuleshov was a radical separation accomplished between the cinematic image and theatre. As Kostanić puts it: "Using the potentials of montage and the close-up allowed entry into an erstwhile inaccessible domain of theatrical relations and made the preceding type of gestuality and supporting persuasiveness and rhetoricity redundant. There occurred a sort of repression of the acting body and, accordingly, there was an increase in the narrative relevance of immobility, neutrality, and the concentrated body. What is crucial is that films no longer choreographed movement but the gaze, which automatically gave rise to film psychology and suspense." (2011)

The moment when film found its own way to absorb movement, the moment when it began moving and editing the gaze and not only rhythm, to distribute attention and not just information, became the moment when a new dispositive developed and the viewer had to be re-educated. From that moment, viewers could also see slow motion, as well as stillness as a form of relative motion, because motion comes to be as a consequence of analysing complex levels of choreographies of the gaze. Motion was no longer anthe exclusive privilege of the body, but was expanded to objects, gestures, grimaces, gazes ...

That is why we can no longer view moving images, whether theatrical or cinematic, only as tableaux placed

before the viewer's gaze, but they must be seen as composites, aggregate unities of the object of viewing, the apparatus of viewing, the viewer, and with attention as their connective material. Each one of these composites is a variable unit that differs in its density and crystallisation of attention and the regimes of interest. The viscosity of a composite, its ability to turn living and inanimate actors/agents and their *milieus* into metastable sets will also determine the degree of the refraction of "reality" in theatre. Moving images, as in Diderot, reside not only in the observed object, but also in the viewer's "soul", as Tomislav Gotovac brilliantly described them in his brief text 'Whilst Watching a Movie': "a structure comes to life, pulsating, seeking and finding its own rhythm, freeing, in mid-flight, its tensions, and carrying the mass that accompanies all of that. The screen and the eye as part of the same organism. The image and movement. That is film. The only genuine and the only possible definition of film is already contained in its name: motion picture." (Cvejić and Pristaš 2013, 133-4)

The screen and the eye are part of the same pulsating organism, locked into a rhythm, the flickering that makes the image and movement a composite unit. Theatre and cinema are two extremes of those crystallisations – from the total immersivity of the cinema to the possibility of extreme demonstrativeness and transparency in the theatre, the relationship between the agencies of viewing and the viewer undergo a transformation, as does the way they produce and reproduce images.

Ultimately, the choreography of the gaze not only resulted in a series of new film aesthetics. It also produced

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the economy of attention, constituting a new domain of labour, turning the viewer's labour into an organised and productive labour, as Jonathan Beller asserts: "Let it be registered then that the media have not just been organizing human attention; they are the practical organization of attention just as factories, agribusiness, the military-industrial complex, and the service sector are the practical organization of labor. Attention is channeled in media pathways that traverse both hardware and wetware." (Beller 2006/7)

While the cinematic dispositive, seeking to industrialise viewing, has continued to develop an ever higher degree of immersion, theatre today imposes on itself an equivalent and corresponding, although ostensibly opposite, command – care for the spectator by injecting theatricality into viewing itself. Perhaps it would be even more precise to say that contemporary theatre mediatises viewing itself through various ways of subjectivising the spectator. From de-theatricalising performance, via theatricalising the spectator, subjectivising her, making her participate in the performance, to the enlisting of "real people", that is, delegating or outsourcing performance (see, Bishop 2008 and Ridout 2008),[20] contemporary performance has developed practices of care for the spectator that only emphasise this integrational mode of viewing by attempting to play with the spectators' expectations. Manifestations of a person sitting in an auditorium are manifold: observer, spectator, seer, referent, referee, activist, the implicated, the embedded etc. Becoming programmed, internalised, integrated, an

observer today mimics an ideal spectator, like the way Schlegel understood the Greek tragic choir, only the ideal model has moved from the stage to the auditorium. Probably the most intriguing conceptualisation of the viewer of contemporary performance is what Bojana Cvejić, in her book *Choreographing Problems,* calls the *attender* (Cvejić 2015, 71). An *attender* is a spectator who is concerned with displacing the habitual, and this attention results from performances that: 1) include, in a non-dialogical way, the presence and movement of those to whom the performance is presented; 2) establish different temporal operations; 3) establish an asymmetry in perception, that is, disable automatic perception in the spectators and divert their attention from the performers' acts to their own perception. The attender is not a performer, but is part of the set that constitutes the encounter. But the attender is not a mere participant either, she is not interpellated into the action, her viewing becomes doing. Above all, she is expected to be involved in a form of *participatory thinking*, action thinking, or, simply, thinking as opposed to recognising, and in this way negotiating not with the performers but with the regimes of interest in order to find her way, or herself, in the problem field (see, Bakhtin 1993, 8). Participatory thinkers are "those who know how not to detach their performed act from its product, but rather how to relate both of them to the unitary and unique context of life and seek to determine them in that context as an indivisible unity" (Bakhtin 1993, 19 fn). If the spectator's performative act of thinking, of viewing as thinking, makes the product itself and so constitutes the performance, there still remains

the question of how the attender seeks to determine that act of viewing/thinking and production as "an indivisible unity" in the "unique context of life"? How is this self-activity on the spectator's part at the same time a unique act, "my own individually answerable act or deed"? (Bakhtin 1993, 3)  The attender is always at risk of remaining just an attendant, as Deleuze dubs those dark, shadowy figures in Bacon's paintings, those figurative referents that act as the measuring units by which the spectator monitors the variation of the performing Figure (see, Deleuze 2005, 50). Indeed, it is difficult to shed the various connotations the term 'attendant' acquires in the age of service economies: follower, one who is present, assistant, guard, caretaker, servant, etc. Following is only an internal measure of viewing. Although a follower seems an active viewer, her function is only to highlight the variation of reality, while the function of the so-called participatory audience is only to verify it, to facilitate its validation. And the more real the attendant becomes, the more distorted is the artist when measured against her reality.

# Ideal People

It is true that a performance is made with the spectator in mind, and while a rehearsal is for a spectator who is not yet there, this spectator has already left behind an empty point of view. The process of creation does not involve the presence of the spectator, but does involve the composite presence of her gaze.

In his short diary entry on the solitude of creation from 1974, Ion Grigorescu argues that art is made in darkness and that the 19th century artist would find no pleasure in being watched whilst working. Whilst creating, an artist is in dialogue with "ideal people" right up until he stops painting, until he withdraws and allows the image to coagulate, to become alienated to the point where any subsequent intervention from the artist would constitute a foreign body. "There is an obvious opposition between the first time – the time of imaginary dialogs – fixed in the composition of elements charged with energy (see, Kandinsky), and the second time – the time of repression, manifested as oblivion, as amnesia, through which the individual separates himself from the elements of the work, with which he lived in a state of identification without

distinctions, and experiences the hallucination (the exterior existence of the image) of a whole, of a global impression." (Grigorescu 2014, 209) Artists cannot paint for themselves; at worst, they conceal their internal master's voice with the mask of selfhood because their art is made with the purpose of communication.

Ion Grigorescu, however, as a photographer, an artist in the age of technical reproduction, paradoxically views photography as an art that is made primarily for the artist. An analogue-era photographer carries with her a ready supply of pictures right until the moment she examines her negatives. A photograph excludes the beholder, because it acquires its final shape only upon development, when it is revealed to the artist. The artist, like an alien, stands over her work revealing itself to her, and then later, the work, exposed on paper, seems to the beholder like a "result of alienation, 'mechanical', made not by man, but by nature" (Grigorescu 2014, 211). For Diderot and Grigorescu alike, the crux of the matter is technique, which renders things natural, imprinting them into reality, although no one can see reality as it is presented in the image because that would entail an extremely still and extended gaze. In the digital age the immediacy of recording and the possibility of instant intervention in, and even generation of, images has transformed our vision into tele-vision. Beller argues something similar concerning the main characters of Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, who see other people as images and treat them accordingly. They view their own lives as if they were television, formatted by television procedures and conventions, and they treat their victims in the same

way, like remote-controlled images that may be erased or removed when we've had enough of them: "Capitalism turns empathy into television and humans into images." (Beller 2006, 274)When theatre began losing the race for the fastest (re)production of images, it went back to the power and authority of experience, but this time through the participation of the spectator in the broadest sense, the spectator as a witness to the performance, or the spectator as a social participant in viewing. Involving the spectators, whether as delegates of the performance, as experts, or as participants in the process of creation always brings back the same problem – that of ideal people, people who are experts on account of their experience, acquiring wisdom through experience and recognising experience. Brecht did it by including workers, amateurs, but again along with the transferral of experience represented in his dramatic text. Activating the spectator, and even her potential participation, will only further consolidate the internal regulation of integration and, via the performance, produce a mask standing in front of a mirror affirming ideal spectators as images of action. As in Grigorescu's darkroom, the artist, again, is the one who treats theatre as a negative of society, where the author's authority is what includes the spectator under the aegis of experience.

The young Walter Benjamin, choking under the authority of experience, writes: "In our struggle for responsibility, we fight against someone who is masked. The mask of the adult is called experience. It is expressionless, impenetrable, and ever the same. The adult has always already experienced [*erlebt*] everything: youth,

ideals, hopes, woman." (1996, 3) To effect an explosion in the present, to open self-defining horizons of activity, to make the encounter with the spectator open to possibility, it is necessary to place the initial capsule in which the view is constituted at the point of the geometric regulation of the scene. Only an exploded gaze, a gaze that demands additional thinking about what was seen, can become responsible and answerable. Such a gaze is not directed at the mask of experience (or through it), but looks instead through "closed eyes", eyes whose pupils are faced with a rupture, an interstice, and have an exploded view of the problem. To find oneself with the spectator at the core of the programme, to be with Grigorescu while he is operating his camera optics and not when he examines the negatives, at the moment when the apparatus is being negotiated, means to find oneself in the "AND", the dot over Godard's "Et", the interstice, a place that offers a difficult but accurate view. It is a void, the place where the image emerges and the world withdraws. To occupy this place where facts retreat into irrelevance, where what is left in the void becomes visible through the smoke following the explosion, is to be in the density of composites. To find oneself over the abyss of the "i/AND" means to find oneself in the theatre, the place where we come to resemble ourselves, when, forfeiting our function, we just begin to re-emerge.

# Double Exposition/Exposure

> **"How many of us are there altogether, finally? And who is holding forth at the moment? And to whom? And about what?"**
> — Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (1979, 339)

In physical terms theatres are typically deprived of a viewing position that has already become normalised in galleries and museums – the aerial or bird's-eye view, a viewing position that offers a view of viewing itself. In the architecture of contemporary museums these are often bridges, galleries, or transversals over exhibition spaces that enable a view of the entire space and exhibition. In the history of theatre architecture, however, the viewing of viewing is nothing new. In renaissance theatre, for example, the act of the King viewing, or more often listening to the performance had to be seen, which is why the King often occupied the central position in the hall. From Wagnerian theatre on, the spectacle moved from the King's appearance to the performance onstage, and turning off the lights in the hall both concealed viewing, and enhanced its intensity and focus. In galleries, museums, and similar spaces the need

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for a view from above increases with the spectacularisation of exhibitions (an obvious example is Richard Serra's installation *The Matter of Time* at Guggenheim Bilbao). Alternatively, the view from above becomes a tool for thematising the gallery as medium, that is, the context of exhibiting (a textbook example is the exhibition *Kontext Kunst. The Art of the 90s* curated in 1993 by Peter Weibel at the Neue Galerie im Künstlerhaus in Graz).

In theatrical *scenography* the spectator sees singular appearances emerging at singular moments, seen from specific perspectives. Scenography generally rests on concealment and sporadic revelations. Even in a black box, which is closure itself, there always exists a logic of plans, coverings, and perspectival differences. Michel Serres posits *ichnography* as the opposite of scenography, as "the ensemble of possible profiles, the sum of horizons. Ichnography is what is possible or knowable, or producible, it is the phenomenological well-spring, the pit, the black box." (Serres 1995, 19)

My memory of Xavier Le Roy's exhibition *Retrospective*, which I saw at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona in 2012, begins with its founding *division of the view* into that from above and that from inside the exhibition space. The entrance to the exhibition is from above, down a flight of stairs leading into a barrel, a white cylinder similar to the one in Beckett's *The Lost Ones.* The view from above seems to level everything. The performance and the act of observing the performers and the spectators (who are not notably differentiated) occurs simultaneously, and does not appear to suggest anything, but seems like a trace

(*ichnos*) of the performance that invites us to come down. However, the rustle of the performed fragments and gazes crossing one another soon poses the question: what is this? An exhibition or a performance? Even before coming down those stairs it is obvious that someone is performing something for someone else. In this performance, however, it is the spectator who is exposed. By virtue of her viewing (in the space) of the exhibition, the spectator is exposed to the exhibition, but is not the exhibit itself. This second division, the *vectoral divisibility of the spectator,* turns watching itself into a situation. The spectator is an observer, but this is also highlighted by the exhibition. The exhibition is continuously radiating toward her, and its orientation toward the centre of the space is likewise radial. The third division, however, guarantees the stability of the viewer–viewed situation, which is a consequence of the incommensurability of the respective positions of the viewer and the performer. Although the view from above suggests the *possibility* of their replacement or equivalence, their knowledge of the performance is incommensurable, and at work instead is the *division of the actors/agents*.

Despite the performers' constant comings and goings, the exchangeability of their positions, and the simultaneous composition of intervals in the performance, the exhibition nevertheless rests on the scenographic operation of hiding and appearing. The ichnographic presentation of the exhibition, the bird's-eye view, shows that the exhibition's fundamental operation is not an "exhibition" of the performers but an exposition of the performance. Here, someone is exposing an exhibit to someone else. This is

done by breaking out from the white background, by being fore-grounded in relation to the spectator, by the *divisibility of the performance* into the centrifugal performance machine and the centripetal performative objects. The performance mode is suggested by the performers tangentially running in and out of the exhibition space, but the performative situations themselves, extracted from Xavier Le Roy's earlier performances, do not generate a general logic of the unity of performance but function anecdotally, representing the singularity of each choreographic quotation's problem, while as a whole they share a purpose that lies beyond their singularities. They are discrete units, temporal sets sharing the same operative territory within the duration of the exhibition, but simultaneously products with different genealogies, turning the exhibition's framing into a performance, a machine made of a different kind of metal.

While the viewer and her viewing are invested in the abstract performance machine, what makes each performative quotation an anecdotal, temporally condensed manifestation of singularity is Le Roy's choreographic technology, comparable to the way that Benjamin, in the case of photography, views technology as a historical variable of magic: "Whereas it is a commonplace that, for example, we have some idea what is involved in the act of walking (if only in general terms), we have no idea at all what happens during the fraction of a second when a person actually takes a step. Photography, with its devices of slow motion and enlargement, reveals the secret. It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual

unconscious through psychoanalysis. [...] photography reveals in this material physiognomic aspects, image worlds, which dwell in the smallest things – meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams, but which, enlarged and capable of formulation, make the difference between technology and magic visible as a thoroughly historical variable." (Benjamin 1999, 512-3) Le Roy's choreography is a high-resolution choreography, operating not on the level of harmonies and compositions, but that of a long exposure of problems. In Benjamin the camera renders the optical unconscious conscious, and Le Roy's choreographies similarly extract choreographic structures from other modes of moving and the formal relations of bodies in space (the space of animals, sport, a concert, etc.). Marko Kostanić calls these structures the choreographic unconscious and, using BADco.'s work as an example, describes the method as follows: "Articulating choreography as a structural moment of operation in other, non-dance social fields not only casts a different light on those places from which it has been extracted, but also establishes a framework for different ways of writing the history of dance. It is a double method of cancelling the unconscious in the supposed detachedness of choreography from the historical and social reality – but what is brought into light from that reality are the constitutive traces of choreography, whereas from choreography as an autonomized artistic field it is the unconscious social and rhetorical conditions of the specific legitimization of the autonomizing process with respect to the social hyper-codification of ballet and the gestural ideology of

everyday life." (Kostanić 2011) Choreography, to paraphrase Benjamin, reveals itself in those physical relations that, once magnified and able to be cited, reformulate the automated functions of the body's technological use into "magic", giving rise to wonder (the kind that, according to Aristotle, gives birth to philosophy). This is the double-take method, familiar not only from ancient tragedy, but also from Benjamin's interpretation of epic theatre.[21] It is a serial game of wonder/estrangement and recognition/ reflection, causing shock due to a delayed, belated reaction. In the case of ancient tragedy, its regulation hinges on two machines: *peripateia*, a sudden and unexpected reversal; and *anagnorisis*, a transition from unawareness (ignorance) to awareness (knowledge). In epic theatre, those machines are the break (*Unterbrechung*) and the afterthought (*Nachdenken*).I would say, however, that this is a reversible situation that does not arise from the logics of the "double take", as in Le Roy's performances, but from a choreography of "double exposure". What is exhibited is not a choreographic object of desire but a reflection of that desire, what remains from desire after the afterthought, a reflection of choreography. Although at first sight it may seem otherwise, the opposite of retrospective is perspective understood as "looking through", or even better as "looking ahead". According to its dictionary definition, a prospect is a mental picture of an imagined future. Following the same logic, a retrospective is a mental picture stemming from a later or delayed consideration of a past event. A retrospective is thus not an exhibition but an exposition where a "double exposure" is at work:

ex-position of the spectator and ex-position of a mental image of the past, more accurately, the exposure of the spectator to a mental image of the past. In this way "double exposure" leads to the divisibility of the exhibition space: as a space of exhibiting, it is a place of performance; but when exposure is dislocated from the object of desire and shifted onto the spectator – from exposure to performance (already a reflection) – this theatricalises the space, because "theatricality emerges where space and place can no longer be taken for granted or regarded as self-contained" (Weber 2004, 300). Being in-between exhibition and performance, at a boundary that is an illusion, flickering, *Retrospective* is precisely in between, a medium, an intervention (*inter-* "between" + *venire* "to come"). And a medium *qua* intervention does not keep us in a certain state, but demands that we take a certain stance (*Haltung*) regarding our state.[22] In the case of *Retrospective,* it is an encounter where the spectator's stance upholds or deactivates the performance machine. A series of divisibilities does not enable us to insert ourselves into a stable spot where no intervention from either us or the viewed could occur. The only thing that remains as an antidote to the operation of constant breaks and mediations is to approach experience again, anecdotally, and focus on every detail of our behaviour and that of the performance, because in each one of those anecdotes with which we leave the exhibition, we shall find operations of conscious and unconscious social determinants.

# The Melting of Perspective

Things are, therefore, always viewed from a point, and "[t]his point of meaning is always the Law: law of society, law of struggle, law of meaning. Thus all militant art cannot but be representational, legal." (Barthes 1977, 76-7) In Brecht and Eisenstein's case, this point is the place of social struggle or the party, while in Diderot's case it is a bourgeois point of view – the gestic differentiation of a citizen. The gestic character of a specifically theatrical image rests on the law that governs the scene, not on the choice of subject. This law regulates two levels: the dramaturgical-operative level of composition and the directorial-juridical level of the regulation of inclusion and exclusion. Dramaturgy is thus always a sort of instituting of the work, establishing its problem fields and regimes of interest, while directing is a regime of perspectives and practices. Dramaturgy is therefore never identical to the work of a dramaturge, whose work is invisible, whereas dramaturgy always comes out, even in cases where there was no specific work on the dramaturgy. Directing, on the other hand, establishes what will be visible and what will

be excluded, and is authorised by the visible individuality of the director, a fetishistic subject with a vision of things, only to surrender it to someone who will then view them. The anecdote that Jan Fabre always watches his own work from the royal box or royal perspective illustrates how the architectonic of power in the theatre has moved from the spectator to the mental configuration of the director. What would it mean to deprive an image of its source, to take its legality away? To abolish an image's legal status we would have to equate our gaze with the "closed eyes of the dead man", where the "price that must be paid is enormous – no less than death" (Barthes 1977, 77). The solution that Barthes offers sounds like an impossible possible, like an event. Can death, however, be an event? Like the event, death always occurs "against all expectations, always too early, something impossible that nevertheless happens" (Dastur 2000, 183). It seems that death is the most universal event, an event *par excellence*, but the problem with death is that it is never present. In contrast to the event, which is characterised, according to Foucault, by a materialism of the incorporeal (Foucault 1972, 231), in death there occurs a "corporeal materiality". Death does not open a new world or a new style of existence. It is only a possibility. Death is a possibility that we can never realise, and its essential passivity is deeply inscribed in human existence, making us singular, because we die alone. If death is a constant possibility, if our existence is determined by our anxiety regarding death, then our being is always in the domain of possibility. Therefore we cannot view reality as a domain of existence either, but as a domain of insistence, of

temporality, and as an intentional construction. In reality our interests are revealed, and theatre is an accurate mirror of their construction. Theatre provides the best outline of the fragility of any given reality and its ability to be completed. Theatre is an exposed mechanism of possibility ruled by an imposed Law. The idea that theatre should cease to be a mirror of reality, in favour of reality as a mirror of theatre – Antonin Artaud's idea – seeks to use the mechanism of theatre precisely against the construction of reality. He seeks to imprint it into reality, imprint fragility even into possibility itself, and burden the mechanism with an affirmation of its unpredictability. Perhaps even further, to throw off the yoke of death, of any kind of determination regarding finitude. That is why Artaud's thinking of theatre will always be in an existential relationship with death, but in a way that does not recognise its unreality. Indeed, in death he sees an affirmation of life, life before one's birth and after one's death (see, Derrida 1978). For Artaud, reality and the theatre of reality already contain death. The theatre of cruelty is a melting pot of life: "this crucible of fire and real meat where by an anatomical trampling of bone, limbs and syllables, bodies are renewed and the mythical act of making a body presents itself physically and plainly" (Artaud 1965, 169). For Artaud, theatre is "an act of true genesis" and death "an invented state". Artaud, too, clearly understands the fact that if death is the most universal kind of event, then no other event has any commensurable significance whatsoever, except one, and that is rebirth. Not being born into death, however, into the condition of the passive existence of death in our lives, people and

things that are reborn cannot be determined by anything else but themselves. As a result, there is no performance in Artaud with a single point of view, an image with a pre-selected viewpoint and law. His view erases the point of choice, or, rather, there is no view at all. There is only a complete enfoldment, a smelting without any primacy of the spirit over the body, of death over life, of the sign over the signifier.

# Scheme

Once the world became a picture, the image in theatre
became a representation of the world. We learned that
from Diderot. Then we also saw how theatre in its most
sovereign forms cruelly oriented itself toward refracting
the image of the world, while film formed world pictures
by investing them with our own imaginary inside. But at
the same time, 20th century society developed along the
line of another thinker of the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques
Rousseau, and his vision of a transparent society, a society
whose members will be able to perceive both the whole
and every individual part of that society from any position
within it. In a reified version of society there is, however,
always a privileged position, the position that determines
other perspectives of viewing.

We rushed into the 20th century with two other types
of inward views: x-rays exposed our bodily interior; while
psychoanalysis exposed our souls (see, Lippit 2005). This
visibility of how organisms function, their transparency,
is reaching its culmination today in medicine as much
as in the performance of democracy, corporate business

procedures, and procedural art. Total transparency, however, was actually attained in the ecstasy accompanying the explosion of the atomic bomb. For Willem de Kooning, it was a moment when "the eyes that saw the light melted out of sheer ecstasy" (quoted in Lippit 2005, 81); for an instant, from the privileged perspective of the West, "it made angels out of everybody" (Lippit 2005, 81). Nevertheless, only a short while before, another Western gaze was exposed to the extreme sunlight of an Algerian beach, the gaze of Camus' Mersault. And while De Kooning no longer needs the fullness of colours nor even open eyes to put interiority into action on the surface of a canvas, Merseault is entirely indifferent, reduced to pure gestuality and the extreme exposition of an experiential moment. In Merseault, blinded by extreme sunlight, nothing is hidden inside, and neither the examining magistrate, nor the prosecutor, nor the judge, nor the chaplain can find it. What keeps *The Stranger* in one piece is a scheme, a diagram of details, of the configuration of things that he remembers.

One should view in the same "light" the all-pervasive performances of Stano Filko and Tomislav Gotovac. Stano Filko, an artist from Slovakia, pronounced the city of Bratislava and whatever happened in it between May 2 and May 8, 1965, a work of art. This was followed by years of diagrammatic classifications, statistics of all sorts of animate and inanimate participants (women, men, dogs, refrigerators, tulips), infrastructure (houses, balconies, apartments, water supply systems, cemeteries), and environment (the city, the Danube). The performance's

rays illuminate all of that, and their transformation will be formulated in an obsessive *post-hoc* conceptual operation in which the performance's temporal structure are divided into chakras, colours, emotions, and subjectifying semantic operations.

In 1979, in a similar and yet again characteristic way, Tomislav Gotovac planned to shoot a documentary called *Totalni portret grada Zagreba* (A Total Portrait of the City of Zagreb). In a short text whose purpose is not entirely clear,[23] Gotovac describes Zagreb as an organism, comparing it to a human being who "has its own body and soul. It has its own bloodstream, its own breath, its own nerves, its own steps, its own optimisms, its own pessimisms, its own arms, its own legs, its own body..." (Šijan 2018, 106) Then he gives it a temporal dimension: "its own past, its own future, and, most importantly, its own now and its own here." The third step is the introduction of film, but as a time-travel medium: "I am talking about the 21st century. I am talking about 21st century film. I am talking about the only kind of film one will be able to see in the 21st century, film without fiction."

Gotovac's proposed method for producing such a total documentary film is that of weaving, like the weaving of a spider's web or a weaver's lace, like a jazz pianist improvising on the keyboard. It would be a film whose form could only arise from a rhythmical operation of this type or, in Gotovac's case, in the rhythm of an obsession.

Filko's diagrammatic reconstruction of his own decision to scan his city, and Gotovac's decision to make a film as a performance that re*organ*ises the city of Zagreb,

are two ways of viewing reality that problematise the dominant logics of the transparency of social regulations.

It is precisely the coming together of multiple impetuses to viewing, from Diderot on, that brings viewing itself to a critical state, one open to various temporal, sensorial, and cognitive operations that collide and generate the possibility of recomposing the nervature running between the viewer and the object, or, more accurately, an explosion of the gaze. Performances that enable such chain-reactions might be called temporal diagrams – images of thought characterised by the schematism of the view. A diagram is an experiment in vision that imparts form to, and communicates a certain layered or accumulated knowledge of an image, not only the knowledge of envisioning, but also that of viewing. Conceived as a temporal diagram, a performance exposes world images to displacements of perspective and orientation, abstracting the iconic values of the object, testing the capacity of an image to link up (or delink) in shifting regimes of interests, with different problematics and a diversity of logical operations that allow one to compose an image, or encompass it in time (and thereby in motion).

Nonetheless, schematic viewing should not be understood as only being a result of elucidation. Let us consider another two examples where twilight turns into night, the time when the images and symbols of the world fall into the darkness of matter. This crepuscular moment also brings to light constellations and schemes, and allows us to view images of thought, temporal diagrams.

In 2010, in the twilight of the procedural, transparent dance performance, a performance that exhausts itself in a schematic staged explication of a single issue, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker restaged *Elena's Aria*, a performance from 1984. Like any "well-tailored piece", in Vienna that year *Elena's Aria* was met with irony, which nowadays usually greets *metier*. The performance returns, however, not as a piece put together according to a scheme, but as a piece that is itself a scheme, a scheme not so much presenting the geometry of the internal anxiety of the subjects it presents, as the tensions among those constitutive elements that Ptolemy called *schemata*, including "gesture", "figure", "pose", "movement", "pattern of motion", and "picture" (see, Lawler 1954, 148-58).Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker said: "After jubilant movement outward in *Rosas danst Rosas*, *Elena's Aria* turned inward: it was about retreating into silence and stillness, waiting, slowness, and absence," (Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2012, 151) but what kind of a turn inward is meant to be shown, what is it that turns inward only to be posited outward? *Elena's Aria* was an undesirable performance in 1984 because it had neither the expressionist swing of *Tanztheater* (despite there being a dialectical relation between the fiction of the characters and their action), nor was it the jubilant translation of minimalist music into choreography foreshadowed by De Keersmaeker in her early performances *Fase* and *Rosas danst Rosas*. *Elena's Aria* was equally undesirable in 2010 because the professional spectators' eyes, melting before the avisuality of a demonstrative and overexposed dance, no longer had the strength to gaze through a *metier* that is

nothing but the factuality of the enframing itself, which was the focus of De Keersmaeker's own gaze. Enframing (*Gestell*), the very technique of theatre, is the inside that De Keersmaeker inverts in the performance in order to combine the stage, the backstage and the emptied orchestra pit in the same space. Everything central was put aside (the arias, the texts), while everything transparent and transitional was made central. The so-called interior of theatre became visible, not via a Brechtian exposure of the conditions of production, but on the contrary, by an otherwise transparent dispositive becoming a visible scheme, a geometry exemplifying the abstraction of a female subject's interiority. Tensions emerge that never turn into a drama involving subjects, but rather enact a battle between the actors and the stage. *Elena's Aria* is not an attempt to take the inside out and extend it into theatre. It is an exemplary scheme, not just a piece of theatre but an example of theatre, with a drive strong enough to reveal the dynamics of images and worlds that are either too small (intimate) or too big (expressionistic) (see, Jameson 2015, 17-22).If there is anything interesting in this performance, it is the fact that it bears all the hallmarks of early procedural choreography – the steps, expositions, cells, schemes and architecture (Keersmaeker and Cvejić 161-71) – but does not exhaust itself in procedurality. There is a level where this performance is significantly more intriguing and that is the gestic character of the subject. *Elena's Aria* does not present the procedural subject that is familiar to us, the subject in *Last Performance* for example, a paradigmatic procedural performance where a group of performers

comes onstage with the *Haltung* of a doubtful observer, but use the performance's semantic procedures to compensate for their lack of faith in signification with a belief in the universe bearing Jérôme Bel's authorial signature. In *Elena's Aria* there is no title character, there is not even an aria sung by Elena. The performance explores the multiverse of a subject that is not manifested through different semantic investments, discharges, or displacements, but through performative frameworks. The certainty of this subject does not stem from the schematism of the signifying procedure, or from their fear before an image of the world, a spectacle. The figures (I prefer not to say characters) of this performance are not subject to the test of the succession of procedures, but reside in the multiplicity of a gestic character, where choreography is understood as a performance scheme. *Elena's Aria* is a performance that does not present a world picture, or seek to recreate the world or a part thereof with procedures that will make it more convincing, but understands performance as an image of thought, a set of gestures, breaks, movements, and simultaneities. If that subject is female, then it is female because it does not look for its integrity in concepts that unify (figure, sign, author, gender, class, nation...) but in the multiplicity of its own otherness. In both of its historical contexts, *Elena's Aria* was an instrument for gazing inward. In the twilight of *Tanztheater* it provided a view into the nervature of a theatrical apparatus that no longer tolerated expressionist images, and became a testing ground for a gestic elaboration of affects.[24] In the twilight of *metier* it returned to illuminate the scheme of choreographic

thought, where one finds the formal causes of procedural choreography as well as the opaque schematism of temporal structures, and the gestic thinking of duration, silence, and stillness. The key for this, interestingly, is not to be found in the author's own choreographic elaborations.The other example focuses on time as the object of viewing, or more precisely, the meantime of our gazing into darkness. Looking into time entails a multiple view, a view that can survey time in its multiplicity. *Open Score*, an anthological performance by Robert Rauschenberg, can be seen retrospectively as the moment a critical mass of knowledge accumulated in sets of images and viewing confronted an inhuman gaze, and exploded. As Rauschenberg put it:

"My theatre piece (to date unnamed) begins with an authentic tennis game with rackets wired for transmission of sound. The sound of the game will control the lights. The game's end is the moment the hall is totally dark. The darkness is illusionary. The hall is flooded with infrared (so far invisible to the human eye). The modestly choreographed cast of from 300 to 500 will enter and be observed and projected by infrared television on large screens for the audience. This is the limit of the realization of the piece to date.

Tennis is movement, put it in the context of theatre it is a formal dance improvisation. The unlikely use of the game to control the lights and to perform as an orchestra, interest me. The conflict of not being able to see an event that is taking place right in front of one, except through a reproduction, is the sort of double exposure of action. A screen of light and a screen of darkness." (Rauschenberg,

*Open Score*) As Rauschenberg states in the score for the "theatre piece", it starts with an authentic tennis game, which in the context of theatre becomes a formal dance improvisation. But we have to ask ourselves not only how tennis reboots itself as a dance improvisation, but also how putting tennis into theatre changes theatre itself? And how tennis rebooted as dance improvisation becomes a choreography? Such a transformation occurs by translating, not from one language into another, but from one coordinate system into another.

Usage of sport choreography in theatre is rather common practice, but what makes Rauschenberg's piece special is the way he changes the lines of sight and regimes of interest. Rauschenberg is not taking only the movement of tennis, but the whole space of the game. Building up the tennis terrain, and making its floor plan the performance space he makes the first step in transforming space from a scenography to an ichnography, to use Michele Serres' distinction. By drawing a tennis court on the floor he introduces the difference between perspective and a bird's-eye view on theatre.

By introducing the floor-plan of the tennis court Rauschenberg redraws one playing field over another in a similar way to how Julius Koller, in his U.F.O. anti-happenings in the 60s, redrew the lines on a tennis court, and designated this minimal yet fundamental form of agency *Time/Space Definition of the Psychophysical Activity of Matter*. Simple tasks, simple rules introduced by the new agency of space, twist local circumstances and recondition the locality of an event. The tennis game is objectified

through a double spatial exposure, a double framing, in a dialectic of the object and its circumstances that is not new for performance. In fact, this dialectic is rooted in the first floor-plan of a performance, in ichnographic speculation on the fourth wall.

At this point I would like to come back to the second part of Rauschenberg's *Open Score*, the part that he describes as follows: "the hall is totally dark. The darkness is illusionary. The hall is flooded with infrared (so far invisible to the human eye). The modestly choreographed cast of from 300 to 500 will enter and be observed and projected by infrared television on large screens for the audience". The darkness is illusionary. The space is flooded by infrared. Darkness, the very darkness that we physically see (or not) in front of our eyes is the ultimate illusion, because that's all we can see. Rauschenberg notes: "The conflict of not being able to see an event that is taking place right in front of one except through a reproduction is the sort of double exposure of action. A screen of light and a screen of darkness."

What we see here is the shadow movement of a modestly choreographed cast. The inhuman view reproduced on screen allows us see what is cut out, everything that belongs to another regime of attraction simply takes a step that shifts the circumstances. We not only see the negative of colours, but as well the negative of choreography.

Infrared light is probably the best representation of the agency of the lateral or inhuman gaze. The camera is not only reflective, but also penetrating, because it's, quite

literally, the enlightened gaze. It's brain-like, it produces its own light. If the illumination of atomic light supplied De Kooning with a subliminal image of humanity's angelic existence,[25] Rauschenberg's experience of infrared viewing is its negative. Rauschenberg's camera brought choreography closer to pornography, or rather to the pornology of the infrastructure of viewing. But that impossible view is only one in a series that also includes the articulate view of Grigorescu's and Koller's cameras, as well as the view of all those cameras that occupy that non-place, the place of the watching of watching, the place from where we can see temporal diagrams, images of thinking the past and the future.[26]

# The View from Matter

The experience of darkness and the black box in the cinema is significantly different from the equivalent experience in the theatre, because the cinema radicalises darkness, from which one watches the film, whereas the theatre primarily emerges from darkness, which the spectator peers into. Unlike in the theatre, the cinema experience is hypnotic, healing. The assumptions of going to the cinema are idleness, free time, lethargic states, states that give rise to daydreaming. It was such states that led Roland Barthes to the cinema, where he was "finally burying himself in a dim, anonymous, indifferent cube" (Barthes 1986, 346-9).

This buried spectator is presented with the "festival of affects known as a film". The spectator's gaze travels, choreographed by the camera (or image), and the darkness of the cinema engulfs her like a silkworm's cocoon, as the very substance of a daydream and the colour of a "diffuse eroticism". Unlike the theatre – still an inheritor of the bourgeois pose of watching, of "cultural appearance", of attending theatre as a class gesture – the cinema makes

the spectator dream. In the cinema the "body's freedom is generated", eroticism arises not from exposing bodies but from their languid accessibility. The darkness of the movie theatre condenses human presence, empties the space of all its worldliness, and relaxes bodily postures and attitudes. For Barthes, the cinema is a retrofitted infrastructure of darkness, an upgraded theatrical black box, meaning the polar opposite of the cinematic experience is not the theatre, but watching television at home. In watching a film at home (I'm trying not to say "home cinema"), "darkness is erased, anonymity repressed; space is familiar, articulated (by known objects), tamed". The de-eroticised space of watching television is familiar, it leads to the family, not the dream.

The eroticised space of the cinema is one of hypnosis, Barthes argues, the cinematic image the perfect bait: "coalescent (its signified and its signifier melted together), analogical, total, pregnant". In the cinema the spectator is "glued to the representation", a screen-image with all the ingredients of technique, functioning according to the principles of the *ideological*. This text by Barthes remains exciting today because it asks how we might unglue ourselves from this ideological mirror of the repertory of images offered by the cinema. How to separate from the experience of coalescence, the safety of similitude, the naturalness generated by the "truth" of the image, both in the cinema and in the cinema of society?

Barthes uses a term that has a double meaning: *décollant*, meaning both "taking off" as in aeronautics, and "coming off" drugs. Rather than resorting to the methods

of epic theatre, to "critical watching" and counter-ideology, Barthes proposes the method of being fascinated twice over; by the image and by the *situation of the cinema*. For Barthes, the situation of the cinema comprises the image and all that surrounds it, its environment: "the texture of the sound, the hall, the darkness, the obscure mass of the other bodies, the rays of light, entering the theater, leaving the hall". In order to "take off" Barthes complicates the relationship between the spectator and their situation. For Barthes, situating watching in the qualities of the circumstances of watching is "discretionary" rather than critical, because it gives us "the freedom to decide what should be done in a particular situation" (OED Online).

This experience of watching is quite similar to the one in Gotovac's account of the screen and eye coalescing into a single organ, although to achieve Barthes' double displacement into the situation of watching our "relation" to the screen must be complicated, and the regime of interest changed.

## 2. A FLAME AND A FLASH

A night in 2017, a small improvised stage in a gallery,[27] the lights turned off.[28] The artist, standing on the podium, flicks on a lighter, which he is holding pressed against his heart, and gazes at the flame, as though he were trying to keep it from going out, or trying to set his shirt on fire. At first, the flame illuminates the artist's chest and face, framing it as a portrait. As time passes, the flame

subsides and illuminates only the hand holding it. The spectator's attention is imperceptibly narrowed down to the location of the heart, where the hand becomes both the stage of the flame and the frame of the heart. As the flame recedes the portrait slowly becomes an icon of care, a scene resonating with Christianity's sacred heart. As the lighter runs out of fuel the flame is reduced to a flicker, no longer illuminating anything, but simply a speck of light whose dying flame now sheds light on the personal history of the artist – Slaven Tolj, who is performing for the first time following a recent life-threatening stroke. The duration of the performance was only a few minutes, shorter than Tolj had anticipated, and only a few people managed to get into the room on time to see it, but late-comers remained in the room a while longer hoping that something may yet transpire, something that only a premature end may promise.The same space, eighteen years earlier, a few hundred people sitting in the dark, endlessly waiting for the beginning of Oleg Kulik's performance "*White Man, Black Dog*". Finally, several photographers start taking pictures in the dark, with flashes – the only source of light during the performance. A naked Kulik and a dog (wearing its own fur) enter the space. Kulik kisses and pets the dog and after a while the dog walks over to the spectators, who are sitting on the floor. Kulik follows the dog, walking across the people, their bodies, their faces, and the dog is licking them, jumping all over them. The spectators, although for the most part 'experienced' professionals and aficionados of radical art, are in a state of shock and some run away from the dog, some run away from the artist or the performance

space, but remain outside, discussing not dispersing. According to Kulik, the performance did not follow its regular course because there were too many people in the space and there was panic, so the dog did not behave the way it and Kulik had 'agreed'. Kulik spent most of the time chasing the animal, fearing an unpredictable reaction both from the dog and the audience.

Both of these performances made the most of darkness – the density of its structure, the way we can immerse ourselves in its background, immerse ourselves in the depth of a black box (even though both performances took place in a white box). A white box separates, it interpolates interstices and gaps between objects, it allows objects to generate exemplary worlds or their fragments, seeds or debris. A black box renders the world indifferent. The image emerging from the dark is a membrane of meaning that separates layers of enframing. By itself, this manifestation of the frame does not guarantee meaning – Slaven Tolj holding a burning lighter; a dog and a naked man chasing each other amongst the audience.

Different techniques of illumination reveal different levels of the enframing, which in both instances are linked to their duration. What was constituted in Tolj's performance by the time the lighter took to burn its fuel is equivalent to the millisecond of a photographic flash in Kulik's performance. They both extract, out of the indifference of darkness, an image of the excess of temporal intensity, and that excess feeds directly into the virtuosity of the performance apparatus.

### 3. INNERVATION

With a certain amount of generalisation, one may argue that there are two dominant poles organising representation (and viewing) in theatre: one pole is closer to processes of subjectification and the other to the reification of relations. The former is expressed in the subjects of representation or viewing, in the procedures shaping a character, performers' presence and critical awareness, or, rather, shaping the spectator. Whether comprising individuals or a collective subject, the performers or a spectator, the subject and her perception have a constitutive function in the performance. The latter pole rests on processes of objectification and includes a wide range of procedures, from turning persons into things to the panpsychism of objects, from processes forming images to "expanded" choreography, or contingency performances.

In his interpretation of Brecht's literarisation of the conditions of production as a functional transformation of living conditions, Walter Benjamin stressed the importance of the apparatus's membrane, where the refraction of a performance's two modes of existence takes place. The performance apparatus is itself a form of the enslaving conditions of production, as well as a reservoir of the potentialities of previously unexplored models of production. The processes whereby the characters, performers, and spectators are subjectified are a side effect of the apparatus, and when that apparatus disappears, the distribution of roles disappears as well. Some authors have sought to bridge the problem of the apparatus by

connecting these two tendencies. On the one hand, the apparatus begets subjects and Artaud attempts to transcend it by means of a fatherless rebirth, without resemblance, while Beckett attempts to implant the being of the as-yet unborn into the very infrastructure of theatre. If we accept Artaud's need for rebirth as a desire to avoid the closure of representation, how should one understand the unborn status of Beckett's characters? If we return to *Breath,* having adopted the perspective of the composite, we will see that it was an attempt to encompass the gaze (by means of an increase and decrease in the intensity of the light), human breath (as a measure of time), and the world of objects (rubbish as the pure presence of de-functionalised objects) in a single integrated, operative, and machinic unit. Similarly, buried in the ground, living in rubbish, deferred to waiting, uncertainly visible in semidarkness, Beckett's characters are not integral subjects but are instead integrated in matter, subjects manifested in matter but not yet corporeally taken place. Their gaze, if they have one at all, is short-sighted, it does not collide with, attract, or refract the spectator's gaze. What extends the spectator's gaze is precisely the breath, the rhythm of the expansion of matter, the rhythm of activity, of the caesurae, of exhausting movement in a square, of the rhythm of leaves falling from the tree... Beckett's stage allows no discontinuity between the body and matter, it is a scene of total integration synchronised with the spectator's immobilisation in her seat, her immersion in the darkness of the hall. Beckett's theatre comes close to a realisation of the images from Benjamin's innervation machine, the prayer wheel from

the eponymous fragment of the same name in *One-way Street*. The notion of innervation is a wandering concept in Benjamin, a notion that emerged in early versions of his essay on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction before disappearing in later versions.[29] Benjamin argues that only a visual image (not verbal) can generate a healthy will because "there is no imagination without innervation" (Benjamin 1979, 75). We may divine the riddle of innervation if we return to the aforementioned film by Tomislav Gotovac; a living, pulsating structure encompassing the screen and the spectator's eye in a single whole (a composite). Benjamin invokes the mimetic function of innervation that transfers the impulse of the moving image to the viewer, thus making room for a more direct operation of the apparatus, and the possibility of it intervening in the social space of viewing. In his more mature materialist phase, Benjamin probably worried that innervation could numb the spectator's will when faced with the impact of moving images, so he retreated from further consideration of its mimetic function. For us, however, it is interesting that in Benjamin's description of his "prayer wheel" in *One-way Street*, what performs the regulative function in innervation is breath. Breath, Benjamin argues, operates as a sound formula, one of the "sacred syllables" of the image (a hieroglyph?), similar to yoga exercises, a prayer wheel regulated by breathing. The composite image of a body that stretches and exercises matter through yoga is another metaphorical image for Benjamin's apparatus, and its work of creating tensions and articulations. Innervation justifiably generates fear

of an anaesthetic image, but in theatre, in the encounter of mutual gazes, upon the image and from the image, innervation creates the potential for an utopian moment of watching – the view from matter.

Dragan Živadinov offered an ingenious example of this in a performance that was (probably) named after Benjamin's fragment: *Noordung Prayer Machine*. The spectators were led to the performance in two groups; one group was led into a regular theatre auditorium, while the other was taken to a grid of frames made of wooden beams. The second group of spectators were in fact sitting underneath the stage, their heads peering out from the frames, with their backs facing the regular auditorium and their gazes directed at the shallow stage, an almost two-dimensional performance space. The performance was for the most part coordinated by the breathing of the ballerinas, who performed segments of a visually elaborate choreography both on the shallow stage and the beams, amongst the spectators embedded in them. Another break between the spectators 'pinched' by the stage and those in the auditorium was that the director himself was 'directing' the reactions of the audience in the auditorium by giving signals for applauding, whistling, and the like, without any regard for what was happening on the stage. In this rather intense structure of performing, breathing, watching, and surveying, Živadinov opened quite disparate registers in the innervation of the machine – distraction was generated by the spectators' directed 'emotive' reactions, and thus the view from the matter of an image was becoming a view into the matter of a performance.

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What am I referring to here when I write about 'the matter of an image'? Every image or tableau is viewed from somewhere, from a specific point of view. This is a practical geometric law grounding representation, or as Barthes says, "a fetishist subject is required to cut out the tableau" (1977, 76). A point of view is also a point of meaning, and its various constellations are determined by the "law of society, law of struggle, law of meaning" (Barthes 1977, 77). That is why from every tableau, from its perspective, one may also determine the depth of the opposing triangle. That triangle is where the gaze is canned, preserved, acting as its impetus, its momentum. The intensity of the view's saved *momentum* will also determine its militancy, that is, the advocating force of the image and the law of representation that grounds it. By the same token there is validity to Barthes's claim that "all militant art cannot but be representational, legal" (Barthes 1977, 77). By framing the spectator, Živadinov almost literally preserves the gaze, as in a can or a jar, and displays it to the spectators sitting in the regular auditorium. But their gaze is also framed by the director staging an instance of directing, placing the director himself in a point of meaning, and directing the reactions of the spectators in the audience. The moment the first of the 'shackled' spectators turns her gaze backwards, towards the darkness of the auditorium, her gaze explodes and starts travelling through the darkness of the black box, the darkness of the auditorium, forming new relations between the laws of watching, of the image, of affective reaction, etc. From that moment on the spectator is not confined to the function of watching, of occupying a point of view,

but instead becomes an 'attender', one whose interest is dislocated from the field of the image, ex-centred, one whose gaze becomes a side-gaze and whose relation to the image, theatre and the world is no longer simply reflexive. The apparatus of theatre becomes a place of the density of the gaze (of the matter of an image), wherein (all) people and things, crossing from the world into theatre, undergo refraction, a deflection in the ray of vision. That view from the apparatus and through its cuts, the leap from the matter of an image into the complex matter of performance, the explosion of the gaze that occurs in the membrane, in the cut between an image and performance, opens a new regime of interests within a heterogeneous population of spectators. I wonder: if the coalescence of the factory machine, the apparatus of cinematic representation, and the performer's body that gave birth to the eccentric actor,[30] allows us to also speak of an eccentric spectator emerging from the friction between the theatrical apparatus, the technologies of mediation, and the spectator's body?

### 4. THE GAZE OF THE UNDEAD

Barthes argues that the price that must be paid to have a representation without an origin or law, is death (1977, 77). He offers the example of a vampire's gaze, the camera's subjective view through the closed eyes of an un-dead person in Dreyer's film *Vampyr*. Barthes claims that representation is thereby exceeded, because the spectator cannot occupy the vampire's point of view, which leaves the image without the support of the law. But is there a form of

complicating one's point of view more sublime than the one in Joseph Beuys' performance *wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt.*? While the performer explains things to the dead hare in the gallery, the audience views the performance through the (fourth) glass wall and via a TV screen. The inhuman gaze of the dead hare carried by Beuys renders various vectors of watching visible. The gaze of the one watching from the side is channelled through the gaze of the disinterested object, a gaze that does not constitute an image, but allows for the rationalisation of the triadic object of making-performing-attending.

"The dead hare is a dead external organ of humanity." (Beuys quoted in Ray 2001, 110) From today's perspective Beuys might seem a precursor of some kind of "object-oriented art", but on the contrary, in a series of interviews and texts Beuys asserted his anthropocentric beliefs, in which animals, trees, and other materials external organs of humanity allowing him to access substance. In this sense, the dead hare represents a ruined environment, and as such is a deactivated prosthetic extension of humanity. In a way the dead hare embodies the gaze without momentum, the gaze of the environment, indifferent, but not for that reason any less important. There is, however, only a small step from the environment to the apparatus, or from the indifferent gaze of a dead hare to the preserved gaze of an "un-dead" camera, or more accurately, to the "disembodied gaze" as Judith Butler calls it in her description of the camera's masculine privilege as the gaze that produces bodies, without itself being a body (Butler 1993, 136). But there is always an in-between.

## 5. THE VIEW FROM MATTER

There are no clean apparatuses. Institutional apparatuses are ticking time bombs. However, it is an ideological tendency of every apparatus, every institution, to sanitise its perspective, to lubricate and programme its own operations in order to reproduce a certain image of reality (and the order of things) as clearly as possible. If we want to bring about an explosion of the automatised gaze, to vaporise its perspectives and points of view, we need to bring its momentum to a juncture, to a collision, to prise open the gaze and re-edit its apparatus. We already learned this lesson from Dziga Vertov, whose *Kino Eye* is not the gaze of a man who cuts a *tableau* into matter, nor is it a gaze from the environment, the gaze of a bird or a frog. It is the gaze of matter, the gaze that issues from the collision of the camera and montage, wherein the gaze, as well as the interval, the cut, leap to encounter each other.[31]

A similar lesson comes from Ion Grigorescu's diary entry on analogue photography, renouncing the quest for the right angle and position. Grigorescu finds the real excitement in playing with light by combining different kinds of lenses, or in darkness, developing photographs. He thus surrenders the genius of articulation to the camera, because "nobody has seen the things standing still so far" (Grigorescu 2014, 211). The photographic darkroom is a place of deceleration, the place where the process of image-creation is naturalised, whilst developing an image is an art only for the artist. The artist, says Grigorescu, is the only one who looks behind the image, which does

not resemble reality, and sees the month-long process of choosing the right lens for transforming the gaze into the eyes of matter. Let's push that speculation further still. If the apparatus of performance is a sort of machine, and if, as we know from Brecht's and Benjamin's criticism, it emerges from a crystallisation of social relations, from the conditions of production and of life, then this apparatus too, is dead labour, a vampire sucking living labour from the work of art and reproducing the existing divisions of labour, specialisation, and reception. If we wish to change those patterns we need to occupy the gaze precisely from the viewpoint of that vampire, the viewpoint of a diagram wherein the relations of subjectification and knowledge are materialised, a point of view that is neither the viewpoint of the subject (because the subject is blind) nor the object (because the object is conditioned by its relation to the subject), but a point of view "from the side", one that sees the theatre as a place where things are simultaneously shown and seen, as well as a local manifestation of the encounter of viewing.

In the end, shouldn't we also view theatre as a place where we had long been preparing to look artificial intelligence in the eye? Perhaps the unease that research theatre has regarding new technologies is a symptom of this. Theatre has embraced new technological tools in the development of its practice, for documenting performance, for spectacular realisations of the modernist visions of the Über-marionette and 3D projection, as well as, in its more radical forms, reconsiderations of algorithmic modes of composition and narration. However, unease is still there

when it comes to the question of "What does a machine see?" Or, further, "What does an artificial intelligence see?" American artist Trevor Paglen has already pointed out the fact that, in addition to images placed before the human eye, we live today in a technological environment made of images that machines display to other machines, disintegrating images with countless individual layers (Paglen 2016). These images are visualisations of analyses, processes rather than single exposures, permanently at the disposal of other machines even when we do not see them. They are ultimately sets of operations rather than representations. This techno-gaze is one of radical displacement and confronting it is another step toward not only a critique of the image, but toward a displacement of the viewer in the viewing of viewing, the viewing of a clash between two views – the intelligence of the performer and that of the apparatus.

There are countless ways the apparatuses may be penetrated, encased, and alloyed; we can make the black box a photographic darkroom, or an algorithmically programmed TV studio, or a prison TV room, or a sitcom TV sofa; we can rock the gaze of the spectator (as in Michael Snow's film *Back and Forth*), or dislocate it using the logic of Bacon's triptychs; we can stage a play on a film set; we can pay film extras to perform theatre spectators; we can impose the apparatus of an observatory or biosphere on a repertoire institution, a tourist camp on an abandoned factory, a painter's studio on a theatre auditorium, or an x-ray room, an animation studio or an infrared laboratory, etc. In order to open a portal into the gaze of matter,

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perhaps even to invoke it as the materialist gaze, we need to collide different apparatuses, to cause friction between their drives and temporal accumulations. These repositories of time and technique open a view from the noise of matter, they offer the possibility that *poïesis* might reach its highest state and become *physis*, whereby theatre might become a site where the encounter can transcend the functions of authorship, bringing forth, and watching to become a 'flower' of performance/production.[32]

## INTERSTICE:

# A Few Looks...

But when she went around the corner and entered the stage, she found herself facing a wall – a body amongst bodies, as if this was the only way she had ever existed. And then, like in a compressed video clip, she felt like she was disappearing, withering away, dissolving frame by frame, step by step, image by image. She realised that what defined her was the only possible noun, although a rather anachronistic one – soul. Not fearing the words, she tried to name her drives, to see how much room there was inside, in that place where she found herself turned inside out, and how many frames that mirror had been cut into. For it did not take long before her shape regained a figure, still with a worrying consistency, but only as much as a figure needs before turning into a thing. She stepped forward, no longer needing wings. The sensors monitoring her joints, leg deformations, and feet contact confirmed that she could move freely, walk, run, sit – she was ready for a field test.

* * *

He was turning the map in all directions and wondering
whether his self-confidence was still justified. He quickly
realised that the intersection wasn't there and nor was
the street he was looking for, whose name did not appear
on the map even though it was clearly marked, visibly
separating two blocks. He looked up, trying to find the
bridge connecting buildings above the street, and realised
that both the glass bridge and the street only appeared on
the map for copyright reasons. Still, he could not let go of
the feeling that the map was more real than the houses in
front of him. All the more so because in the satellite view
the street was reflected in the glass panes of the bridge,
except for a single open window behind which, if there were
a little less sunshine on the screen, one would certainly see
a human face.

It was time to abandon the search and try to find
another exit. He knew that his solution was not quite
popular, but, with a bit of a creak, he lifted the wooden
door on the floor and disappeared into the trap room.

* * *

Encountering his own face on the façade, he was no longer
sure whether he felt like a larva or a ghost. He wondered
whether his appearance might be merely a cocoon, because
he found his own reflection more realistic than the original.
He was standing in front of a building that harboured the
same dilemmas in its foundations, although it hid those

foundations deep underground. The façade, rising from self-forming vector samples, was shifting like an apparition, endlessly exchanging forms, adapting to the movements of those who had yet to come to the performance. A canyon of crystal glass crevices, a magnetic wave interference scheme rendered in steel, window frames arranged in the rhythm of polycarbonate chemical structures, floors intertwining according to a computer-controlled dynamic... The façade was no longer on the surface of the building, the façade was his face, perfectly composed into precise holographic advertisements announcing participative performances. He was standing in front of the theatre, but he was incorporated, his money had acquired a character even before he spent it on his ticket.

* * *

The final piece of footage he reviewed was also the most expensive. When he asked, probably some 60 years ago, if they could recover material from a damaged hard drive, they told him it would cost too much, but that in just a few years the procedure would become cheap and affordable to everyone. He thought that no one would be interested in his experimental home movies anyway, so as the years passed he lost track of the drive. Although it took him time to recognise what a hard-disc was, he could not recall what his first home 3D camera looked like. Nevertheless, the movies were still etched in his memory. Perhaps not even the movies as much as his roles in them. If nothing else, he remembered that he was an extra and that in those

movies he always re-enacted his performance works, but as an extra. Now that he was viewing them again, he tried to figure out if any of it had a political cause...

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

A look to the left, a look to the right, a touch, wherever she went there were leftovers, abandoned data, ruins of augmented reality, discarded navigation lines... Data trash that had not been swept away for days. One could barely discern the surrounding walls underneath the decomposed banners, she could only recognise those shop windows that were protected from illegal ads. One drunken weekend, one holiday, and the terrible state of city services becomes evident. "Mine isn't much better," she thought, looking at the facial thermogram on her apartment's front door lock and hoping that the all too eager City Construction Office had not changed the city's Master Plan over the weekend. She wondered if her balcony was still where it used to be, or the symbiosis with the adjacent villa had progressed, a symbiosis that would most certainly place the energy unit of her neighbour's Aquatic Centre in her winter garden.

# A Few Turns

I became familiar with the nocturnal character of theatre, with its constant effort to keep the spectator awake by wrapping her attention in sleep (but not in dreams!), when I had to keep vigil in a play by François Tanguy. Although I have never attached too much importance to sleeping, I am extremely invested in the experience of walking at the edge of sleep (and occasionally falling over), an experience I've had in some of the best performances I have seen. Tanguy's *Chant du Bouc* was a fairly long piece that kept breathing by emerging and re-emerging from darkness, whispering its texts throughout extended scenes – protracted studies of near invisibility whose illuminations impeccably combined the insecurity of the image with my own dubious wakefulness. The thin line along which the performance pursued its *limes* in the flickering darkness of the black box, filled with barely intelligible fragments and glints of Kafka, Beckett, Pre-Socratic philosophers (and who knows what other texts lost their identities in that darkness) was enjambed by my drift to sleep and my return to the surface of images, which soon disappeared again. My attention

slowly turned into concern, then pleasure, then calm, then desire. As an "undead hare" would say: "A universe of notes wrapped in notes wrapped in notes... of lines wrapped in lines wrapped in lines... of steps wrapped in steps wrapped in steps... of bending wrapped in bending... of touches wrapped in touches wrapped in lines wrapped in bending wrapped in steps wrapped in notes wrapped in notes wrapped in notes..."[33]

* * *

"Sleep belongs to the world." (Blanchot 1982, 264)

Blanchot views sleeping as an act, a clear act of surrender that "promises us to the day". Sleeping is therefore a sort of escape from the night. Nodding off before an image that arouses us, the yielding of the muscles in our neck that keep our gaze in perspective rhythmically interrupts watching by sleeping, a sleeping that betrays the magnetic quality of night just as in enjambment the line break suspends the linearity of language. Leaving aside the romanticising of the boundary between theatre and dreaming, where theatre and dreaming stand on either side of the perceptual mirror. By sleeping, the sleeper escapes from the spectacle of night, just as in theatre the spectator may escape from the spectacle of illusion only by an event of thinking.

Total attentiveness, however, would leave no space for thought in theatre. A break, a temporary immersion into matter, diverting attention to the caesura, the interstice that converts the conveyed thought into another aggregate state

of matter returns theatre to the proximity of event. Sleeping as a metaphor for thought.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

The kind of theatre that knows what to do with a sleeping spectator also knows that sleeping brings natural rhythms to theatre, a kind of stability that assumes that the sleeper will calmly wake up to the same world in which she fell asleep. In fact, lovers of fiction should turn to sleeping to find what they normally expect from theatre – an escape from night which prepares us for the world. The sleeper who wakes up facing the stage is brought back into the world, but only by recursion to her own image as a sleeper facing the stage, because her exposure to the gaze of the wakeful spectators who see her watching the show through sleep makes her feel guilty. The spectator's problem with sleeping in the theatre is that in the theatre one always sleeps badly, and "people who sleep badly always appear more or less guilty. What do they do? They make night present." (Blanchot 1982, 265)

According to Blanchot, sleeping badly means being unable to find the right position. Hence our tossing and turning until we find the right position, at which point the world finally gives up on us. At that moment where we are becomes a place of the act of sleeping. Our seat in the theatre, if we are sleeping with pleasure, becomes the new centre of action. The question that arises then is how to maintain this intensity of turning, the intensity of space between the absorption of the image and the gravity of sleeping?

* * *

What is the trajectory of the sleeper's body whilst turning in sleep – not in dreams, but in sleep? There are two ways a sleeping body may turn – under and over itself. The sleeping body is that of a perfect technical performance. Whether turning under or over itself, a sleeping body will use minimum energy and all of its weight in order to remain in the same place. A minimum investment for a maximum effect. A sleeping body is no longer one of construction, but of relaxation, release and lightness, boneless flesh, but still a deeply centred body, a body in which its current place is also condensed, as well as everything that bears any connection to the sleeper. Waterbeds represent a dream of the double body – a body endowed with multiple and redistributable weights. A waterbed is an external body that envelopes the sleeper's body. In combination with the sleeper's body, it forms a new, integrated body, which is at once turning under and over itself. Nothing happens to a body turning in a waterbed, unlike the body of a sleeper in a wooden bed, on a wooden plank. On a wooden bed, the body must seek out space, its weight penetrating the hard surface of the plank, just like the body of a dancer pins the spectator's gaze down to an image. With each toss and turn of a body sleeping on a wooden bed, new possibilities of relaxation open up. In water, however, one may only yield to sleep.

* * *

In a white box there is nothing obscure. Although the gallery has for decades been a site of exhibiting and explaining the body in all of its performative capacities, including taking it to the brink of death, the gallery is nonetheless a diurnal place, a place of wakefulness where the performer is invariably obliged to demonstrate the objectness of the body, to expose it to tools and procedures that bring it to the light of day.

I have already pointed out that in the black box of the theatre, in the darkness of the auditorium, the body always undergoes the process of objectification, but as an image the body only emerges when, like tool, it is "no longer disappearing into its use" (Blanchot 1982, 258).

I also approximated Blanchot when I argued that a body permeated by theatricality is not a fake, mimicking body, but an artificial body, one that resembles itself the way a corpse resembles it*self*. In *The Space of Literature* Blanchot insists that the corpse resembles not "the person [it] was when he was alive", but only it*self*, because the self is "the impersonal being, distant and inaccessible". Its relation to the world is the image, the image *qua* emerging from darkness, "an obscure possibility, a shadow ever present behind the living form which now, far from separating itself from this form, transforms it entirely into shadow" (Blanchot 1982, 258).

But Blanchot's laying out of the basic conditions of the image reads as though he was describing those of a black box: neutrality and the retreat of the world, "the indifferent

deep where nothing is affirmed" (Blanchot 1982, 254). This indifferent deep is not informed by the architectonics of the black box itself, but by its nocturnal quality, its closeness, which is perhaps the only properly mimetic consequence of theatre – the pitch darkness of existence giving rise to impersonal beings. This constitutes the very thought of dramaturgy, notions that in performance belong to no one and are not personalised, because belonging and being personalised take everything into the daylight of the world (see, Bleeker 2015). And just as day and night alternate by taking turns and not through revolution, so this shift in theatre occurs by means of turning, not transformation. Blanchot says that it is not through death, but by turning, that "I" become the one who sleeps, "I" and no one else because in sleep "I" elude my self as well (Blanchot 2010, 265).

* * *

A turn is a flash in the Enframing (*Gestell*), in the technique of walking, of sleeping, or of dancing. Dancing is "presencing" precisely through turning, it flashes in an event, a flash that opens the dancer to every possible world, those worlds that are stated and those that appear to be shining through, with which thought begins to dance and dance comes to imagine.

The technical turn: The polar opposite of the sleeper's turn is the ballet turn, the pirouette. A maximum expenditure of energy, total control of the ankle joint for a minimum level of efficiency and the maximum effect – the

impression of lightness. The technical turn is no longer a flash but a dazzle, a surfeit of turning, turning without perspective, a series of turns that nothing precedes or follows, the mere situation of turning. In art dominated by perspective and featuring a controlled disposition of objects in space, every accident is concealed, costumes divert the gaze away from the detail toward the whole, and turning is valued only in terms of a numeric leap. In ballet, the pirouette quickly abolishes expression. The perfection of turning reduces the dancer to a unit, who gives the impression of presence only by her fixed gaze, the secret cure for vertigo. In a technical turn, however, pleasure emerges from releasing something inhuman. The body lends a voice to that which is deprived of the right to a body, something that is deprived of truth and existence, the proximity of the imaginary and the real. In a technical turn, one hears the voice of the one who cries in the desert of a complete enframing, one hears the rumble of a whirlwind, whose machine-like quality will always be represented to us by swirling sand, but whose mechanisms will always elude our grasp.

* * *

The turn in technique: Dance and the art of dance do not reach their summit in the turn. The turn is a turning point in dance. The turns of a dancer are those of a sleeper in motion. In dance, following a turn nothing should remain the same. Since there is no dance without repetition, because the unit of movement is invisible unless repeated,

it disappears in transitions, there is no dance without repeating turns. But unlike the technical turn, a turn in technique invariably makes the dancer visible, kicks him out of his technical training with a flash and into new dilemmas, into the namelessness of thoughts that are always in expression, in the dynamics of exposition. A turn in technique is not a full stop like a pirouette, but a conjunction, and dance bases its sentences on conjunctions. But thus or, therefore, and only, while if hence though, neither for nor but… And thus from a mere turn emerges an entire dance score. Assembling, opposing, decomposing, concluding, excluding, gradation, temporalisation, guessing, causing, allowing, intent, consequence – all of these are functionalisations of a small change in spatial orientation within the continuity of a movement, or its suspension in the field of possible movements. And where there is possibility there is already movement. The turn makes movement into something more than just resolving possibilities, it opens new problems, the turn disperses all enumeration, but also enumerates movements into units that are no longer just series, but wobble on both sides of the membrane of stillness. The turn, however, hardly ever appears as purely a turn. It is always embedded in movement and is its flash. The turn is embedded in agility, but also announces the possibility of turning over. Every dancer, as well as every spectator will wonder whether the turn communicates. And if it does, what?

If we reduce a turn down to a single point in space it communicates a reconfiguration of the material, a recombination of genes, the multiplicity of a single traveller

travelling at one and the same station. If it occurs in space, not as a change in spatial orientation but as a flash in the line of motion, the turn travels with the traveller, the turn then communicates a rearrangement of the elements of a series. The turn points to recursivity in the material of that which is not reversible in time, it divides movement, but it also determines the stations on the dancer's journey. If it does affect spatial orientations, it is because the turn communicates spatial mutations and the multiplicity of space. Movement, however, tells us nothing about the character and contents of these reconfigurations, rearrangements, and mutations. It invariably communicates only itself, a turn is communication without interpretation.

This forms the difference between the turn in dance and the twist in narration. Dance has no teleogenetic quality, there is no difference in the situation following a turn, although, as mentioned above, after a turn nothing should remain the same. A turn produces neither a reconfiguration, nor a rearrangement, nor a mutation. A turn only reveals what is reconfigured in the material, what is rearranged, or mutated. The turn is a flash that lasts long enough to let us understand that something has already eluded our gaze, and that the clarity of that gaze is a pretext for a new beginning, for an event that brings us to a state of readiness. Perhaps the metaphorical link between dance and thought lies precisely in this agility of the gaze.

* * *

looking for a show that by a measure
(10 bpm or even heavier)
withdraws unto it-self unto itself
withdraws and resides impermanently

(from the belly of the stage sighs a noise)

between concern for the expectator
and a fall to slumber because nowhere
(not even off the beaten track of gaze)
does it push or tighten the horizon

it does not drag one to the promised land
of understanding but instead it turns
again into a problem so as not
to rush to a turnout to a purpose

(then the light then left then right black and forth)

but lives and dwells in the remaining time
in the leftover stanza of problems
(repeatedly begins with an exit
with which someone sometime had begun
an interval a chapter a rhythm
a turn a gesture or leastwise a cut)
and puts the time next to another time

and already whilst grinding time opens
questions of time in gazing needed to
see what is in seeing turn to the gaze
from darkness into the gaze in darkness

(from above sideways through the camera)

looking for a show that rhythmically
performs always new and new caesurae
before the comma of the always new
but (or) unposed or unsettled problem

(therefore) the blistering vortex of time

and if the measure is the heavy beat
the membranes will loosen will crack will leak
through semblances of some other genre
stable and public (I turn the lights on)

# 5.

# Appendix

# The Exploded View of Poetics

We are not looking for a system, even though our performances may seem systematic. We do not begin with grand structures, because we do not have an answer to every question, nor do we have clear and predefined views. The theatre, they say, can show anything, but we are not interested in showing the whole, but in rehearsing how things come together and what they turn into. Thus we do not attempt to reconstruct myths about historical artistic practices, we are no longer interested in primary, pioneering works where we might repose our own practice and determine our position in a continuum. Instead, we look for contradictions in the structure or, perhaps more accurately, in the *infrastructure* of the work of art, for gaps in the armature, in the *steel framework* (Tomislav Gotovac), where the reinforcements, the solid links between the work and the world come apart and all that is concrete is broken, crushed and scattered. One must look closely for where there are frictions, resistances, deviations, glitches, and distortions.

An example of such a work, which was a starting point in our pursuit of encounters, was a performance titled *Čovjek-stolica* (Man-Chair) made by Damir Bartol Indoš in the early 1980s out of a resistance of sorts to the surrealist-cabaret poetics of the Kugla glumište group and their association with the local theatre establishment through their work at the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. *Čovjek-stolica* was molded out of Indoš's idiosyncratic "encounter" with a chair, his approach to correlating the body and object, a sort of empathy between the subject and object, the subject's unconcealed desire to become an object, which would also return in his later work, particularly in his thematisation of catatonia.[34] A sort of counter-animism also offered us an interesting method that might be derived from performance, I would call it here *conformation*, a procedure that simultaneously objectifies and *retrofits* the performer's body through the infrastructural logics of an external object. The conformational object of reference in the case of Indoš's performance is a concrete physical object. What the performer conforms with is not the image of objects or things, but their *notes*,[35] speculatively defined attributes and features, the qualities and intensities of surfaces, joints, stabilities, etc. More complex, multiple objects or their conjunctures often suggest, however, contradictory traits and intensities. Once translated into performance notes, they hold together by the formal unity of a choreography or situation; by entering a series of operations with the world of other objects of the present performance; by exchanging the soft and hard materialities of a performance. As a result, in performing catatonia or motionlessness, we will

speak of a plurality of possibilities, tendencies, and vectors of moving whose collision is blocking progress, rather than of stasis. Accordingly, one may then ask how primary deformations of an object arise in the direction of, say, the body or vice versa, how the body deviates toward an object.

Likewise conformational is the procedure of shaping the actors of a performance. In the process of production, performers and dramaturges map various iconographic, physical, and discursive manifestations of socio-factual subjects, that is, conditions that turn certain social figures into fetishised or commodified subjects. Those figures result either from the dominant regimes of representation (a human being or a Thing, a living being or a biological person, a woman or an Arab, a melancholic or a neurotic, a cricket or an ant, to name only a few examples) or identitarian or ideological determinants that condition it (a cosmonaut or an astronaut, an aviator or a UFO-naut, Charlie Chaplin or King-Kong, a priest or Mersault, etc.). Conformation rests on performing contradictions, a simultaneous performance within several registers; Nikolina performs a monologue from an SF story about a body-snatching alien, muses about the facticity of her partner-performer, and performs a dialogue with her own voice played back with a five-second delay; or, with his "too human" body, Pravdan performs a scene from "becoming a man" by producing glitches in gesticulation similar to the animation of Max Headroom, simultaneously outlining in chalk, on boards set up in three dimensions, the contours of his own body, deformed by topographic presentations; or Ana performs a mass-games choreography wearing the

costume of a Soviet aviator, reciting Alexei Gastev's "poetry of the workers blow", and thundering in the voice of King Kong through a laryngophone responding to vibrations in her throat…

Their transformations depend on the modes of conformation between the performer's function and the conditionings and functions of the figures. The specificities of these newly acquired figuralities or "characters" played by the performers mutate with modifications in the conditioning, as well as with encounters with softer and harder actors in the process, performers of various modes of realisation.

But let us return to Gotovac's *steel frameworks.* Apart from conformations and the figuralities arising from them, there is another formalisation that merits discussion, because it can tell us a lot about the configuration of bodies in specific formations of social relations. This concerns an articulation of what Marko Kostanić calls *the choreographic unconscious*. That proposition is analogically derived from Frederick Jameson's concept of the political unconscious, which argues that successive layers of political repression are buried in every methodology conditioning agencies and relations in the sensorial field. It concerns rather specific ways of organising bodies, movements, gestures, and actions in space, from which one may symptomatically read the specificities and phenomenalities of social choreography. Whether it concerns collective choreographies (parades, mass games, social and popular dances) or political/militant actions (demonstrations, blockades, occupations, etc.), or artworks that in a

certain way and in certain relations configure bodies in space, govern the movement of bodies, or generate an impression of moving (by moving the camera in film), one may reconstruct this choreographic "object" and insert it into new circumstances, where the suppressed layers of the political might more obviously come to the fore. The procedure therefore rests on speculating about the "unconscious" structures that organise bodies in space, as well as the technologies and forms of their representation in different epochs.

Once extracted, the choreographic object must first be translated from one medium into another, but not by translating it from one language into another (e.g. not adapting a film sequence into a theatrical sequence). *Translation* here implies moving the object from one coordinate system into another, which means that the receiving system (say, the theatre) must change if the object is to become visible in it again. That entails re-examining the apparatus of theatre, if we are to survey the translated object in adequate conditions. Brilliant examples of such a procedure are familiar to us from Tomislav Gotovac's translations from the cinematic medium into those of performance and the film leaflet.[36] Of course, the same applies to translations in the opposite direction, into "theatre by other means", where an adequate result should not be the theatricalisation of another medium (theatricality is a medium, as Weber says) or opening a new stage for performance in another medium. Translating a theatrical object into another medium entails configuring a new scene of viewing in another medium.

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Once extracted, reconstructed and translated in the theatre, the object is first subjected to choreographic manipulation. Interventions in choreography itself are accomplished by means of *inversions* (e.g. the total internalisation of contact improvisation to the degree of its exclusively verbal performance, counter-impulse in mass-games, athletic choreographies), *resistances* (looking for internal slip-ups in slapstick choreography, intersecting vectors of moving, material resistance of the environment), *serialisations* (serial transformations of artificial rhetorical gestures), *modulations, viral materials, redundancy*, etc.

Another level of intervention is in the *regime of visibility*. The object is exposed to observation from the side, in discontinuity, from the inside (mediated by a handheld camera), in its floor plan, under infrared light, with reactive or movable lighting, etc.

The third level is the introduction of the choreographic *instrumental variable.* We dubbed the specific choreographic approach that pertains to this method the instrumental approach, because it entails an understanding of choreography as a machinic diagram which shifts in different states of actual affairs and in different sets of circumstances, whereby dance is not understood only as a mode of expression, but also as a utility, an instrumental variable. Using dance as an instrumental variable points to the introduction of a specifically performative mode of behaviour that is not directly related to the thematised mode of the organisation of the body, but, imitating its conditions, may expose differences and internal tensions in the forms of representation that are contemporary with

it. To put it simply, dance is introduced as a variable in places where one would not normally find it, in order to rearrange the relations so that it emerges as an instrumental substitute for another type of activity (physical work, animal life, social gestures, etc.). On the other hand, dance secures (an illusion of) moving through the interstices, ruptures, intervals between different registers of performance and discursive games.

Experimenting with different organisations of bodies, figuralities, and choreographic objects may be expanded in the direction of connecting these performative sets with other machines – narrative, political, affective, biological, etc.

To be able to approximate those procedures we need to resort to methods of *over-* and *under-determination,* which in the theatre may be organised in an exemplary and intentional way. In structuralist dramaturgy, the results of these processes would be called semantic investment, whereas what interests us here is *semantic discharge.*

We might take an identifiable, referential performative set (a historical choreographic unit, communicative act, spectator-performer juncture, framed performer-text relation) and move it from one environment into another, changing and adding causalities that would affirm the set whether within a narrative, a political perspective, an affective situation, or a thematically empty concretisation, and the like, until we come to a point where recognising causality and over-determination turns into under-determination. The accumulation of predetermination results in a communication *overload* that cannot be resolved

with a twist in the structure of the performance, but only by critique, selection, or an attempt at mapping.

Those changing environments may be *performing formats* (e.g. a performance of Diderot's synopsis of "The Death of Socrates", his "perfect" philosophical play, in the forms of narrative dance theatre, situational dance improvisation, and a didactic play), *regimes of visibility* (a homogeneous choreographic object whose appearance changes by reordering the relations between the visible and the invisible), *modes of mediation* (changing or multiplying viewpoints by means of technological tools – videos, microphones, movable lighting, etc.), overlapping or modulating the stage *dispositive* (shifting the constructive elements of the space onstage, transformations in the auditorium, etc.). In every form of presenting multiplicity there occurs a representation of the *state of the situation*, that is, those smaller segments of the situation that come to occupy a privileged position from which multiplicity is represented and simplified. By manipulating over-determination those privileged positions are exposed and evacuated, which opens the possibility of changing the regime of interests.

On the level of figurality we might test conditioning by subjecting historical or archetypal figures (e.g. Charlie Chaplin, a cosmonaut, worker, UFO-naut, King Kong, a pilot) to changes in the configuration of spatial setups, moving them from one to another set of spatial tensions, layouts and orientations – a sports field, a theatre of operations (in the military sense), a film set, a factory picket line, an architecture studio, a page from a notebook, Plato's cave, a movie theatre, a Mediterranean beach...

The structural re-organisation of a performance is also possible from the logic of under-determination by engaging *uninformed* or *illiterate actors*. Uninformed actors are those who take a qualitative part in the performance, but their insight in the performance is asymmetrical to that of the other actors. For example, these may be performers whose public legitimacy stems from their inscription in the context, whether as artists, public figures, or members of a certain social category. Their intervention in the process or performance is an ad-hoc intervention, made from the perspective of their own expertise. Uninformed actors may also be spectators who become such actors by accidentally coming to occupy a position in between the performance and regular spectators, for instance, by observing the performance from a window, from the street, etc. Their role is not calculated in advance, but does have consequences on the viewing condition.

Unlike them, illiterate actors command insight and a continuity of participation in the process and performance, but act quantitatively. In principle, they are unable to contribute to the quality of the performance because their performing skills are not developed, meaning their role is to perform primarily from a position of knowledge.

Once we reach the level of *overload,* a rupture scenario becomes probable, and the performance may be viewed by insisting on finding internal causalities in the performance material or linking local manifestations of small events and situations to analogical or operative meanings. On our side, another step forward is to internalise that distribution, to make it the starting point in order to make space for

observing the logics of random encounters and their outcomes.

The guiding principle in this matter should be the following: "If you have to choose between two options, choose both". This is how F. Scott Fitzgerald would describe it: "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise. This philosophy fitted on to my early adult life, when I saw the improbable, the implausible, often the 'impossible', come true." (Fitzgerald 2009, 69)

On a lower level, this is an analogical accumulation, placing an individual sample in relation to a whole series of possible, but incompatible outcomes that are simultaneous and equally relevant, but may coexist only in performance. For instance, if we are dealing in a performance with processes of memory and attempt to test the audience's ability to encompass a large range of information belonging to the same register, but with disparate, divergent (*incompossible*, Deleuze might say (1990a, 130)) local manifestations, the performance will soon yield to negativity and the active line of reception will turn into forgetting, or more accurately, the amount of forgotten and unworkable data will increasingly grow. This bankruptcy of memory opens the possibility to materialise, using examples of such phenomenon, the abstract logic of the economy of dramaturgy and performance by opening ruptures, or "crack-ups", to borrow Fitzgerald's term. These crack-ups form the space of interpretative investment.

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And as in the title of Godard's film *Here and Elsewhere*, the question concerns not only the distinguishing characteristics of this "here" and that "elsewhere", but also the forces of the conjunction "and" that binds them together.

Individual, separate sets, sequences, and series are linked together by various procedures of editing, including, in operative terms, procedures such as rhythmic alteration, recapitulation, retrogression, gradual elimination, cyclical repetition and serial variation... (Burch 1981, 14)

Nonetheless, in terms of construction, we may assume the following invariants:

*Divisive synthesis* is a procedure related to the composition of performance whereby two separate, inherently homogeneous performative structures are synthesised by means of overlapping (simultaneous performance of mutually independent sequences), mutations (internal distortions of individual performances), substitution (structural migrations of individual elements of the performance), and amalgamation (merging multiple performances into a single performance).

*Divided attention* results from giving the spectator a specific position in the architectonics of the performing space. The spectator is placed in a position where it is impossible to survey the performance in its entirety, either because she is too close to a wide shot of the performance, or there are hidden spaces in the performance, or the performance is freely floating in the space and the spectator must locate it. The spectator's position imposes the necessity of choosing what to watch, while her choice

is conditioned by different dynamics in the economy of attention. In this context, one speaks of a sequentialised viewing.

In such a performance the spectators are free to choose their own positions in the space, to organise themselves, and behave as they like during the performance. At the same time, the performance has its own internal system of development, with operations that are not conditioned by viewing, and this system is obvious but illegible to the spectator. But the performance is responsive to the ways the spectators organise themselves and behave, which the spectators may read through the discrete symptoms of change emerging in the performance. In such a constellation, one of the symptoms is the self-regulation of viewing and reacting to the feedback loop, while at the same time it is important that the performance remain within its boundaries and not veer off into one-sided manipulation, whether by the spectators or the performance itself. The performance itself never makes suggestions to the spectator or reveals expectations as to what he or she should do. Every reaction from the spectator is equally relevant, from sleeping, excluding herself, abandoning the performance-viewing compound in order to observe the performance as a whole from the side, to "overpowering" the performance with her own intervention.

None of these procedures is based on the logic of transparency, the assumption that beneath the level of phenomenon there is a phantom world that we might uncover with an x-ray image of the dense layer of signs. These procedures are of a poetic, productive nature and rest

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on a symptomatology of conditions, where the symptom is not a sign delegated from deep below, but the disease itself. The redness on the surface of one's face is not a sign that there is illness somewhere inside, but the explication of the disease itself, the way a diseased body works. All of these procedures are therefore aimed at chasing away the phantoms of transparency precisely by highlighting their presence. And they are present in the theatre, from the "depths" of the black box and its infrastructure, to the structure of the dispositive and the flickering illusion. It is precisely these phantoms that demand to be visible and one should insist on it, starting already from the material facticity of the stage, via the materiality of vibrations in the transductive systems of sound and light, to the gaze of the spectator as a relay of attention and watching *qua* material and mental work.

# Poetics of production

"There is an art of an event. But the word art is a little too reassuring: it generates feelings that are elevated, but which don´t oblige thought. One might also speak about poetics. In the same way that art communicates with "trade", poetics retains a link with "making", fabricating, poesis."
— Stengers and Pignarre (2005, 217)

The opening quote comes from the short book *Capitalist Sorcery*, which Philippe Pignarre and Isabelle Stengers wrote in 2005, when almost everybody lost hope in the movements critical of capitalist development that came after the event of Seattle, or Occupy movements. Their book was written as the result of a faithfulness to the event, which at first sight seems to be a very difficult thing, if not impossible. This political event was not only cynically trampled by the right, but also rejected with even stronger cynicism on the left, and this disappointment forms the base of our experience of the world as without alternatives,

an experience that Mark Fisher described as capitalist realism. It is interesting that this experience arises at the moment when hope in progress is also definitively lost, even as ideology; when capitalism definitely and openly lost its main historical drive - the "rationality" of progress. Nevertheless, even if this rationality is ruined, capitalism has become even stronger, even more destructive, especially today when its chronology has fallen to pieces and modernity itself only exists as an exploded view, to use one of Pristaš' main notions used to describe BADco's work. Capitalism and its production of knowledge cannot be linked to rationality, write Pignarre and Stengers, but are rather modes of sorcery, we believe in it because we are under the spell. The struggle will only exist if we stay faithful to these events and again reclaim Marx – but this time his rhetorical, poetic side – in order to counter the spell, develop our knowledge of witchcraft and of counter magic, and affirm other practices and knowledges to create alternatives. Practices like wondering, rupturing, refracting, knowledge that belongs more to grasshoppers than ants, practices which could also belong to artists. Both Pristaš' and Pignarre and Stengers' books affirm the role of artists in the struggle. Artists are a part of this magic struggle against capitalism's sorcery when they engage thought, and more particularly when their production challenges the abstractions and mystifications at work in their own practices. They should not be satisfied with simply producing good feelings (Berlant), which usually arise with the economic and political claims for the transparency and instrumentality of art. They should not play along with the

production of sociality, creating surplus value through the production of pleasant social relations.

The red line running through Pristaš' book is an analysis of the relation between poetics and materialism, between matter and "how something is brought into being", and this gives an insight into the very matter of (artistic) work as the materialist power of production. Performance and theatre are central here because of their temporal construction, which as matter is not geared towards an end (rejecting the rationality of progress/project), but presents itself through the processes of production: labour, moulding, transforming, relating, interruptions, breaking and breathing. The focus of the analysis is on the process of work, but it does not consider the social dimension of the labouring process – the relations of collaboration, the flows and dynamics of work and subjectivities – which is so central to how theatre is produced today. The stress is rather on the variety of temporal, spatial, and material demands theatre production makes on its creators and spectators. To quote from the book: "theatre is not the moment when the process reaches its summit, after which everything is just repetition, but a moment of break, a moment when another set of agents, abstractions, and real effects, or, to put it more precisely, another series enters into a relationship with performance, through a non-relation." (60)

To produce such breaks it is important to acknowledge the multiplicity of practices, knowledges, and labours that, as Pristaš shows through his analysis of different poetic processes, can never be unified, structured, ordered, or

organised, and so cannot have a temporal or spatial unity. They can only co-relate, explode into each other, shift their focus, always in their particular historical moment and space. Inside this historical frame the performance produces a particular and magical exposure of the ruins, one that floats in the historical magma of hope, or comes back when everything is already finished. This multiplicity of practices is closely related to BADco's work processes, a collaborative ensemble of artists and thinkers from Zagreb who very much inform the whole book and influence its dramaturgy and thought. The book is written through the traces of performances, with dramaturgies, procedures of thinking and working, and is impregnated with the thoughts and actions of colleagues and friends (Tomislav Medak, Nikolina Pristaš, Ivana Ivković, Ana Kreitmeyer, Zrinka Užbinec, etc.). A multiplicity of theoretical personalities also accompany the arguments: Benjamin, Diderot, Brecht and Althusser. All of them can be described as materialists in the ways they think about art and through art, materialist in a radical, utterly consequent way. Even if the magic of the matter impregnates their thought in different ways, they all critique the ideal constructions at the very core of materialist operations, while admitting the very messiness and untranslatability of matter itself. The responsibility of theatre is thereby turned towards it own historical, institutional and temporal conditions, rather than imposing itself as a social conscience – as so much political art does today.

This problematic political desire to produce sociality is something that Pristaš, at the beginning of his book,

describes as anti-production. Anti-production is the continuous production of social relationships, which today seems to be the main task of artistic institutions. Pristaš writes about a particularly problematic ecology, where an artist grows less and less present through her artworks and more and more present through her labour: "Art institutions no longer function as disciplinary instances whose task is to take care of artists and produce artworks, just as the dairy industry no longer exists in order to make good yogurt but only the most desired yogurt. What art institutions produce today are no longer works offered to public viewing and valorisation, but it is valorisation itself that is reproduced and exchanged." (19) The modes of production are transformed through the abstraction of practices of work. To produce an artistic work predominantly means mastering logistical and managerial operations that function through a multiplicity of social and participatory relationships. These social and political dynamics are then transformed into surplus value when the artistic work is consumed. No wonder then that such an important part of a dramaturg's role today is production, and more and more dramaturgs are working as production dramaturgs, or if it sounds better, as curators in the field of performance. This turn is not so much a turn between institutions (because their economic rationality stays the same), as it is a turn in the understanding of production, it is an economisation of the artistic process and its consequences. In this way, especially in theatre and performance, practices that demand temporality, spatial location, and are bound to the stubbornness of matter

(like the body for example) and its poetic processes, the practices of experimentation and delay, of contingency and anachronism, are more or less eliminated or made invisible. Pristaš' book stubbornly returns to these practices, describes them and analyses them not only in relation to his work in BADco, but also in relation to materialist philosophy and its understanding of theatre, returning to the abstract and complex event of theatre in its materiality. Through theatre the transformation of production can be practised, tested and also analysed, as Benjamin and Brecht did when they proposed the transformation of the apparatus of production through interruptions, gestural suspensions and displacements, and especially those related to the new filmic technology of looking and producing images. Ruptures, displacements, refractions, which make of theatre both an institutional setting and a poetic disclosure of an event, are processes or practices of work that are analysed in the book in great detail. In this way it offers an enriching insight into the poetics of theatrical and performance work and how this work comes into being, stays there, and returns, when everything is over.

One historical figure who has a strong voice in this book is Denis Diderot, the French philosopher and scientist, who according to Marx, added wit, flesh, blood and polemic to materialism. He is introduced not only as one of the first to experience cinema in his dreams, but as introducing materialist thought into theatre. It is interesting that Diderot, as a materialist, also returns in a short text of Isabelle Stengers called 'Diderot´s Egg', where she connects him to political struggles around

knowledge and the multiplicity of practices. Stengers argues that Diderot's specific type of materialism accepts the messiness of the world and is not eliminativist, it does not claim to be right and attempt to erase all other views. While elimination was a scientific strategy to oppose the power of the church and state it also, as Diderot points out, can become the very source of power itself, destroying the imagination and narratives that animate our world in a different way. Stengers focusses on Diderot´s discussion with D´Alembert about the egg, which later reappears in D´Alembert's dreams. This discussion between two defenders of different understandings of materialism shows that materialism itself can have an idealistic core. Instead of accepting the messiness of the world, this version of materialism differentiates between right and wrong knowledge, and eliminates knowledges which demand interpretative adventure in the name of reason. Diderot challenges D'Alembert with an image of an egg, which he claims overthrows all theories, including those of academic science: science should not refuse the challenge of the egg in the name of its own restricted definitions. As Stengers writes, for Diderot the question "What is matter?" cannot be answered by a particular science, because it depends on an interpretative adventure. "Diderot's materialism is not demanding that we respect challenging facts. Few facts are challenging by themselves. The egg offers no challenge – it is an egg. Diderot's empiricism is not about the facts and only the facts. He does not ask D'Alembert to observe the egg, but to accept seeing the egg, seeing the developing embryo, the small chicken who breaks the shell

and comes out. What Diderot asks D'Alembert is that he give to the egg the power to challenge his well-defined categories." (8) Stengers presents a case for the divergence of practices, and fights against the abstraction and elimination of knowledges, or to speak with Pristaš, against anti-production. Anti-production is not only present in the arts, but also in science. Its consequences can be felt everywhere within contemporary capitalism, in privatisation and bio-piracy for example, where the abstraction and possession of life forms and their ways of coming into being opens the door to their destruction and accumulation of capital by dispossession. (Harvey)

Stengers therefore speaks about problematic theatre of concepts, the power of which is marked only by the powerlessness to transform, it only serve to escape any confrontation with the messy world of matter and practice. (16) Against such theater, or to say differently against the theatre of reflection, totalisation and disappearance, Pristaš offers a theatre of poetic rupture, of the production of presence, where the world is decomposed and composed anew. "In it, there is no priority of the body over thought or vice versa. A change in thought brings about a change in being and we cannot know for certain what the body can do – we may only speak of its potentiality, because the body is made up of elements, like other more complex bodies. What we can think about is motion and stillness, the dynamics of theatre, event and situation." (162) In this sense the connection between materialism and poetics brings materialism closer to the political struggle, because it opens the imaginary, inventive side of grasping and dealing

with matter. It also helps us turn the theatrical event and its inclusion of the audience into something that cannot be entirely framed, but is also not entirely autonomous. It is not satisfied with the production of a good feeling, with the drive to repair what was lost, with developing and producing "good" social relations. This drive to repair is a problematic response to a glitch appearing in the infrastructure (Berlant), to the infrastructural collapse we are experiencing through the dispossession and destruction of practices and ways of living. Instead of repair and social responsibility, instead of the reflection of reality, the theatre is for Pristaš a poetic operation, where one must look closely to see "where there are frictions, resistances, deviations, glitches, and distortions."(269) And not only look closely, but also persist in the contingency of events and actions, in this ungraspable situation, where there is nothing beyond the level of phenomenon except for that which has yet to be discovered.

What is soothing and deeply political in this complexity, in this theatre, is that there is no particular demand as to how we should watch and receive what is produced around us. We can also just fall asleep, and with the excursion into sleep the book comes to an end, in a nocturnal way, making a connection between the experience of sleeping and the watching and experiencing of a performance. This is hardly surprising if we take into account how strongly materialist theatre is related to time and temporality, to the ruptures and glitches in our experience of intimate or historical time. This temporal dimension is also very much related to Diderot's critique

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of elimination and his connection of materialism and historical contingency, and its no surprise that the egg returns in all its theatricality in D'Alembert dreams. Historical contingency returns at the end of the book in the form of sleep, or rather walking at the brink of a sleep. It seems paradoxical that the materialist approach to theatre, an approach that wants to have a strong connection to historical struggle, ends in this image, where the senses shift and the experience of time changes as we slip into sleep. But at the same time the image could not be more precise. Sleeping enters the book at the end as an echo of the temporal matter of theatre, as an integral part of the poetic experience of how things come into being. "A break, a temporary immersion into matter, diverting attention to the caesura, the interstice that converts the conveyed thought into another aggregate state of matter returns theatre to the proximity of event. Sleeping as a metaphor for thought." (256) In this sense we arrive back at the introductory quote in order to paraphrase it again: an art of the event is not art because it elevates the feelings, but because it is obliged to be thought. This thought usually demands another mode of perception, another practice of being, which would be closer to our nocturnal side. The glitch and rupture for which theatre looks is not blinding, rather it gives us the time and space to attend to the event in a different way, tuned anew to something that is coming into being. In this way theatre demands a faithfulness to the impossible, to the living matter which is not there yet, was already there and will maybe re-appear again. Or as writes Pristaš at the end, now in the form of the "we" of BADco:

"The theater, they say, can show anything, but we are not interested in showing the whole, but in rehearsing how things come together and what they turn into." (269)

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# Notes

**01** In this context, I am borrowing Hannah Arendt's distinction between the concepts of "work" and "labour" in her *Human Condition*, primarily because she does not articulate them exclusively in the economic sphere, but also in that of human activity.

**02** See the following reports: Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Their Audiences*, 2003; European Commission, *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, 2006.

**03** Parts of this book were written at an artist-in-residence programme at AZALA Centre in Lasierra in Basque Country.

**04** "In fact, contemporary art institutions no longer need an artist as a traditional producer. Rather, today the artist is more often hired for a certain period of time as a worker to realize this or that institutional project." Boris Groys 2010, 127.

**05** Cominform was an advisory body comprising the communist parties of the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, France, and Italy, which in 1948 and 1949 adopted Resolutions harshly condemning Yugoslavia over its alleged rapprochement and collaboration with Western imperialist powers.

06  "An *intermediary*, in my vocabulary, is what transports meaning or force without transformation: defining its inputs is enough to define its outputs. [...] *Mediators*, on the other hand, cannot be counted as just one; they might count for one, for nothing, for several, or for infinity. Their input is never a good predictor of their output; their specificity has to be taken into account every time. Mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry." Bruno Latour 2005, 39.

07  Georgia Albert translates this as "a self-annihilating nothing" in Agamben 1999, 52.

08  See, Giorgio Agamben's letter in William Watkin 2010, 201.

09  "The question is how to manipulate that which manipulates you, so obviously, so shamelessly, but I am not innocent either – there is no art without consequences." Mladen Stilinović, 2010, 4.

10  See the distinction between instrumental and operative time in Brian Massumi 2002, 110.

11  "The belief in progress-in an infinite perfectibility understood as an infinite ethical task-and the representation of eternal return are complementary. They are the indissoluble antinomies in the face of which the dialectical conception of historical time must be developed. In this conception, the idea of eternal return appears precisely as that 'shallow rationalism' which the belief in progress is accused of being, while faith in progress seems no less to belong to the mythic mode of thought than does the idea of eternal return." Walter Benjamin 2002, 119.

12  "Whence *the form of order* and *the form of beings* whose birth is induced by this pile-up, determined as they are by the *structure* of the encounter; whence, once the encounter has been effected (but not before), the primacy of the structure over its elements; whence, finally, what one must call an *affinity* and a complementarity (*complétude*) of the elements that come into play in the encounter, their "readiness to collide-interlock" (*accrochabilité*), in order that this encounter "take

hold", that is to say, 'take *form*', *at last give birth to Forms, and new Forms*-just as water "takes hold" when ice is there waiting for it, or milk does when it curdles, or mayonnaise when it emulsifies. Hence the primacy of "nothing" over all "form", and *of aleatory materialism over all formalism.*" Althusser 2006, pp. 191-192.

**13** The most important of whom are Herbert Blau 1982; Henry M. Sayre 1989; Peggy Phelan 1993; José Muñoz 1996; Diana Taylor 1997; Rebecca Schneider 2001; Rose Lee Goldberg 2004; Adrian Heathfield and Hugo Glendinning, 2004; Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye and Michael Shanks, 2012.

**14** For more on how a simple fact becomes an event see Agamben 1993, 140.

**15** The reader *Whatever #3, Post-Hoc Dramaturgy* resulted from *10 Days 1 Unity*, a ten-day laboratory that brought together two groups of artists, those from the collective 6m1l, and members of the performing collective BADco. These were joined by a smaller number of Zagreb-based performers, choreographers, dramaturgs and theatre directors; http://badco.hr/2012/06/04/whatever3_4/

**16** On the literarised theatre, the theatre of interrupted myth, Nancy has written: "This does not mean that there is no theater – as though there could be literature without theater. But theater, here, no longer means the scene of representation: it means the extreme edge of this scene, the dividing line where singular beings are exposed to one another. What is shared on this extreme and difficult limit is not communion, not the completed identity of all in one, nor any kind of completed identity. What is shared therefore is not the annulment of sharing, but sharing itself, and consequently everyone's nonidentity, each one's nonidentity to himself and to others, and the nonidentity of the work to itself, and finally the nonidentity of literature to literature itself." Jean-Luc Nancy, 1991, 66-67.

**17** "We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does

not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. A book exists only through the outside and on the outside. A book itself is a little machine; what is the relation (also measurable) of this literary machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine, etc. – and an abstract machine that sweeps them along? We have been criticized for overquoting literary authors. But when one writes, the only question is which other machine the literary machine can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari 1988, 5.

18  This is even more prominent in his *Salons*, where he speaks of the "mobile image of the soul" when describing the spectator's mental participation in a production. cf. Berri 2000.

19  Agamben will use gestus in terms of a trapped and socially perspectivised [*perspektivirana*] gesture derived from Benjamin's concept of "exhibition-value", and warn about its appropriation by the apparatus of power. See, Giorgio Agamben 2007, 24 and Benjamin Noys 2009.

20  Also see Claire Bishop's brilliant survey of the history of the spectator's participation in performance *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*.

21  For a more comprehensive account of the "double take" method, see, Weber 2004, 295–312.

22  "As intervention, it causes the borders of all interiority – and be they those of the interval itself – to tremble. This "trembling" also delineates the enabling limits of the theatrical stage as a scene that both separates and joins whatever comes together in and around it. Such trembling and tremors summon its audience to do more than merely hear, its spectators to do more than merely see, its actors to do more than merely act. It exposes them to the afterthought that, after all, they share the same trembling space of singularity. It is a space not of *Einfühlung* but of *Exponierung*, of exposure to the possibility of separation and detachment." Weber 2008, 113

23  Darko Šimičić, curator of the Tomislav Gotovac Institute, to whom I am grateful for providing me with a copy of this document, thinks that the text was a funding application draft.

24  It would be unfair to overlook the fact that in Pina Bausch's oeuvre there is a similarly schematic choreography – in *Blaubart* (1977).

25  Michael Light has made a brilliant archival photo-documentary of American nuclear tests: Light 2003.

26  "The transcendental hyperspace in which such a transcendental observer finds itself is then simply the infinite regress of point of view, the nothingness on which the attempt to think time and temporality, to think the past and the present, to think the difference between my multiple selves, is founded." Jameson 2015, 17-22.

27  Galerija HDLU (Gallery of the Croatian Association of Artists), performance by Slaven Tolj, *Bez naziva* (Untitled), as part of the opening of the final exhibition in the cycle "Janje moje malo..." (My Little Lamb...), organised by the curatorial collective *Što, kako i za koga* (What, How, and for Whom)/WHW, in collaboration with Kathrin Rhomberg, 2017.

28  Galerija HDLU (Gallery of the Croatian Association of Artists), performance by Slaven Tolj, *Bez naziva* (Untitled), as part of the opening of the final exhibition in the cycle "Janje moje malo..." (My Little Lamb...), organised by the curatorial collective *Što, kako i za koga* (What, How, and for Whom)/WHW, in collaboration with Kathrin Rhomberg, 2017.

29  "Related to the notion of an optical unconscious familiar from the artwork essay, innervation refers, broadly, to a neurophysiological process that mediates between internal and external, psychic and motoric, human and mechanical registers." (Hansen 1999,312).

30  The Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS) was founded in 1921 in Petrograd by Grigori Kozintsev (1905–1972) and Leonid Trauberg (1902–1990) and combined the training of actors with collective artistic production in theatre and film celebrating achievements of slapstick, variety and circus. See, Pytel, 1992.

31 "Vertov realizes the materialist program of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* through the cinema, the in-itself of the image. Vertov's non-human eye, the kino-eye, is not the eye of a fly or of an eagle, the eye of another animal. Neither is it – in an Epsteinian way – the eye of the spirit endowed with a temporal perspective, which might apprehend the spiritual whole. On the contrary, it is the eye in matter, not subject to time, which has "conquered" time, which reaches the "negative of time" and which knows no other whole than the material universe and its extension." Deleuze 2000, 83–84.

32 This poetic metaphor was equally important to Martin Heidegger when he was paving the road for the un-concealment of truth, and to Zeami when looking for paths to reach an ultimate harmony between performing and watching. See, Heidegger 2013 and Quinn 2005.

33 An excerpt from a text spoken in *Poluinterpretacije ili Kako objasniti suvremeni ples nemrtvom zecu* (*Semi-interpretations: How to Explain Contemporary Dance to an Undead Hare*), a BADco. performance from 2010.

34 The first performance that we produced as BADco. was *Čovjek.Stolac (Man.Chair)* in collaboration with Damir Bartol Indoš, based on his performance *Čovjek-stolica* from 1982. In 2005 we made a joint two-hour performance titled *Katatonija* (Catatonia).

35 We began using the concept of "performance notes" [*izvedbene bilješke*] as early as 2005, while working on *Memories are made of This...*, but our articulation of that concept also benefited from the coincidence that Graham Harman also referred to the defining features of objects as "notes", which we learned a few years later. Harman 2005, 175.

36 The phrase "cinema by other means" is attributed to Branko Vučićević, while the phenomenon is treated at length in Levi 2012.

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