

SCORES  
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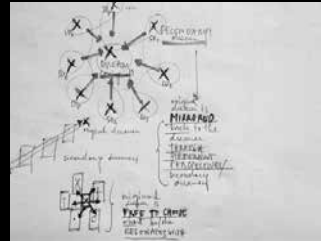
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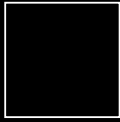
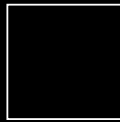
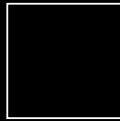
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THIRD IMAGE: STORM  
OF DISTURBANCE...  
GLOBALIZED ECONOMY  
IS MISUNDERSTANDING  
GROWTH: IT SEES GROWTH  
AS LINEAR AND NUMERIC. BUT  
GROWTH IS A HORIZONTAL  
STRETCH AND PASSAGE  
AT THE SAME TIME. IT IS  
WALKING WITHIN THE STORM  
WITH A STORM IN MYSELF.



# CONTENTS

## NOTE OF INTENT

Lilia Mestre

8-9

## WRITING ABOUT SCORES AND THE WRITING OF MOVEMENT

Lilia Mestre

10-19

## EXERCISES IN DREAMING

Mala Kline

20-39

## THE ORDER OF THE COLLECTOR

Anna Sörenson

40-52

## YOU MAY ALSO USE YOUR OWN SENSES! An Advisory Score To Survive In An Image-Run Society

Hans Andreas R.

54-55

## WRITING ITINERARIES

Cecilia Molano

56-83

## PROBABLY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO TALK ABOUT...

Nicolas Y Galleazzi

84-91

## CONVERSATIONS

Philippine Hoegen

92-99

## ANETTE'S SUITCASE

Gosie Vervloessem

100-103

## THE EXHAUSTION OF THE COMMON

Elke Van Campenhout

104-113

## NOTE OF INTENT

Lilia Mestre

For this three-month block, the goal was to develop strategies and tools for the **practice** of dialogical/collective formats of research, deepening the exchange between the diverse **practices** of a pass participants. Considering every contribution to be a significant part of the whole, we sought to find strength in our differences through elaborating on the specificity of each **practice**.

In other words: How do the individual research cases engage together in the larger scheme of “sense making”, both within the microcosm of a pass and on a wider scale, in the world as a whole?

By creating **scores**, one establishes a format ready to be experienced, passed on, interpreted, or modified. In short, ideas get transformed through the contamination/participation of others and come back in an endless chain of processing, thinking, and acting.

This system of interrelation becomes a way to understand art as a philosophical contribution to the way we think, live our lives, and construct our world. The work becomes a performative tool that articulates the field between the one and the other(s), between who we are and the infrastructure(s) sustaining us all.

The program of this block underlined the importance of thinking and practicing together; be it through words, the body, the spatial distribution of objects, or **writing**. The collaborative aspect of the workshops that took place within the three months formed templates for possible architectures of collaboration on a larger scale.

Lisa Nelson’s “Tuning **Scores**” Workshop, introduced the **practice**-technology of seeing/doing in a collective choreographic **practice**. Her larger body of work is dedicated to systems of play and feedback that propose a deep questioning of the acts of performance and observation.

Nikolaus Gansterer’s work focuses on the diagram as a medium for research. His **practice** reveals the interstitial processes of notation and translation between thought, space, **movement**, and **writing**.

My own workshop “**Scores** Generator” invited participants to design **scores** for double interviews, with the goal of bringing both participants’ ‘cases’ into dialogue. These **scores** were conceived to be performed multiple **times** and then passed on to others, creating several tools for conversation.

Throughout the block, I invited the participants to a **practice** called ‘**Writing Score**’, in which they discussed and exchanged ideas and questions about their **practices** and the workshops, creating links and resonances through the process. This publication is the result of nine sessions of **writing** between all of us.

More specific information on the workshops can be found in the three interviews conducted by Mala Kline with Lisa Nelson, Nikolaus Gansterer, and myself.

The following pages are individual texts produced by some of the participants after the block: On Scores. These texts are based on the questions and answers each of us formulated during the nine sessions of the Writing Score.

## WRITING ABOUT SCORES AND THE WRITING OF MOVEMENT

LILIA MESTRE

### WARM-UP

*Lie on the floor; scan your body bit by bit starting with your toes ending with your head and hair.*

Pay **attention** to your breathing; do not change anything; just **acknowledge**, feel the air coming in and out of your body, notice the moment between the inhaling and exhaling.

Maybe we should develop warm-ups for **life**. I like this idea. Let us warm-up **life!** Maybe we, as citizens, are lacking rituals that touch affectivity, **attention**, displacement, agency ... Or rules for resisting an overpowering system that dilutes desire and increases consumption ...

The warm-up is the preparation to engage in the 'playtime'. In performance in order to be available as much as I can, to be in the present **time** and available to encounter the other (people, objects, thoughts), I have to raise my sensibility and for me that has a lot to do with the body. To excite the physical signals (breathing, voicing, loosening the joints, being aware of the flow of thought, where my eyes are, how I feel, what kind of order the body has), to focus so much on these that anything that appears is worth investing in, anything that appears is curious.

I like to think about the reliability of the body in the act of being. What this intense state of **attention** does, though, is that it resonates, it spills into the other kind of **time** regulation and by doing this it informs me and changes the way I relate.

## COLLECTIVE APPARATUS

By framing **scores** as 'collective apparatus'es, I see the invitation to engage and relate with the 'other'. Being the other here already includes the structure of the **score**, plus all the other elements involved in the **time/space** frame, like people, objects, the audience, architecture, weather and the context where it happens. In dealing with those 'others', the process of negotiation creates, makes appear sensible formulations for the construction of meaning on a collective basis.



The skin, Live-In Room / object of performance. photo: Lilia Mestre

Rosinha, photo: Lilia Mestre

One could say that 'new-ing' **knowledge**, reformulat-ing **knowledge** or acting **knowledge** is a political act by consciously or unconsciously putting into action, re-actualizing of the relation between the self and the other. This endeavour enables the emergence of ideas, orientations, inclinations and transformation of a given situation.

The **score** becomes a tool for acknowledging **knowledge** in process by framing the field of action and making visible the agency of all elements in play.

The departure point is modified by a series of actions, behaviours, energies that cross one another, interact in a given temporality and spatiality.

I believe a thing is never a 'thing' alone; a 'thing' exists in a network of relations that are not linear, that are from different natures and belong also to other constellations. That is why **knowledge** is not universal/absolute but specific to the context where it emerges, is processed and constructed. That is why **knowledge** needs to be practised, why it does not stay still but is in constant **movement**. The accident is strong evidence of **knowledge** processing; it brings to the fore an unforeseen relation, the unexpected; it changes the temporality of the situation; it creates new points of view; it makes **life** alive.

I see **scores** as triggers for accidents that instead of being avoided are embraced. It is a call for risk-taking and creating unstable grounds, for imagination and the manifestation of emotions, ideas, states of being, etc., not as ideologies but as awareness of the being in the present. It is the state of **attention** mingled with the desire to be at play.

In my work and mainly in the past years I focused on creating strategies for an encounter between human and non-human bodies. The on-site performance *Live-in Room* and the stage performance *Moving You* want to destabilize the functionality of domestic objects and bring them to voice their singularity. I wanted to create another kind of relation with things where the uncanny appears. In these performances the audience is also invited to imagine their own sense of making sense. In both pieces we worked with domestic objects with which we have an affective everyday relationship. The overall purpose is to dive into a system of associations that allows us to reinvent or be aware at the present **time** of a personal/singular system of references. Those singularities intertwine with each other, creating another ecology of relations where the affect conducts the unfolding of **time**.

I am very interested in shifting the logic of things in order to see them differently, to bring out other unexpected relations. By perceiving the layers of things through the matter, history, aesthetics, shape, **movement**, affects, thoughts, etc. that constitute them, one can get to amazing combinations that shift our logic and reveal paths for thought and sensation. The uncanny is a good concept because it mixes the very familiar with the strange, the foreign.

By doing a performance, I am searching for what I do not know yet, to be puzzled by what occurs when one engages temporally in another way of experiencing things. The state of confusion, the act of figuring out what is going on, shifting the status of what we recognize as stable is a good tool for me to 'understand' how I function and what is the meaning I give to what surrounds me, what is constructed beyond my awareness. I often use displacement (to give things another value, functionality, **movement**, etc.) and subtraction (to focus on one of its qualities) as tools to provoke a different contact and communication between things we are familiar with. I reckon I alternate modes of relation in order to provoke layouts, constellations.

## MOVING YOU

The piece *Moving You* deals with the relation between subjects, objects, sound and **movement**, and proposes a frame where affect appears as the generator of **movement** and change. In this piece I developed a system to give sound to objects which I called 'voicing out objects'. This system consists in attributing a specific vocal sound to an object and producing this sound each **time** one comes in contact with that specific object. We then arrive at a collection of objects and their various correspondent vocal sounds. This interaction with objects produces a relation between the subject, the object and the environment, creating a kind of dialogue between matters. One could say that the performer happens between these relations. To be explicit about my intentions, this voicing out is neither a representation of the objects nor of their feelings but tries to turn **attention** to a possible mode for interaction.



Moving you / improvisation at SI  
photo: Simona Koch



Ai! a choreographic project. photo: Marcelo Mardones

This work very much questions the place of objects, organic or inorganic matter but also their inherent cultural value in the way we perceive the world. It wants very much to pay **attention** to what we pay **attention** to when we are paying **attention** and how that defines our relation with our environment. To act upon, to communicate experiences, to challenge the stability of systems, to bring focus to the present and the context we are in moment by moment, to engage - these are aspects that are, I think, political and that I am concerned with. To give voice to the 'other', to whom and what we do not identify as similar, to shift the supremacy of the human, to think democracy and ethics beyond just people.

In *Ai! A choreographic project*, developed in collaboration with Marcos Simões, we create the **scores** as modes of operation and communication, as strategies that enable the performers and the audience to be in the moment, playing, imagining and creating senses.

## SCRIPTED PERFORMANCES VS IMPROVISATION

I think my interest really lies in-between the scripted and the unexpected. On one hand the script/structure/form and on the other the interpretation/performance/act of playing, happening at the present **time** in a constructed public space. And my question has been: how much flexibility can I give to the script in order to arrive at what I find most interesting, i.e., the play act (not just the act of play as in theatre but also the act of playfulness and imagination). What kind of **writing** needs to be done in order to be in the moment, not to achieve authenticity but to engage in the present **time**?

I also see it as an act of resistance, of not wanting to make sense globally, in totality but within the moment. To be in dialogue with the given structure, to set the parameters of communication, to be able to engage in the act of being present, to enhance the capacity of focus, of detail, choice, surprise, change, to be listening, not to foresee but to create relations when things come to you and you come to things. As in the craftsman's **practice**, you see all the stages of the work. And herein maybe lies the political act again because the interest is to join the process and the product as dependent of each other, to be able to have both at the same **time**.

Live performance has the quality of such immediacy; it disappears when it is over. But not all live performance wants to emphasize this quality as a power, as the capacity of agency of several elements at the same **time**, and the negotiation between them.

Because the performing arts are dependent on an audience in their communication form, I am very interested in formats that are explicit in the way they function and where I can see the agency of all elements so I can also play with it. This is different than understanding the content or foreseeing the development of the work. I think this has more to do with the simplicity of the set-up and the degree of playfulness.

For example, if I refer to my scripted performances, it makes me think about the shift that happened in my work due to the desire to be on my toes when I am performing and to bring people to their toes when they are being an audience. I am more used to searching for the unexpected in rehearsal and then **writing** it down, creating a structure to make it appear again and again. While constructing *Moving You* the state of **attention** and the game were moving; they went from code to tradition to another possibility of game-ing. By the end of the performance, we know the rules of the game but we do not know the shape things are going to take.

This was a big impulse towards composition, and in *Ai! A choreographic project*, the entire piece is based on those principles; both performers and audience are figuring out what can be done, what it is creating and how we relate.

Both strategies are interesting and they operate differently. In order to keep the **presence** in the present one has to practise it. In a scripted version one practises repetition until the point when the material becomes embedded in the performer, so one can play it over and over as if it were the first **time**. In a **score**-based performance you rely on the form and practise playing, listening, engaging with different entrances to the game. You practise **attention**, listening, flexibility, and openness. In both cases one has to be familiar with the conditions in order to invite the unexpected. But the unexpected is not often a big spectacle; it is rather the appearance of what is already there but not yet seen.

## THE ACT OF WRITING

Choreography is the **writing** of **movement** in a given space/**time**. There has been a big leap from choreography as the **writing** of dance **movement** to assure its reproducibility, from dance to gain the status of a real art as the **writing** of music, from the necessity of document, to choreography as seen in contemporary art.

These days, choreography is a term that has been used in the most diverse disciplines and its field of action is not just in the domain of dance but also in any domain that pays **attention** to the **movement** of things or of physical (and maybe also para-physical) elements within a context.

Of course I take choreography as the **writing** of **movement** but I could also say the **writing** of affect. If I frame a space/**time** context and start looking/listening to the **movement** that manifests itself within that frame I am paying **attention** to choreography. What are the desires, orientations, inclinations and intensities of the elements that are present in that context? What kind of events or micro-events do those **movements** create? How do the events form themselves and how do they dissolve themselves? How many layers do those events propose? What is my point of interest in that observation?

Here is where the **scores** come in not as choreography but as structures that make choreography emerge, **writing** or drawing a trajectory of relations. I am interested in observing, when and how things get mobilized or not, as a performer, as an audience and as a person. What are the implication, desire and drive of things? What are the conditions that facilitate or obstruct **movement** (to mention just the two opposites)? Is there such a thing as no-**movement**?





Affect it yourself / participative installation. photo: Lilia Mestre

If **attention** is turned to these factors there is a high state of **presence** and present. And these states concern the individual and the collective. One and multiple, the crossover of those limits seems so obvious but they are never established; the interchanging of the focus between me and the other; the sharpness and dissolution of one into the other; the negotiation happening; the emergence and emergency of things.

My questions are then: how do these **movements** create language? And what kind of language is created?

Just as the **movements** are written they are erased. There is nothing besides the act of **writing**; the act of **writing** of the players involved and the simultaneous erasure of that same **writing**. It is as much a **movement** of appearance as of disappearance. Choreography is ghostly; it is and is not. And now it brings to mind the opening sentence of Brian Massumi's book *Parables for the Virtual* that says: 'Concrete is as concrete doesn't'. I love its ambiguity, its vacillation between sense and nonsense. And then yesterday in a conversation I heard this sentence: 'Present as present isn't ... as a condition of performance'.

I do not know whether my performances reinvent the notion of choreography. They do to my own understanding of relations, in trying to create frames for encounter that question a familiar ordering of things. I have a tendency to work with domestic objects, as they are so close to me. I know the chair I sit on, I know the cup I drink from, or do I?

I quote André Lepecki: 'Contemporary dance discovers choreography as the polarizing performative and physical force that organizes the whole distribution of the sensible and of the political at the level of the play between incorporation and excorporation, between command and demand, between moving and **writing**, as those central elements for all performance composition'.

## (ANOTHER THOUGHT). ETHICS

Let us say that all of us work (deal, are in touch) with ethical parameters and self-**knowledge** in order to process the continuum. The simple fact that nothing stops can be a very cruel condition of **life**. We cannot pause, rewind, sustain or stop any event in a systematic use of **time**. In the arts we can bring questions of temporality and linearity to the fore, we are occupied with suspension and transgression of **time** and borders in order to access the complexity of **life**, and here I can see a radical difference between **life** and art (and very much with performance). Performance transforms our regulated conception of **time** but **life** goes on with the tick of the clock. But they transgress each other, create passages in-between and reinvent themselves.

If I would think about transposing my **practice** (choreography) to the public sphere as a proposal for resistance and observation, I would perhaps like to import a **score** (e.g., Lisa Nelson's Tuning **Score**) into the private and public spheres as a counter-social choreography. **Time** would become contracted or expanded. It would be a way to perform, experiment and communicate the doer's observation in a daily regular situation.

When I am in contact with the larger world we live in, the streets, social services, bureaucracy, I fold into a 'common' functioning. That matrix allows such diversity of encounters, people, **practices**, temporalities that flow ... I can pay **attention** to many things or to nothing. I scan, I select, I compose.

I find quite remarkable the co-existence of different worlds in a city, as I find remarkable an ecosystem in nature. I think this functioning is not just rational but also empirical, sensual. It is amazing that we can go from point A to point B passing through so much otherness without crashing. It is a maze (ing). I see my work as a tool to observe ecosystems, discover their modes of functioning, and be surprised by the characteristics of their singular elements. Any kind of frame creates a territory. My desk is a world. I want to share. I will make a performance.



Neighbours near Cercal. photo: Lilia Mestre

## PRACTICE LIFE

And here it comes: what is the relation between my work and my **life practices**?

The relation is the '**practice**' and here I quote John Cage: 'Art comes from a kind of experimental condition in which one experiments with living'.

In this way there is no distinction between the two. Making art enlarges my perception and my ability to observe and apply **knowledge**. It makes me create conditions, systems to perceive **life** and understand what there is. My changes encompass the changes of the world and they are all temporary; as examples of the now:

The ethical standpoints are more exacerbated, the acceptance larger, the distribution of **time** a contradiction, the dedication to re-actualize my self strong, the nervous system a contradiction, the femininity empowered, the discourse sparking, the self-esteem nurtured,

Marginality a tool I will never let go of, family a continuous experiment, **knowledge** something to listen to and embrace, the desire to engage flying, the tears poems, the smiles empathic, the responsibility in fire, the skin falling smoothly,

Taste is less important, owned objects are being given away, animal consumption reduced, the affirmation of queerness is shining, the body awake,

The fear of violence constant, the astonishment regarding political procedure huge, still dislike the police,

The curiosity keeps flourishing, the other is a surprise, motherhood happily embedded, the sensation of me peaceful, dance is wonderful, insomnia dreadful but no sleeping pills, nature rules in whatever way, paying **attention** to **attention** a political act, looking twice a tool for change,

Silence a gift, trust a gift, being here a gift, thinking a gift, sensing a gift, fantasy a right, disagreement a right, difference a right, exercising encounter a must, vibrant matter a must, being alone together the best, peacocks like old kings a must, it looks like that ... a must,

Being in and out at the same **time** a condition, tiredness concrete, battery full, battery empty, it encompasses the world around me.

Re-**writing** a necessity, **writing** senses, not **writing** is not drawing, is not tracing, is not incorporating, dislocating, do not be so serious, do not take things for granted, do not drive a car yet, do not own big things, do not misuse power is an important principal, respect authorship, disrespect authority, violence in-explicable, the fluidity of things a relief, stimulating desire as a warm-up, generosity a must, sensing a word to not forget, ears, eyes, nose, brain, skin, sex, guts, heart awake.



Father. Photo: Lilia Mestre



Moving you/ performance  
Photo: Luc Depreitere

## EXERCISES IN DREAMING

MALA KLINE

It started with a **dream**.

*I am with Catherine. We are in a small poorly lit and simply furnished room. She asks me to stand up. She walks behind me and starts saying some words I do not understand. It feels like she is chanting words in a magical incantation. Meanwhile she is snapping her fingers behind my neck and shoulders and then down through my body. It feels as though she is activating my **dream** body. It feels like a preparation of some sort. A Native Indian woman appears in the room as if from nowhere. She is very tall with long black hair. Her statue is almost masculine and there is a power and vigilance to her I have never seen before. She is totally present and totally focused on me, scanning my body with a fierce and penetrating gaze. She is not satisfied with my current state of power and focus. Now I sit at the table and Catherine stands behind me. We watch her. Suddenly she screams at me loudly and with a force that makes the small room resonate as an echo chamber: WRITE! WRITE! She wants me to focus instantaneously my intent and all of my will without a shadow of a doubt or hesitation. I say: OK, OK. I take a pen and start to write. It is amazing to suddenly feel the force and clarity of the focus in my body. I write and I write. Catherine is behind me, watching me write. I know I am **writing** in **dreamtime**.*

I sent my **dream** to Catherine with whom I have been studying a way of **dreaming** for years. Next day I receive an email from her. It said:

*You must finish **writing** your PhD. Also do it from **dreamtime** not from left brain. Then it will flow.*

Upon receiving this **dream** and Catherine's response to its necessity I knew I needed to develop a way of thinking from a place of **dreaming**, using **dreaming** as a way to write my PhD. So I decided to start experimenting with diagrammatic **writing**, which seems to me to be an obvious choice since **dreams** are themselves diagrams. The following pages are thus a series of experiments in which I explore what is the gesture of **writing** through my **dreaming** and in what way this gesture of **writing** allows for a thought to emerge and evolve through my **dreaming** too.

## DRAMATURGY OF DREAMING

In my PhD on ethics in performing arts I am **writing** about diverse emergent or existent artistic **practices**. Each of them is a singular case study. What then would be a dramaturgy of thinking and **writing** about a case as **dreaming** it?

I take Maite's photo of herself with plants to experiment with what a dramaturgy of a process of thinking and **writing** about this photo through **dreaming** could be. Sometimes I use cards as an interface to stage a dialogue with the case. Cards like a Tarot deck of cards expand the thinking process about the case by accessing and activating the affective and imaginative mind. With them I open the case in the same way I would, as a Kabbalist, open a **dream** by seeking to know the 'real question' of the **dream** and the right response to it.

How to do it?

1. Take up a case and something that represents it. (Maite's photo of herself with plants)
2. Look at it attentively. Make a diagram of responses and thoughts about the case. Assemble associations and map out questions, topics, concepts and relations within the case. Diagram displays the matter and form of the case.
3. Locate the question of the case. Or choose the most resonant concept or image of the case. The clearer the question, the better. It sets the intent for the conversation with the cards.
4. With this question or image in mind, take a card from the pack of cards.
5. Contemplate its forms, colours, **movements**, directions and numbers. Make a diagram of responses and thoughts about the card. Assemble associations and map out questions, topics, concepts and relations within the card.
6. Weave a response bringing together the insights of both diagrams while focusing on the 'real question' of the case (**dream**). Let insights about the case emerge in answer to the question of the case. Write until thoughts emerge. Then stop.
7. Or: Work with a spread of cards. This can be done in different constellations. Each card within a constellation opens a different aspect of the case represented by the first card. Choose the different cards and place them on their positions within a constellation, each position in relation to the first card representing a specific aspect or perspective of the case. Look closely at the cards as aspects of the case. Then weave a response bringing together all the different aspects while focusing on the 'real question' of the case (**dream**).



Card that opens Mayte's photo with plants



Outlining the question of Mayte's photo through a card

Example of dreaming Mayte's photo with plants



Mayte's photo with plants



Outlining the question of Mayte's photo with plants



Opening Mayte's photo with plants through the card: What is the real question of Mayte's photo with plants?

To Maite: When I look at your photo of yourself with plants as a dream I see the naked body of a female figure in a white environment. As cotton wool of infancy it fills me with a sense of innocence. She is standing erect with an intensely green plant on either side of her. Plants too insist on erect presence next to her. She looks stern but something in her exposure and withdrawal into the kingdom of plants moves something in me. She looks at me with an un-human gaze, more like the gaze of a meek animal. The meekness of the figure addresses me without imposition but rather as an open question. How am I in the world? How open, how exposed to hesitate in the between-ness? How daring to linger within a relation where I do not know? Can this fluid openness grow and expand? Can I look with my eyes wide shut and see?

Displacement of her naked body reveals her vulnerability. The vulnerability resonates with me. I too am slowly opening up next to her. Giving in. Surrendering. To the image. Into a relation with it. With her. Just being with. As if her hesitation in the space of the im-possible causes me to hesitate too. This is a non-place somewhere on the edge where the human world collides or merges or stands next to the kingdom of plants. The juxtaposition of body with plants reveals the im-possibility of becoming a plant. It amplifies the measure of being human. The borders of the skin. Or it displays the remnants of being human while perhaps drifting into the kingdom of plants. Drifting into the im-possible. This is perhaps what remains of us somewhere in an unknown present where, stripped of our human constraints, we linger in an encounter with the others. Where there is more space, openness, fluidity and grace. It fills me with hope and longing.

## DIAGRAMS AS TOOLS FOR DREAMING

My concern with diagrammatic **writing** is an attempt to move away from the linearity and rationality of **writing** and set up a **practice** of **writing** that activates different bodies of a writer and reader. It is performative for it engages the corporeal, the imaginal, the rational and more. It is eventful in a sense of emergence of a thought or rather insight that arises in the process of **writing** or reading. It is not about conveying the content of a thought or phenomenon but about **writing** or reading as a creative act of thinking. Ultimately I am interested in the *living thought* given within an *experience of thinking*. The work with diagrams is a kind of formative path to *creative imagination*. I will return to this later.

Diagrammatic **writing** is a form of relational **writing**. It is mapping the **movements** of thoughts and the relations between them. It is opening up and activating the spaces between concepts and images. It is about different aspects of 'being with'. It is not just about the relations of elements and forces within a particular diagram, but also about the relation a diagram

requires from us, so that the thought (sight) that is 'folded' in it, can unfold (in-sight) through a process of our relating to it. As such, diagrammatic **writing** requires a performative reading, an engagement that is an experience of thinking, wherein thinking includes the faculties of feeling and imagining. Feeling the resonances, imagining correspondences, contemplating connections between images as analogical forms of consciousness within a concrete relational map of an event of a thought in creation. It is a way for the reader to become a vehicle for an emergence of a thought or still unknown configuration of relations, to become a vehicle for an insight with relevance to one's own particular situated embodiment and context. Ultimately it is a **practice** of looking within while looking out, asking questions and receiving **knowledge** in return, from within. In this sense a diagram is an interface (not unlike an oracle) that connects one to the source of **knowledge** within oneself. In this sense it is, exercising practical thinking or what I call **dreaming** while allowing forms (of consciousness) to unfold into a line of an experienced in-sight. Diagrams set in motion the different bodies in a process of thinking. They have the potency to activate the different sensorial, affective, imaginal, intellectual and other bodies of the reader.

To consider a **dream** as a diagram is to see it as a specific temporary configuration of forms of consciousness, in which everything matters: their shapes, relations, **movements**, directions, colours, sizes and dynamics. The meaning of a diagram is not fixed but dependent of the context. Diagrams are essentially dynamic events of change or transformation of its basic parameters or of the unfolding of an in-sight where what is not seen comes into sight. Diagrams display **dreams** as configurations of forms of consciousness put their relationships in the foreground and describe the alignment of elements. Positional relationships are important and the viewpoint is always immanent to the field of observation. Every point of observation in a diagram can be pivotal. Thus a diagram is an open, fragile, processual tool of **writing**. It allows the thought in it to vibrate, to continue. It asks the reader to be in relation with it, to resonate with it, to negotiate its content and relevance in response. It stirs up relational thinking and extends the possibilities of thought. Diagrams address one's responsibility in a process of unfolding of a thought. It is a partner in dialogue. It opens up space for the emergence of an in-sight that was not there before. Thus a new way of seeing and understanding, a new perspective, a new configuration of thought can emerge. The point is thus not reproducibility of **knowledge** but the unexpected, the yet un-known that appears on the horizon of our thinking.

## DREAMING AS A WAY OF KNOWING

Using diagrams as a tool and form of **writing** inevitably points towards different questions in relation to **knowledge** production. For example, how we value **knowledge** and what kind of **knowledge**, and how we understand the means with which we generate, transmit and disseminate what we understand as **knowledge**. The use of diagrams as a tool or vehicle for relational thinking proposes an alternative mode of **knowledge** production. It questions the prevailing ways of reproduction and legitimization of a thought. It questions the authority of objective **knowledge** based on an almost authoritarian and binary mind-set with an external disembodied, absolute and irrefutable point of view. It understands **knowledge** in relation to concrete embodiment, situated and conditioned by its context, and thus as multiple situated points of view in dialogue and exchange that enables their growth and extension in assembling and comprehension of their **knowledge**. **Knowledge** thus is relational, dependent on a context, on history, on environment, on the embodied perspective of the one knowing. And perhaps **knowledge** is a knowing assembled through receiving, not learning. Every reader of a diagram is a singular context into which a diagram is embedded, an opportunity for an emergence of an assemblage of diverse perspectives, of lines of thinking as emanations of an ongoing process of creation, as an act of receiving.

Diagrammatic **writing** questions a solely rational approach as a way of knowing. It is a way of affirming other sources of **knowledge**. It is really about how to access our **dreaming** without turning irrational, about how to engage the corporeal and the imaginal into the process of thinking without collapsing into fantasy. It is about how we employ different agencies or modes of *thinking* such as feeling and imagining and what this can do to our thinking and to the process of the unfolding of a thought. How can *thinking* be a creation and not a reproduction of thought? What is thinking as an *experience of life and of presence* in the objects of our thoughts? What is *thinking* with integrity of an insight or a revelation, where **knowledge** is received from the source within or from the relation with the other (the other inside or the other outside oneself)?

## KABBALAH AND THE POWER OF DREAMING

In a Kabbalist way of understanding we **dream** all the **time**, not only in the night. Night **dreams** are just some of the images that come to the surface of our conscious mind, while this amazing wide river of **dreaming** continues even while we are awake and fully conscious. We **dream** all the **time** because we have a body, which is constantly experiencing. The body is exposed to an incredible flux of information from within and from outside and which it is processing all the **time**. We have lost the connection to **dreaming** as a form of knowing but **dreaming** is the knowing of the body with everything that the body is, and it is more than we ever imagined it to be.

In the Kabbalist understanding **dreaming** works analogically. It is about how forms relate, how they attract each other, how they fit. When I say I 'open a case as a **dream**' I follow this logic of **dreaming**. Associative thinking is part of this procedure of *opening* (a case as) a **dream**, but there is a whole other dimension to the **dreaming** because **dreaming** is a body experiencing itself and everything in relation with it, be it close or far, as in its knowing distances do not make a difference. Diagrams are a way to invite back the **dreaming** as a way of knowing. This is a way of knowing that inextricably engages the body and imagination as agencies of knowing. For all I have said of it, a diagram makes for a great tool for **dreaming**. **Dreaming** itself is diagrammatic. **Dreams** are diagrams or constellations of forms, **movements**, directions, colours, moods and emotions. Thus the work with diagrams opens space for *seeing* through **movement** and its relation the *intent*, for a **life** that escapes fixity in thought, perhaps for misunderstandings, mistakes, nonsense, even humour. It requires the all-knowing judgement to surrender yourself to the hands of the figure of a fool.

Perhaps my attempt for diagrammatic **writing** has to do with how I understand myself in relation to **knowledge** and can this be a relation of trust. Can I undo myself as the author of my thoughts and owner of my **knowledge**? To what extent can I not know and sustain the hesitation of not knowing? To what extent can I pause, empty of myself, undone as a figure of knowing and be a vehicle, a mirror for **dreaming** the other (the case)? Can I simply hold the space for the other being totally there and watch what I see take place without interfering? Can I then *see* it – its forms, colours, **movements**, direction, rhythm, patterns and the *question* or *intent* that drives it? The case is a vehicle for **dreaming**. And my **dreaming** of it is situated and conditioned. I **dream** it through a specific prism that is my body, perspective and the language of my **dreaming**. There is no **dream** outside of its context. **Dreaming** is unique to each one of us, it is never generic. But the multiple different **dreamings** of a particular case can create an assemblage of **knowledge** about the case the **dreaming** holds in focus.

I am building diverse formats of *communal dreaming*, in which a communal body with multiple different singular points of view is the vehicle and where the spaces in-between start to matter as a non-space from which a new **dream** or in-sight unfolds. I am interested in how a collective thinking process expands the horizon of our **knowledge** and understanding, how we assemble **knowledge** through different singular sources and process it together. This then is **knowledge** in flux. A *living thought*. A *communal dream*. It is always already being re-written, just as Talmudic writers have been constantly re-**writing** the Old Testament to unfold the multifaceted **knowledge** present in this sacred text. I long to see how as a multi-perspectival communal body we reconfigure and **dream** ourselves into a new swarm while **dreaming** enables us to receive **knowledge** about any particular subject from a (collective) intelligence – something that is there and not there, that belongs to everyone and no one, that is present and put at our disposal only if we are still enough to be moved by it.

## DREAMING YOURSELF AWAKE

**Dreaming** is big. Perhaps there is nothing outside of **dreaming** and **dreaming** is all there is, the matrix of the universe. I always desired to know how to interact with it in a conscious and intentional way. And this is what brought me to Kabbalah or the Jewish esoteric **knowledge** tradition. To be precise, I am speaking of the technique of *Sephardic Kabbalah*, which is one of the ways of Kabbalah or pure Kabbalah (*kabbalah* means 'receiving'), in that one 'receives' through one's inner gazing. And through this work of *revelation* or *receiving* it is a **practice** of conscious and intentional engagement with **dreaming**. In a way there are no 'teachings' because all that is needed is to learn the way **dreaming** teaches through revelation. This is rather a **practice** of call and response with all the **dreaming** in which we partake, the still folded, the already unfolded. And to ask the 'right question' and to hold space open for a response to come in is an art in itself.

Looking closely at Nicolas' question (**dream**) and the image he sent me as a **dream** and work with them through **dreaming**, I elucidate some of the aspects of **dreaming** and how I practise it in interaction with the reality I encounter.



To Nicolas: When I look at your **dream** as a secondary **dreamer** of this **dream**, I see myself trying to get my head around **dreaming**, its complexity and paradoxical being-ness. (In my **dream**) I am using my **dreaming** to understand it but all my **dreaming** is showing me are my efforts to articulate my thoughts around it and even to draw it in the form of a diagram. It is showing me how I am failing to do this. To me it is striking that my **dream** presents this process by showing me my head covered with a pillow while I am doing the **dreaming**, the imagining of what the **dreaming** is or could be. The fact that my head is covered while I am attempting to draw is giving a direction to my understanding. It reminds me of the Queen of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland who screams: 'Cut off his head!' That is how **dreaming** is done. You have to cut off your head.

There is no other way. It is a way to open a space for **dreaming**. You have to empty yourself of yourself. You can address the **dreaming** with a question, just like you did it in your **dream**. But then you have to hold the space open for the **dreaming** to respond with an answer. You cannot force it or push it with your trying. If you do so it will hide itself from you. You have to do it lightly, with ease, just like dancing or making love. When you stop trying, it happens, it just unfolds itself. It is action through non-action. And you are all in the experiencing of it. You are the creator and the witness at the same **time**. Just like it happened to you the morning after the **dream**. You 'just stumbled over an old image. Exactly, last night experience...'

For me if I **dream** your **dream** the image you find and send me is exactly the diagram you failed to draw in your **dream**. But the moment you let go of trying, while your question still lays in your sub-conscious mind, the **dreaming** brings the diagram to you in the form of an old image as something you already know. As if by accident you stumble on this old image in your waking **time**. And so for me as a **dreamer** of this **dream** it is hard to think of an accident in **dreaming**. To me it feels more like I am here in this moment present with a question, which from the deep forms my intent and which, regardless of whether it is conscious or sub-conscious, operates as a call that seeks a response from the rest of the **dreaming** matrix. You are calling for something to come to you, in a certain **time**, a certain space, a certain constellation. What comes to you and the way it comes to assemble and configure with you into a specific event is conditioned not only by your question but also by many other things: how clear you are or not, how clear your intent is or not, how you hold your focus in your sub-conscious mind or not, how you hold the space open allowing the **life** of **dreaming** to flow through you or not ... All this conditions how things will manifest themselves or not. And the Kabbalah teaches you how to manifest and contribute to creation consciously and intentionally and yet through **dreaming** and receiving.

The image that comes to you as a response to your question is a very interesting one. It is interesting to look at it closely to see what is it saying in relation to your question about what this 'multi-layered concept' of **dreaming** is that leaves you 'unable to know what non-**dreaming** is'. And the way you put the question to me and to which your own **dreaming** has responded through this image you had stumbled on is interesting too. You say: 'Consciousness folding into half-conscious and sub-consciousness flashed into concrete thoughts'. It is interesting to look at your choice of wording and see how it relates to the image that comes to you in response to your wording. Language matters in the Kabbalah. In Genesis we read: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' The word is the beginning of creation or our co-creation with God if you will. The word is a shape through which the breath of creation flows.

The word intends a form and it goes forth into a manifestation. If I look at the image it is you in a bed in a bedroom. You are in a state between sleeping and waking. In the image you are multiplied by four. You are a multi-fold – a multi-fold of bodies of you, you as four, as four different aspects of you between **dreaming** and waking. You are folding or perhaps unfolding into the **dreaming**. To me this image is about me **dreaming** myself **dreaming** myself **dreaming** ... or a **dream** within a **dream** within a **dream** within a **dream** ... The multi-fold as events of you taking place at the same **time** as there is no **time** in the **dreaming**. All there is is the present. Not just the present of the image of the four aspects of you, but also the present of the one watching the image, while the image is being imprinted on the consciousness of the watcher. It is the flow of consciousness multiplying itself. It is consciousness fortifying in the now as **dreaming**. And me **dreaming** your **dream** in response is just another layer of the same **movement**. For me the image speaks of this infinite flow of a folding and unfolding consciousness through **dreaming**, through images. This image being your own answer in response to your own question inherent in the **dream** where you fail to 'know' the difference between **dreaming** and non-**dreaming**. To me it is uncovering the fact that **dreaming** knows no difference between **dreaming** and non-**dreaming**. There is no separation, only multiplication of **dreaming** ad infinitum. The paradoxical duality is transcended in **dreaming**. **Dreaming** 'holds the space for the infinite essence'.

The oneiric imagination is privileged as the way to reach the unknowable and unnamable essence, as it is the mental faculty that combines opposites and thus points to the mystery of equanimity, the state of indifference wherein opposites are identical in their opposition. Restoration to infinity – the mystical nuance of the traditional notion of repentance, teshuvah – is predicated on the removal of consciousness, which is indicative of exile, but also on the illumination of the supernal light, the vestment of concealment, since it is only by being concealed that the concealment can be revealed as concealed. Through the **dream**, therefore, the schism between sleep and wakefulness, exile and redemption, is itself transcended in the luminal darkness where the disparity between dark and light is no longer operative' (E. R. Wolfson, *A Dream Within A Dream: The Prism of Imagination*).

In the Talmud, which contains the rabbinic commentaries of the Old Testament, it is said that 'every **dream** unopened is like a letter left unread'. It is also said that 'a **dream** follows the mouth'. It means that through a **dream** our body is addressing us with a question and we can choose to respond to it or not. It is also said that 'every interpretation is actually a capability to actualize a **dream**, to answer to the question expressed in it and by doing so shape reality'. Choosing to dialogue with **dreams** and responding to the necessity they bring about inevitably changes you. A transformation occurs. For the more you look inside and work with images of your **dreaming** and respond to them and let them be your guides, the more light you bring in. And the light inevitably transforms you. This work is really an alchemical process if you will. And there is no end to it.

## DREAM HERMENEUTICS

As mentioned, the saying 'all **dreams** follow the mouth' is considered most important in the Talmudic **dream** book since it encapsulates the quintessential aspect of the rabbinic hermeneutic related to deciphering **dreams** and its imagery. A **dream** is understood as a form of prognostication. The predictive value of **dreams** is to inform one about the future. At the same **time** the **dream** 'also provides one with the opportunity to repent and to change one's ways'. It is interesting that a **dreamt dream** as such is considered to be hermeneutically neutral. Something flows through it – as a (diagrammatic) structure – but it does not have a fixed or inherent meaning in itself. Whatever is present in the **dream** is present only as a potential of what is to come. The **dream** does not 'make sense' yet. That is why in the Talmud it is also said that 'every **dream** unopened is like a letter left unread'. A **dream** requires interpretation and the upshot of the **dream** is determined by its interpretation. For **dream** interpretation is a mode of performative speech that has the potential to shape the course of events. To say that **dreams** depend on interpretation does not mean simply that the interpretation retroactively bestows sense and meaning on the **dream**, but that interpretation confers reality upon the **dream** and in consequence the **dream** shapes reality. The power of interpretation is to tap into the potential present in the **dream** and thus transform the meaning of the **dream** into reality. It is said that 'there is no **dream** that does not have an interpretation', which means that the interpretation is constitutive of the **dream**. There is no **dream** without an interpreter and no interpreter without a **dream**. The outcome of a **dream** is determined by the interpretation that is given it: its fulfilment – whether for good or ill – is activated by the interpretation, which actualizes the **dream**, and in doing so shapes reality.

The interpreter actively participates in the creation of the meaning of the **dream**. She speaks it in a certain manner that gives shape to the identity of the interpreter. The interpreter that interacts with the **dream** in return is somehow defined by it too. The **dreamer** weaves the **dream** through which the **dreamer** is woven.

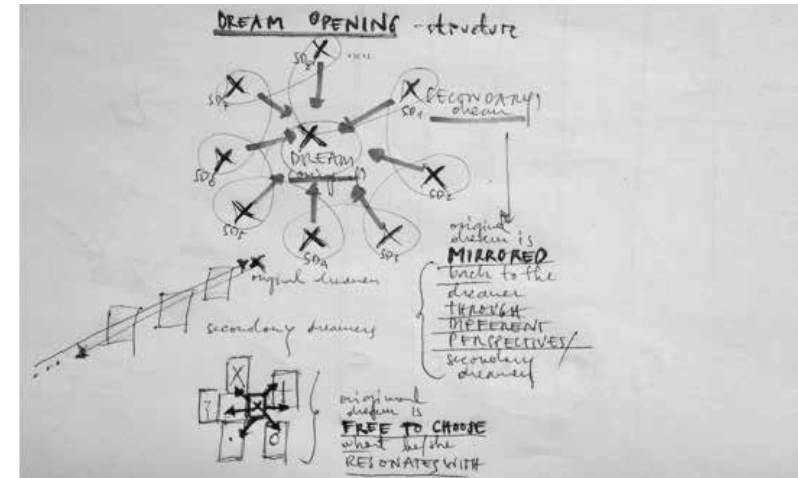
With each effort to interpret, the imaginal topography or hyperspace of the **dream** changes. This is somehow in line with quantum physics, where the observer determines the properties of the observable object. But also of the multiple simultaneous interpretations that each confers meaning upon and blows **life** into the **dream**. In this sense there are as many possible interpretations as there are interpreters. Therefore the **dream** has multiple meanings.



But there is something even more intriguing in all of this. Not only that the manifold interpretations of a **dream** are possible, but it is said 'they will all be fulfilled'. And perhaps this is more difficult to imagine. That there are as many possible realities bestowed upon the **dream** or generated by the **dream** as there are interpreters of a particular **dream**. Thus every **dream** generates multiple realities coexisting simultaneously as mirror images of the one (original) **dream**.

If I refer back to Nicolas's image as a **dream**, it suggests to him a multi-fold of versions of himself unfolding simultaneously in **time**, and if given to different interpreters, they generate multiple possible readings of his **dream** of which they are all equally meaningful and will all be fulfilled. All there is within the matrix of **dreaming** that is all and that is all in a flux of creation. **Dreams** fold into each other. **Dreams** unfold out of each other. They are simultaneous and connected since they are all one web of **dreaming** in flux. They are all different in their imagery, their qualities, intensities and patterns. And yet there is something like a *ladder of dreaming*. Jacob's ladder. It is a path of gradual ascension of a soul into awakening, which can only be the 'waking from the **dream** within the contours of the **dream**'. Again there is no way out of **dreaming** for even awakening takes place within **dreaming**.

Every awakening is 'fleeting and flimsy like a **dream**'. But what the **dreaming** offers on this path of transformation and awakening is an opportunity of repentance or *Teshuvah*, which means to repair (*Tikkun*) whatever needs to be healed within the body of the **dreamer** so it can re-align itself with its true self. The **dreaming** in a **dream** reveals the current *necessity* or the *question* of the body. The images of the **dream** show what needs *repair* and thus create an opportunity for 'whatever is not in place to return to its right place' within a **dreamer**. **Dreaming** always reveals the intent and whatever is hindering it and suggests how to repair it, so that the flux can flow unbound again.



## DREAM OPENING®

**Dream Opening**® is TM of the School of Images founded by my teacher Dr. Catherine Shainberg in New York. The school pertains to the ancient lineage of *Sephardic Kabbalah*. **Dream Opening** is a **practice** of opening **dreams** by looking at a **dream** through four levels of interpretation known as *PRDS*. It contains reading *the story* (*Pshat*), reading *the pattern* (*Remez*), figuring *the real question* (*Drash*) and finding *the secret* (*Sod*) or the right response to the necessity inherent in the question of the **dream**. This **practice** of **Dream Opening** is really an immediate immersion or gradual penetration into the subconscious that responds with an instantaneous revelation. If only we look into it, it responds. If we ask a question, it answers. And if we find the *right question* that conveys the concrete and specific *necessity* inscribed in the **dream**, the **dream** too shows a way of response.

**Dream Opening** can be done one on one or in a group. A collective of secondary **dreamers** or interpreters opens an original **dream** of one of them by way of **dreaming** its necessity and its question back to the original **dreamer**. There are multiple interpretations and each is correct as long as it is tied to the *intent* of the **dream**, even though that intent is exposed only through the weft and warp of the exegesis that unravels in **time**. The original **dreamer** is thus in-formed by the imagery and meaning that are being mirrored back to her. And thus she can let her body and her **dreaming** body resonate with their imagery and be moved by it. Moved towards repairing whatever needs repair, towards healing whatever needs to be healed.

The latent is made manifest through the interpretative gesture and enables whatever needs to be transformed. In this sense 'the **dream** illuminates the concealed matters of the vision' and 'the interpretation exposes what is hidden and is hence said to be greater than the **dream**'. I have been applying this **practice** of *Dream Opening* within different formats of *communal dreaming*, developing it further in relation to the format, context, material and content I have been working with. Any image, text, situation, speech, film or **movement** sequence can be opened as a **dream** using the same strategy of *Dream Opening* and worked with as **dream** material. Through the surface of the linear story and patterns we look until a question appears. When we know the right question the secret of the right response is revealed. And all is done through *dreaming*. When a communal body performs the **practice** of *Dream Opening* on a case such as Maite's photo of herself with plants or on Nicolas's **dream**, each participant would 'string together' one's own singular Opening of a case as a **dream**. It could be read from start to finish or from finish to start. In any case the linear circularity is permeated by the hyper-dimension of the **dream** wherein all is embedded. A **dream** is an 'image cast from and upon the screen of the blank space of infinity and deflected in the imagination of each individual **dreamer**'. The images or words strung together by the interpreters are mirrorings and further deflections of the 'original'. One **dream** looms in another and in another like an infinite mirror. The potential latent in the original material is unfolded and processed through multiple singular *Openings*, of which all ask the question and look for the right response to the necessity of the original **dream**. The structure of communal *dreaming* with the multiplicity of singular perspectives and the spaces between them allows for the (collective) intelligence to be accessed and activated. It allows for the community to be the body of the flute through which the breath blows. To know and respond to the necessity of what is and thus weave together an alternative **dream** through which the **dreamers** themselves are woven.

## FANTASY VS IMAGINATION

In **dreaming** one could delineate a difference between fantasy and *imagination*. Fantasy is a form of wishful thinking, perhaps a way of moving out and away from the present and the body present in the present. Perhaps it is a subtle form of alienation or self-anaesthesia, a fall from the 'small still voice'. It is interesting to look at how we use the word and its variations. Fantasizing is defined as 'indulging into *daydreaming* about something one desires'. Fantasy is a 'faculty or activity of imagining things, especially things that are impossible or improbable'. I experience fantasy as an action that shifts me out of my **presence** to myself and catapults me into a virtual space of the possible but perhaps improbable. It is tricky. Everything that surrounds us is made to trigger and seduce us into fantasizing. I see it is a way of dispossessing, disconnecting and thus disempowering us. The difference between fantasy and *imagination* is something I clearly experience in my body. The body can immediately tell if I am in one or the other. Fantasy can perhaps excite me briefly but eventually makes me feel tired and weary. Imagination, on the other hand, is restorative and transformational. The more I engage with it the more empowered I become. Imagination always has to do with the body. Imagination is the language of the body. It is the imagery of all of the **dreaming**, of all of the experiencing of the body. We feel these images. We experience them. The *imagination* returns us into the present and into **presence**. It brings us into a place where we are present to ourselves and to our experiencing within the present. And so *dreaming* of which I speak has to do with *imagination* because it is our bodily experiencing. Every moment we are experiencing (360 degrees) everything that is coming to us through different modes of perception from our surroundings or from within. The body is this great river of *dreaming* that flows all the **time**. The night **dreams** are just the pop-ups that reach into our conscious mind but actually this same process of *dreaming* is happening all the **time** with the same intensity as in the night **dreams**; we are just not aware of it. The body's way of processing all the information it is continuously receiving on all the different levels of its beingness is through images. The conscious mind is purified and ignited by means of *dreaming* and its parabolic imagery. 'Sleep is the apparatus by which the heart - "the point in the **dream**" - can form images of that which is beyond all images'. Night *dreaming* enables us to witness the imagery that veils in a garment the mystery, that which lies beyond and pervades all. That is what *imagination* enables in us. This is why I say *imagination* is restorative, transformational and empowering. It is an agency, a faculty or vehicle within us, which enables us to create bridges through the creation of imagery, and connects us to the great flow of **life** or to that which lies beyond. 'To choose **life**' is a great opportunity and a great power we are endowed with. The more I tend to **life**, the more it fills me with **life**.

## IMAGES AS FORMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The more I have become engaged with **dreaming**, the more a sense of self as an assemblage of identities or characters has fragmented into a constant flow of assembling and re-assembling images. I see images as 'selves' or perhaps I should no longer speak of a self. I experience images as *living forms of consciousness*.

Here is an example of an exercise, which enables an instant revelation.

*Close your eyes. Breathe out three times. With each exhalation you see a number, starting from three to one. See the number one tall, clear and very bright. See in yourself the body core of your identity. What do you see? How does that feel? Breathe out one time and open your eyes.*

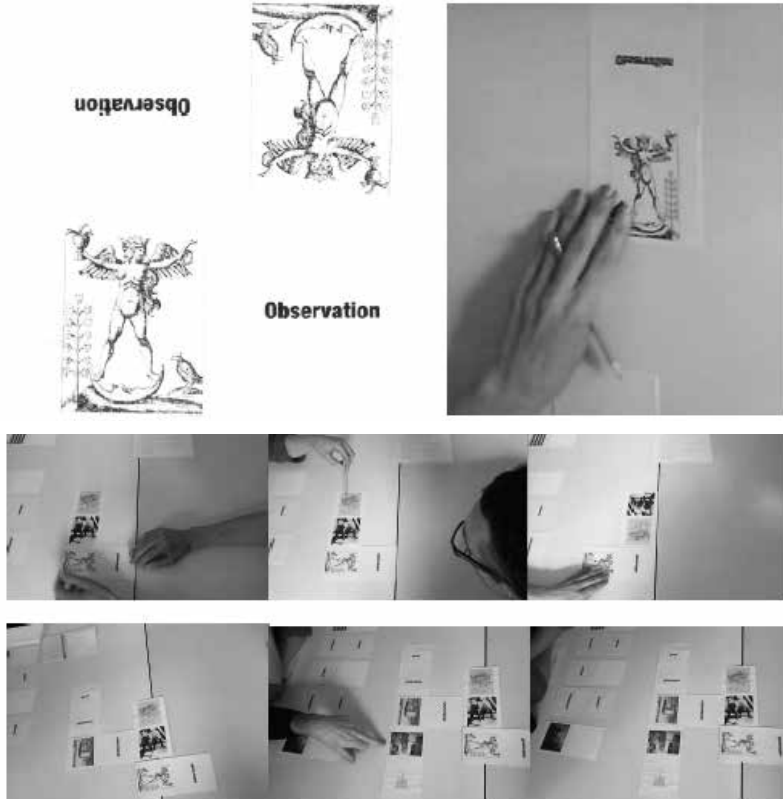
With an exercise like this you need to pay **attention** to the first image you see and be honest with how you feel it. This is to avoid any manipulation or wilful changing of your own imagery that only covers up what your intuition or the **knowledge** of your body reveals to you. Upon receiving the *image of your body core* through an experience, you can **practice** and experiment being it and living with it for a while. You simply focus on it within. Become it. If you pay **attention** you might experience that whenever you shift into the received *image of your body core*, something in your **presence** changes. Not only can you shift into image and allow it to *take over* for a while and suggest you to experience and operate differently within yourself or in the world. In fact, the more you do so, the more you experience that every image is imbued with a certain quality of being, a certain power, will and knowing. This is why I say that for me the images are *living forms of consciousness*. Being *living forms of consciousness*, holding them in focus while leaving the space open for them to operate through you. If you manipulate or wilfully change the imagery you receive you are back in the fantasy of how you think things within you or outside of you or in relation to you are or should be, which is based on what you already know on the basis of your past experience. In this sense fantasy moves you out of your **presence** to yourself in the present.

For me to conceive *all dreaming* as a flow of *living forms of consciousness* has been an absolute revelation. Because conceiving everything as **dreaming** moves me out of the conditioning of thinking in terms of divisions between in and out, subject/self and object. The manifest forms are all one and the same **dreaming**. In the *field of the imaginal*, which is the field of **dreaming** as *experiencing*, there are no separations.

## EXERCISING THINKING AS DREAMING

In his treatise *Practical Training in Thought* R. Steiner proclaims an upside-down image of our thinking. 'No one can come to a right feeling about thought who imagines that thought is something which merely takes place within man, inside his head, or in his mind or soul. ... to get at the things through thoughts, then the things must already contain the thoughts within them. The thoughts must be there in the very plan and structure of the things. Only so can I draw the thoughts out of them. ... When man thinks about things, he is only thinking after, he is only re-thinking, that which has first been laid into them. We must believe that the world has been created by thought and is still in continual process of creation by thought. This belief, and this alone, can give birth to a really fruitful inner **practice** of thought'. **Dreaming** or 'thoughts' are present everywhere. The world is built up by thoughts, by **dreaming**. But one needs to develop in the **practice** of *practical thinking* so that one's thinking is ignited by the thought or **life** of the world. The same goes for **dreaming**. The more I am in my **dreaming**, the more I go back and forth between in and out, myself and the other until divisions between in and out start dissolving and I simply know the *intent* of that which I see.

Diagrammatics of **dreaming** are a vehicle of **writing** or reading which enables thinking as a creative act of *living thinking* based in *creative imagination* (M. Scaligero, *Treatise on a Living Thought*). This then is a thought 'born from the world's essence' – a thought in which the act of thinking is not separate from the act of perceiving. It is a form of experiential contemplation of the forms of the world or of consciousness. It is 'the rising of the force of the image from the inner form of that which we behold'. We infuse the imagining aroused by perception. For the 'images in which the forms of nature and the world arise are the imagining that allows us to encounter the force that gives birth to them. We can experience this force before it becomes thought ...' It is a way of 'activation of our inner being' and opens us to a *living experience of thinking*, which is knowing as *receiving* and resonates through our different bodies. To communally **practice** thinking as **dreaming** I set up a communal format of thinking through the use of images on domino cards. Diagrammatics of **dreaming** allow for an *experience of living thought*. The **practice** of *thinking as dreaming* is about being present, observing what is, feeling it, being what is *seen* or imagined, having an inner relationship with the images and knowing the intent in the images themselves. Gradually the **practice** enables us to 'enter into the very **life** of things' and that 'thought is living and moving in the things themselves'. Then our 'thinking lives and moves with the necessity of things'. It moves in dialogue with them, in response to them. *Seeing* is thinking is **dreaming**. The domino game was the first attempt to develop a **practice** of *thinking as dreaming*.



## DREAMLAB

**DREAMLAB** is a mobile interdisciplinary laboratory for research and development of **dream** and *imagery work* in the context of performing arts. It serves as an interdisciplinary environment where professional artists meet in different formations, set-ups and contexts for the purposes of inventing, developing, sharing and exchanging methodologies of creative **life**, work or thought based on activation and engagement of body and imagination. Diverse artists and researchers concerned with techniques of engagement with body and imagination as well as with questions stirred by it have taken part in the research itself or have contributed to the **DREAMLAB** events. **DREAMLAB** was established in 2011 and has since been dedicated to the spirit and ethics of experimentation with, research and application of the *technology of dreaming*. It aims to develop specific techniques, strategies and tools of *dreaming*, individual and collective, for revelatory and transformative purposes and for the enhancement of creativity in different fields of human endeavour. Not only performing arts but also in areas such as business and education. Not for the sake of progress but perhaps for the sake of space that opens up in-between strong idiosyncratic voices that only then can weave collectively that which is 'not yet' to come.

## THE ORDER OF THE COLLECTOR

### ANNA SÖRENSEN

#### An introduction

Since I was little I collected things, ordinary things like bookmarks, stickers, stamps or pretty erasers in beautiful shapes and colors. I also collected other things like shells and stones. I also collected strange things like pencil shavings; I stored them in jars and neatly organized them. I had aquariums too, not only one, I had three, and it was a pain to clean them, but different-size fish lived in different-size tanks. I also had a collection of toothbrushes, pretty unused toothbrushes. But it was hard to find new toothbrushes to add to the collection, so I bought new ones and started to melt them with a lighter. I created new toothbrushes in shapes I thought were interesting, it smelled horrible; burning the plastic, but the product was funny-looking and pretty.

Many **times** I pondered my need to collect. I also thought there was something unhealthy about it. It was like I was obsessed with things, more and more things. I wondered if I desired the things themselves or was it that I desired to organize them? But why is it so satisfying to organize?

I think it goes back to the toothbrush. What is a toothbrush? Imagine a toothbrush. A stick with some kind of hair or pointy straw on so you can scrub your teeth. Imagine all toothbrushes you can possibly think of...think of lining them up in a long row. You organize them by size, color or shape. For me this is where it happens, when I can see them, many of them, all their differences. I can also start to imagine how a completely new toothbrush would look. With all the variations the essence of the toothbrush can really emerge. For me, organizing has never been about identifying what is wrong or doesn't fit into the collection. If something doesn't fit, it sets its parameters for a new collection, a new spectrum to see the object, a new way to understand the world. To make the world reappear and imagine it beyond what it can be. Being a collector at heart has always influenced my artistic **practice**; so to describe my project, I wanted to open with a quote from Walter Benjamin's "Unpacking My Library," *To renew the world order is the collectors' deepest desire...*<sup>1</sup>



## THE PERSONA

The questions I want to raise in my artistic **practice** are more important than my authorship. My opinion is visible, but not necessarily the point of interest. The questions I propose take many forms: a performance, a photo, text, sound or book. The medium is chosen depending on what I want to communicate with the viewer.

Since 2012 I have been working with the persona of a 'bureaucrat,' for me, a complex character that is still in development. I consider the 'bureaucrat' as a character that exists in different layers of a society, embodying different functions. In order to function most effectively, the bureaucratic machinery is inherently routine. The bureaucrat is often trapped into a constrained role. The bureaucrat has specific tasks, but often very little **knowledge** about the rest of the organization with which s/he is involved. The bureaucrat is responsible for his/her tasks. There is no **time** or opportunity to critically examine the whole system of which s/he is a part. S/he must operate within a hierarchy. Bureaucracy has its roots in the capitalistic machine, a system in which all individuals are obligated to participate in order to survive in modern society. Therefore, I assert these problems with bureaucracy are tied to labor, capital and ideologies.

The bureaucratic character is based on two of my past working experiences, a museum guard, (a position at the very bottom of the museum hierarchy) and an assistant to the administrator in my university's Office of International Affairs (helping students with their VISA issues traveling in and out of the United States). In both jobs, I experienced the systematic problems, outlined above, which I bring to the experience of the character.

Even if you are an understanding and compassionate bureaucrat, you are representing an inherently problematic system, something I explored with my performance "Your Application is Pending." In the performance, I positioned myself as "the Head of the Department," and conducted individual interviews with the audience. The interview format of the performance became my research method to explore and develop the qualities of this character in an improvisational and highly charged setting. I examined how viewers projected their perceptions of the "neutral" bureaucrat onto my character and then reacted upon the projections, both intuitively and consciously deciding how my bureaucratic character would behave. As for the boundaries of the level of comfort or discomfort, trust or distrust, my aim was to create a certain 'agony' through the informal yet personable meeting juxtaposed with harsher bureaucratic procedures. The 'agony' extends not only to the participants being served by the machine, but also to the bureaucrat.

The persona<sup>2</sup> enables me to position my viewpoint and stance: I can be more extreme in my opinions, actions and relations to make the bureaucratic machine visible. I can set an example with my bureaucratic character, an archetype with which most viewers are familiar. The bureaucrat persona is a tool to express certain problems with bureaucracy and the rigid system in which it operates. I wanted to examine how we interact with it, how we are controlled by it and how we at the same **time** reinforce it through our own participation. Making myself the tool, I want to open up a collaborative process with my viewers. They have to formulate their opinions about the character in front of them; the viewers have to reflect on their own opinions of the protocol I am suggesting. I am *embodying* the problem rather than describing the problem from an academic viewpoint. To meet my character is also an open invitation for the viewer to play with my character, and experiment with this archetype. My characters' office is a space where the viewer can also take on a persona him/herself or, at the very least, try out actions and opinions in relation to my character. The viewers have to choose his/her own character as the civil person being interviewed. One can choose to interact with my bureaucrat as with any other bureaucrat in reality, but most of the audience tried out other things like acting strangely, lying or speaking vaguely.



To be in character during the interview performance *Your Application is Pending* also helped me develop the persona "Anna Sörenson - Head of Department." Performing the interview I had to keep the character very close to myself in order to make him/her believable, authentic and to keep the interview interesting for both the person I was interviewing and me. My bureaucrat is still a bureaucrat in the service of absurdity. I had to prepare a lot of material and questions to guide the conversation into creative and mystical territories, while providing formal structure at the same **time**. I tried to be as exact and correct as I could with my absurd questions. When the audience member applies to one of my departments s/he has to state a highly prescribed, yet "meaningless" information. For example, if they applied to the Department of Ambiguity they have to state in a percentage how much ambiguity they were intending to bring to the Department, and how much ambiguity they were intending to consume, and so on. The viewer had to answer my questions and I improvised follow-up questions depending on their answers. Having interviewed nearly 70 people, I developed a fair idea of how my character acts and what kind of values s/he has. I have avoided deciding on the sex of the bureaucrat because I feel that brings in a different layer of gender-based issues. The bureaucrat is first and foremost his/her job identity, a human doing a job. Therefore I chose the costume for my bureaucrat to be a simple suit, not a masculine one, yet it is uncommon for a woman to wear a shirt and a tie. I tie my hair up, but don't hide that it is long and I wear a little bit of makeup. The office desk is as neatly curated as my appearance; paper forms, sharpened pencils, my personal rubberstamp and mineral water. I have a camera rigged for documentation and an audio recording device as well. The visitor is informed about the seriousness of the situation by these visual elements.

## THE HUMAN AND THE MACHINE

*"But I'm not guilty," said K. "There's been a mistake. How is it even possible for someone to be guilty? We're all human beings here, one like the other." "That is true," said the priest "But that is how the guilty speak"*<sup>3</sup>

The complexity of the bureaucratic<sup>4</sup> problem is its function in society today. Kafka describes the labyrinth of bureaucracy in *The Trial*, a system so familiar that it's both tragic and comical at the same **time**. One can recognize the absurdity in the everyday encounter with bureaucracy, and can perhaps even laugh about it from a distance. One may also suffer as soon as one actually needs something from the system, the government or other institutions. Too many forms and insufficient individual problem-solving skills plague many bureaucracies, like the person you are speaking to will be referring your problem to someone else. Bureaucracy is plagued with too many forms, too many referrals to others. Bureaucracy functions by "internal procedures" that are driven via routine, top-down command and control, and rigid rules. The dysfunction and inefficacy of administrative processes, bureaucrats and a ridiculous **attention** to technical details instead of personal service is just to mention some of the discomfort of the system, "the machine."

Ironically enough, the invention of bureaucracy was intended to embody quite the opposite qualities, as argued by Max Weber<sup>5</sup>, where an effective system was needed to govern capital society. The bureaucratic system was supposed to replace the caste systems, such as feudalism and other undemocratic social organizations based on personal status. The idealized version of the bureaucratic system has a universal system of laws and rules overarching all social hierarchies. The law and the rules become a system of codes where administrators or bureaucrats guide the individual regulated by due process rules. Still today, all governments grounded in law require bureaucracy to function.<sup>6</sup>

A part of the problem is the idealized core of the system itself. The machine has become so complex in its format (just look at any law book) that experts are required to interpret the systems and rules. In a functional democracy, when expertise takes so long to acquire, **knowledge** becomes the capital of the society. Political factions can't afford to develop and replace their experts. They must cultivate experts who have a non-partisan position, can work within the framework of the existing system, can discover loopholes and workarounds and the points where the rules can be bent, notwithstanding corruption, nepotism, money, violence and threat.

## THERAPY WITH A BUREAUCRAT



The short video "Therapy with a Bureaucrat" was an attempt to mirror the machine via my character. My way of approaching this process was in part an inward exploration. My own personality embodies some of the problems with bureaucracy. My constant need for order and organization, my attempts to index and apply systems to the world around me is a kind of endless quest for efficiency; all these things are part of my personality and also reflect aspects of my Swedish heritage. These aspects of my culture and myself, mixed with my work experience, became the foundation of the character. The character also exaggerates and over-identifies with the unhealthy system, obeying authority and the utilization of her power to control. I wanted to place my character in a contrasting situation: a psychodynamic setting seemed fitting for that conversation, which allows for strong images, like a **dream** or a metaphor.

At the same **time**, the psychodynamic analysis setting mirrors another system. Freud wanted his patients to recognize him, or the therapist, as a father figure in order to be able to analyze the patient's actual parental figures. He believed that if this strong unconscious feeling was projected onto the analyst it could influence the patient to free associations. The free association technique with analyzing the patient's **dreams**, slips of the tongue, forgetfulness, and other mistakes and errors in everyday **life** would lead to discover the origin of the patient's feelings, the key to help and cure. How the patient responded and/or resisted to the therapist's analysis would be as important as the patient's feelings and experience in determining the patients problems.

The therapist is the authority in the therapy setting, at the same **time**, the bureaucrat-character is representing the authority of law and government. Their dialogue is an image of the negotiation of society, authorities trying to convince each other of their superior point of view. Their conversation could be an endless loop of arguing. The Freudian concepts of the psyche, the id, the ego, and the superego, also mirror the society of its **time**. In the Freudian framework, conflicts among these three structures are repressed and lead to the arousal of anxiety. But the conflicts among the three structures are all rooted in Freud's contemporary ideas of a healthy individual in the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century society. In this society the ideas of responsibility and morality are just as ideal as the early ideas of bureaucracy. According to Freud the individual deals with the inner conflicts, but now we have the perspective to see that conflict as a societal manifestation, a product of its **time**. Freud continues to argue "The person is protected from experiencing anxiety directly by the development of defense mechanisms, which are learned through family and cultural influences. These mechanisms become pathological when they inhibit the pursuit of the satisfactions of living in a society."

For me this pointed to an interesting parallel in **time**, where the discussion of society, morality and the responsibilities of the individual took an important direction. What is a healthy system and what is a healthy person in the system? The therapy format allowed me to play with symbols and images in order to express the emotional state of the character, embodying concepts of the "Schreber," or referring to Lacan's concepts of the crisis of symbolic identity. For me an important influence of the description of the collapse of the system (or the individual in the system) has come from fictional literature like *1984*, and *Animal Farm*, (G. Orwell) and *Brave New World* (A. Huxley) and films like *A Clockwork Orange* (S. Kubrick ) and *Fahrenheit 451* (F. Truffaut).

I organized what I wanted to discuss into five different subjects as a foundation for improvisation with Magnus Ivarsson, the therapist. Ivarsson is a therapist by profession, with great **knowledge** of his field, but also a friend from the political left in Sweden. I wanted to construct the dialog as naturally as possible so working with a script was never an option. I introduced him to the different subjects I wanted to touch on, gave him background, and had several meetings before we started to unpack our material, in character. To construct a language that is both intimate, but that can be applied to a political problem (as an image) was a challenge.

Texts by Foucault, Jung, Beckett's *Molloy*, Cortázar's *Hopscotch*, and Kaja Silverman's *The Threshold of the Visible World*, became part of the process in both the performance and the film. These texts became a starting point for both **writing** and improvising. This is a method I am interested in continuing, where

the participation of other people is vital for the project to take its full form. I restaged my performance many **times** before I felt I knew it well enough to continue to work with it. The process put the subjects through a constantly interrupted cognitive process and filtered it through different theories, producing **knowledge** for me and for those participating. Working together with someone else required me to compromise, improvise, and listen to references other than my own, in a negotiation with the capitalist machine. The communication with the one with whom one works will always be up for interpretation; our experience of language, situations and references are never identical, our needs or desires will remain semi-transparent. The collaboration for me is important politically, where the authorship is secondary to the discourse we are producing as a collective. To share tools collectively, as performers, video makers, theorists, or editors, also serves to create horizontalism and to produce **knowledge**.

## THE EMOTIONAL STATE

With the therapy I wanted to invite the viewer to identify the problems of the machine via Ivarsson's conversation with me. I think to pose this identity of the bureaucrat in all his/hers complexity, human, helpless, stressed, angry, arrogant or elitist is not about gaining or losing power of the bureaucrat, but pointing to another problem. I think that the collapse of the machine is actually what makes it work so well. Where the system fails there is always a person who knows how to take responsibility for the problem and solve it, so the machine continues to work. In the interaction with the system, the frustration and the negotiation with it, it is so hard to see when we pass the line, when we are consumed by the process. When the bureaucrat in therapy says, "Well, even if the system is not perfect, it still is the only system we have, right?" His/her **sentiment** is "I am filling in the little holes and gaps and so, I can help another person." This act, an act that is quite humane, is also what keeps the machine alive. This is also the moment when we all are defeated, or to use the metaphor in the movie, we are all in the "hole" with our shovels, and can't see the whole structure.

The therapy format, or the dialogue format, allowed me to expose my inner struggle, the struggle between being (a part of) the system, the bureaucrat, and criticizing it, the therapist or humanist, at the same **time**. In the therapy setting I had the opportunity to be emotional. For me this was important, to be able to contradict, avoid, and be irrational. I believe the machine embodies exactly these problems (it is contradictory, ignorant and irrational), even though it demonstrates it is not. The short film was a way to expose that.





The power relationship between the therapist and the patient are another kind of apparatus, where both of them hold different kinds of capital. Power also recognizes power, because it lives in the same system and needs to believe in that system to maintain its power. For instance, states are overarching powers, but also they give a bit of power to the people in the form of citizenship. Without a state we wouldn't need to that citizenship, but with the state as the "big power" we are now concerned with holding on to our little bit of power.

The experience of the whole project is a journey through the phases of the bureaucratic-social experience. I invite the viewer to build up the image of power and then pick it apart; to recognize the bureaucracy, as represented by the wall with the watercolors, "Genuine Government Issue;" then to submit to the state, as the audience does in the interview, "Your Application is Pending;" to be indexed by it, losing a part of its identity in "The Analog Database;" and then to see it fall apart in "Therapy with a Bureaucrat."

Parallel to the more dystrophic work with the film, I explore the absurd aspects of government-related work. Encouraged to pursue the fantastic, I created "The Department of Burocrazy" an innovative and a new institution to explore what a bureaucracy could be. Here is a **writing** sample written as "Anna Sörensön- Head of Department of Burocrazy."

## THE DEPARTMENT OF BUROCRAZY

In the Department of Burocrazy we take the production of fantasy very seriously. In order to produce, import and export fantasy we have to constantly change the way we think. In the morning we put a fruit snack in our hats and go to work. Every day we try to find a new route to the office. This helps us to explore our minds. It also makes it impossible to have set office hours because it can take a different amount of **time** to get to work. Occasionally we need to walk backwards, often we talk to everyone we meet on the street. Once in a while getting to work can take the whole day. Rarely it can take a whole week.

Therefore, our morning meeting can start whenever, but we try to have it before lunch. Together we fold a very large paper that everyone keeps his or her notes on from the meeting. We then color-coordinate our fruit snacks and talk about what we **dreamed** that night. We document our **dreams** and index them according to size and length. After the morning meeting we try to take as many personal meetings as we can during the day, especially with people we never talked to before because we have found that this stimulates our fantasy. Re-meetings occur, and if someone comes back more than three **times** we usually hire them to work with us. During the meetings we try to share as many memories as possible, especially the important ones and the unimportant ones. All meetings are recorded and for every single person we meet, we paint a small watercolor portrait. Then it is **time** for lunch.

We have a lunch break from one to three and someone reads a story out loud. If we are not in a story mood, we may skip it. Then everyone that wants can take a nap. Every office has a daybed and a dimmer because we all know we think our most important thoughts when we are asleep.

After lunch we try to stimulate our senses in various ways. **Sometimes** we do it together and **sometimes** alone. We find it very important to ask one meaningless question a day, perhaps of a coworker, but we could also query an outsider. **Sometimes** we also need to have a second morning meeting for the people that just arrived to the office because they had a difficult way to get there or if someone wants to report a **dream** from their nap. We want to take our **time** to write it down and index that as well.

When the indexing is done, we talk about the weather. **Sometimes** the discourse about the weather can take the rest of the day; **sometimes** it is a five-minute conversation. The rest of the day we plan individually but **sometimes** in pairs. We have an office cinema and a cooking station so that we can explore our mind and senses. The office normally closes at 6 pm.

Once a week we invite a person to come and talk to us and inform us about a special subject that we need to learn more about. We encourage our staff to travel to a new place every year and we change our routines according to the season. Just like any other Department we are not sure how big our political impact is on today's government but we always send them our annual report.



## THE IMAGINARY OFFICE SPACE

The first office I imagined was when I was seven years old. My friend Hanna and I created the office space on the floor of my room, consisting of a typewriter, an old unplugged phone, a bulletin board, a stapler and a notepad. We stuck pencils behind our ears, answered the phone and wrote down everything our clients said on notepads. We stuck the notes on to the bulletin board as we took turns providing the soundscape of the typewriter.

Since then I have been in many offices. When I was still just a bureaucrat in the Department of Burocrazy, one of my favorite Burocrazy office spaces I worked in was located on 50 Pine Street, New York. To enter the building, I would have to call a phone number, no one would answer, but a buzzer would sound, indicating the front door was now unlocked. Entering the space, there was a very small lobby, where I would have to wait for the elevator to arrive, not because I called the elevator, the elevator would arrive because the building could feel my **presence**. If you did not have the correct **presence**, the elevator would not be summoned. You would have to take a walk and try again later. If the elevator arrived, you would step in, and it would take you to the floor where you were supposed to work that day. It could be the same office space a couple workdays in a row. However, you could also arrive at the office archive, a Chinese dry cleaning service, a stamp factory or a paper shop. Every once in a while you would arrive in the basement, which presented a tricky challenge to navigate through garbage and storage until you found other people down there. Wherever you arrived, you had to work there that day or at least until lunch.

As the Head of the Department, over the years I have perfected the art of making my office appear and disappear. In some circumstances, I have opened my office on a bed, on a kitchen table or under a tree. All I need is my computer, phone, notebook, pencils and pencil sharpener. Occasionally, I can make an office appear just with a pencil and paper. When I make my office appear for longer periods of **time**, other material can find their way in, a scissors, a clock, a ruler, paper clips, folders, etc... When I became the Head of the Department I obtained my own official stamp and inkpad so I could help other people to travel, interviewing them and creating formal documents. I have also developed a rare skill of making printers appear, a talent that I have been practicing for a long **time**.

I have opened my office in a diplomat's apartment in Brussels; I made it reappear in a storage space in Miami; and I even had it open for six hours in an old flower shop in Sweden. I hope that when I have perfected the art of fantasy creation, the Department of Burocrazy will have several buildings all over the world, making offices disappear and reappear, producing fantasy and making printers appear when we need them.



1. Benjamin, Walter, *Illuminations*, Schocken Books, New York, 1968, p. 61

2. Persona, in psychology, the personality that an individual projects to others, as differentiated from the authentic self. The term, coined by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, is derived from the Latin *persona*, referring to the masks worn by Etruscan mimes. One of the Jungian archetypes, the persona enables an individual to interrelate with the surrounding environment by reflecting the role in life that the individual is playing. In this way one can arrive at a compromise between one's innate psychological constitution and society. Thus the persona enables the individual to adapt to society's demands. (from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/452918/persona>, 2014-04-19)

3. Kafka, Franz, *The Trial*, Dover Thrift Editions, United States, 2003, p.152

4. Bureaucracy, specific form of organization defined by complexity, division of labor, permanence, professional management, hierarchical coordination and control, strict chain of command, and legal authority. It is distinguished from informal and collegial organizations. In its ideal form, bureaucracy is impersonal and rational and based on rules rather than ties of kinship, friendship, or patrimonial or charismatic authority. Bureaucratic organization can be found in both public and private institutions. (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/84999/bureaucracy>, 2014-04-21).

5. Max Weber, (born April 21, 1864, Erfurt, Prussia [now Germany]—died June 14, 1920, Munich, Germany), German sociologist and political economist best known for his thesis of the "Protestant ethic," relating Protestantism to capitalism, and for his ideas on bureaucracy. (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/638565/Max-Weber>, 2014-04-21)

6. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/84999/bureaucracy>, 2014-04-21

7. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/481586/psychoanalysis>, 2014-04-18

## YOU MAY ALSO USE YOUR OWN SENSES!

### AN ADVISORY SCORE TO SURVIVE IN AN IMAGE-RUN SOCIETY

HANS ANDREAS R.

You may or may not have heard that they say we live in a society ruled by images. You may also have noticed that we believe this and that we have joined the 'image parade' without any hesitation, without questioning it.

It is not because a telecommunication parasite has got into your personal photo camera - which you carry around all the time - that you have to take pictures of everything with the potential to touch you in one way or another.

You do not have to strain your arm muscles to try to get a 'better' glimpse of the band you are watching.

You are there. It is a band. They make music.

That is what they do and what you are there for.

Enjoy the music! Dance! Let it resonate!

The impression you have of it afterwards will be of much more value than the injury you got while making those a-priori crappy pictures.

The same goes for a museum or any other cultural happening which you attend for that matter, because it may come in handy as a conversation topic at your next dinner party. Do not rush through it, watching it on the screen of your camera phone.

Look at them. Make your own opinion and share that opinion. Do not be afraid to share it. Be honest. If you have looked carefully, it will not be random or stupid, it will be yours, not somebody else's who gets paid to publish her or his opinion in this or that paper or magazine.

It is not because your child did something funny - took its first steps or whatever - that you have to film it and make it public. You telling the story will be just as powerful, if not more powerful.

Yes, you could reach more people with it if you placed it on the world wide web, but how many people will remember it? Probably the same number as when you tell it yourself. And if you do so, you will have had the pleasure of telling them in person and you will not have lost precious time with your child (who will grow up much faster than you want), trying to get that bloody fragment into the public.

And if you have made pictures or images and you are pleased by some of them - which made you decide to frame some of them - choose wisely. Choose those you are really pleased with and take at least as much time to choose the right frame and where that nicely framed image will go.

Yes, the others may also be cute and nice, but ask yourself, what do they contribute?

This is not an outburst against mutated, cross-fertilized electronics. They can come in handy at some point. Neither are these rules or laws.

This is just some advice.

Advice for a score.

A score which I would be happy with if you took it into consideration for the future.

Hans Andreas R.

# WRITING ITINERARIES.

CECILIA MOLANO

## CECILIA'S ANSWER TO LILIA<sup>1</sup>

### 1. To elaborate on the place 'in-between' which these strategies propose.

Three answers and a small thesaurus to Lilia's questions

#### Answer one.

What I think these strategies (as the double focus presentation that I used for the opening week and that I often use in my works in performance) propose as a place 'in-between' is ambiguity and confusion as tools, blurriness as a 'shape', and free association as content organization. There is an intention for non-deliberated knowledge that arises on the edges of narration. What is unpredictable. What is not controlled or what is intentional. Find, not search. What is public and intimate. Threshold. Border. Tangential. Indirect. These strategies produce confusion, recognizance and humor, and they create hidden connections through the use of metaphors, symbols and parallelism.

"THE PUBLIC IS A MONSTER  
OF A THOUSAND ASSES".

SAMUEL BECKETT.

"MACHINE-BODY PRESIDENT  
SCHREBER HAS RAYS OF  
HEAVEN IN THE ASS. SOLAR  
ANUS".

DELEUZE/ GUATTARI.

Images of texts from the Opening Week presentation by Cecilia Molano.

<sup>1</sup> Lilia's question: In last week's Score Generator workshop, after the exercise of describing an object or surface by its characteristics and associations, you spoke to me about Francis Ponge and the book *Le parti pris des choses* ('The voice of things'). Because I am very interested in the relations we establish with 'things' I did some research on Ponge and got to his idea of 'objeu'. It is defined on Wikipedia as 'the act of pointedly choosing language or subject matter for its double meanings, hidden connections, and sensory effects on the reader'. I then had to think about your double focus presentation in the opening week and would like to ask you to elaborate on the place 'in-between' these proposed strategies, and how you think they operate.



Drawing from the Opening Week presentation by Cecilia Molano

#### Answer two.

I am particularly interested in the concept of 'in-between' because I think it has a lot to do with my work and structures.

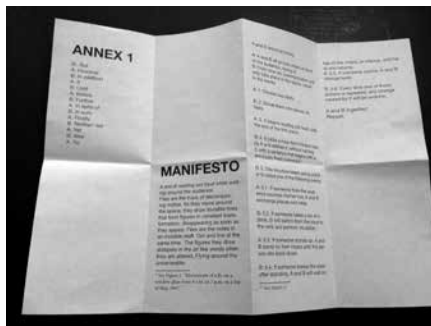
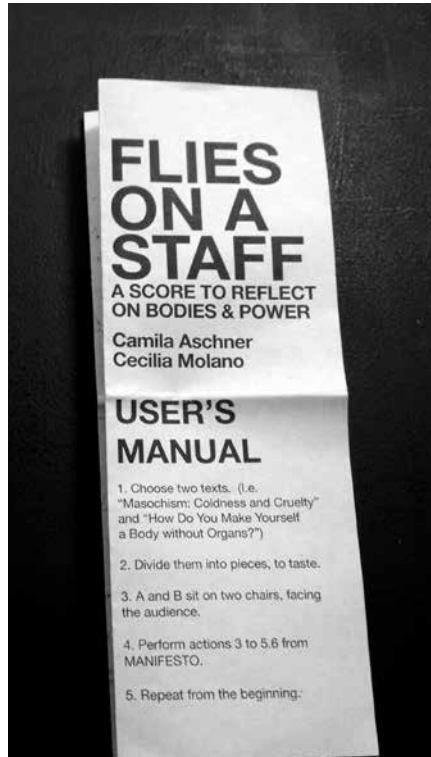
On 6 January I wrote in my notebook: 'The space in-between things is where you have to work on'. Someone had said this sentence 'in-between' the conversation on the third floor during the opening week. Nine days later, on 15 January, I received an e-mail from a friend that goes: '... did you know, *Liebe* Cecilia, that when you touch something, someone ... you never actually really touch. There is always an infinitely small gap between you and the other. The sensation of touch comes from an electromagnetic field between the elements. So we can't actually touch.

This e-mail conversation reminds me of something I wrote some time ago: 'The gap between the bodies is the space where they touch each other'. ('El vacío entre los cuerpos es el espacio donde estos se tocan.'). So in its first meaning: 'in-between' would be a place of emptiness. A gap. Silence. But also the blank space that actually articulates and makes communication possible. 'In-between' could mean either space of confusion or space of silence.

Answer three.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'IN-BETWEEN' AND 'AROUND'.

Photographies of the Score proposed  
by Camila Aschner and Cecilia Molano  
during Lilia Mestre's workshop.



## INTERIOR/EXTERIOR.

*We went to the toilet together. Inside there were those flies flying around the place. Someone left an apple last week on the trash and the flies remain there. C was thinking of death and decomposition. C thought of dots in a score. An ephemeral and absurd score. With neither traces nor the capacity of being played again, but a score for its own decomposition while being played. The idea of 'around' came as a logical consequence of the observation of that flight.*

Around language, around performance, around it is a key word since one of the things I pretend to work with is somehow 'around' and 'in-between': the audience. During the presentation someone asks whether I wanted to disappear through the presentation itself. The strategy of presenting this double or triple or 'n' discourse was meant to be honest to the shape of my own thought. Multiplicity and disorder. Several directions at the same time.

### 2. And how do you think they operate.

(Thesaurus)

They operate by:

Free association\_ association of ideas, chain of thought, inner monologue, interior monologue, mind mapping, train of thought, word painting.

Metaphor\_ analogy, comparison, figure of speech, phrase, figure, condensation, trope, metonymy, figurativeness, image.

Mirroring\_ echo, embody, glass, show, imitation, copy, reflect, simulation, representation, emulation, copy.

Parallelism\_ affinity, correspondence, double, equivalence, facsimile, image, similitude.

Collage\_ pastiche, compilation, patchwork, potpourri, collection, reappropriation.

Emotionality\_ susceptibility, impressibility, sensibility, impressionability.

Play\_ game, performance, show, entertainment, hit.

Polyphony\_ chord, blending, concurrence, unity.

## CECILIA'S QUESTION TO DAMLA

Dear Damla,

On your score, presented during Lilia's workshop, I saw a tool for an orderly confrontation. The score enables the creation of a conversation outside the frame and the conventions that 'usual communication' has but actually within the structure of a contract. So, could the score be understood as a tool of control?

Does it stage a kind of 'reenactment rebellion'? (Perhaps this should be discussed with Julia) *See Annex 1 at the end of this text.*

In what way could confrontation be taken as a main concept related to the score and how does it relate with your own research? How would you relate Foucault's idea of 'internalized authority' and your research?

## CECILIA'S ANSWER TO MALA<sup>2</sup>

Dear Mala,

Thanks a lot for your question. That is a key issue in my work right now: how to be consequent between my practice and my theoretical writing, and how they can interact. For me, it is easier in performance to go towards 'theoretical material' that interweaves with personal experience and creates intimate and interactive practices and discourses. But how to apply those strategies in theoretical writing is more complicated for me.

(As a clarification) I already wrote the thesis on Pedro Costa. I am currently writing on audience interaction. Nevertheless, there was an attempt to try 'another kind of writing' in Pedro Costa's essay. Might be mainly because of my own difficulty to try to follow an academic pattern. What I tried was to relate it with my practice in a very simple way. I wrote around three main points:

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2 Cecilia, in your answer to Lilia's question about the place 'in-between' that your working strategies propose, you said: 'What these strategies propose as a place "in-between" I think is ambiguity and confusion as tools, blurriness as a "shape" and free association as content organization' with 'intention for non-deliberated knowledge that arises in the edges of narration. These strategies produce confusion, recognizance, humour and they create hidden connections through the use of metaphors, symbols and parallelism'. I have seen some of the performance recordings and read some of the poetry on your website and I can see how you apply these strategies to the work. I also know you are now writing your doctoral thesis on film-maker Pedro Costa. I was wondering whether you also apply these strategies in your theoretical writing, and if so, to what extent, and how? What are then the qualities of such a theoretical text? And how does it work on the reader?

1. Space
2. Words
3. And the relation between reality and fiction in his cinema

Those were for me the three main points and those three questions were organized around three of his films:

1. *No Quarto da Vanda*
2. *Où gît votre sourire enfoui? Onde jaz o teu sorriso?*
3. *Juventude em Marcha*

And I wrote it as a kind of internal monologue addressed to myself through his cinema and using these three frames as an anchor. But still I felt it was insufficient.

### What then are the qualities of such a theoretical text?

In 'The Laugh of the Medusa', Hélène Cixous points out the characteristics of 'écriture féminine': body, unconscious, desire, the rejection of 'official male ways of thinking/structures', and also the notion of 'écriture comme résistance' (edges, remains, etc.). I think the main qualities of that theoretical text coincide with these characteristics. I also related with Derrida's notion of 'dissemination', which means: there is no unique and exclusive meaning, no single truth; there is a text in plural meanings and themes, scattered, whose differences engender meaning.

### And how does it work on the reader?

I think it can work in a very precise and intimate way within the reader. It enables the reader to finish the text, to complete it, to appropriate it. It is close on a personal level but at the same time can work with general questions on a theoretical level. Since it can have many shapes and the travesty capacity of embodying different genres, it is versatile and accurate, though on a formal level it is paradoxically diffuse.

## CECILIA'S QUESTION TO MALA

Dear Mala,

During your presentation I was very interested when you introduced diagrammatic writing as the 'shape' of your research. On one hand, I thought that to use such writing was very coherent with your theme (I imagine a kind of 'multiple narrative' related with collectives), and on the other I saw it as a possibility for my own research, since I have a complicated relationship with structures. I was immediately fascinated by the possibilities this type of writing can have. So I started to investigate a little but when looking for images online about diagrammatic writing, I found a lot of those diagrams that have this 'business/powerpoint look' and I was a bit disappointed. I did not find in those diagrams what I really like in the ones you presented in response to Maite, because there was another layer of 'composition' in your diagram and an aesthetic conscience.

>> See Scores in Process page 14-15

- Do you think it is possible to give the diagrammatic writing a kind of 'visual/artistic value' as in some data interpretation?

- I have been researching data interpretation and I asked one expert who told me that one of the problems of data interpretation is precisely when designers get 'so artistic' that you do not understand the data anymore. Do you think this miscommunication could be one of the characteristics of diagrammatic writing, and what kind of values do you think it can bring?

- How does free association work for you in diagrammatic writing?

- Besides Tarot, is there any other method you use?

- In connection with the method you proposed last Friday: how does an object speak about a work? Thank you very much.

## CECILIA'S ANSWER TO GAJA

Dear Gaja,

Thanks a lot for your question.<sup>3</sup> It opens a lot of possibilities and paths. I did not know Jean-Yves Petiteau, but he has a sympathetic name for me, in-between something small and a boat, so I started to look for his name online and I found two things:

- A picture of a nice small man that goes with his surname (but I am still not sure whether it is him).- A brief description of Jean-Yves Petiteau on Wikipedia that says:

*'Jean-Yves Petiteau pratique notamment la méthode de l'«itinéraire», une démarche d'enquête, qui interroge la place accordée à la parole et à l'image. Lors de la journée de l'itinéraire l'autre devient guide. Il institue un parcours sur un territoire et l'énonce en le parcourant. Le sociologue l'accompagne... Le territoire est à la fois celui qui est expérimenté et parcouru dans l'espace-temps de cette journée, et celui du récit métaphorique. L'interviewé nous livre en situation une histoire au présent et la mise en scène de cette journée particulière confère à son récit la portée d'une parabole. Dans ce projet, la narration est appréhendée comme ce qui donne sens au réel, ou plus précisément le sens se construit au fil du récit. Il se réinvente au présent. Il se fait chemin faisant dans le temps. Dans son déroulement, le récit dévoile des lieux. Il offre une nouvelle appréhension du territoire.'*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Dear Cecilia,

From some interviews with Pedro Costa, I found his method similar to sociologist Jean-Yves Petiteau's approach of deep listening to the interviewee person.

I find intriguing the necessity of subtleness defined by devotion to listening in encounter with the other that is a trigger for opening the relation with the space of the other, the environment of personal identity. 'To be listening is to be on the border of meaning', Petiteau once said in a pass, and he also referred to listening as an action admitting that one does not know.

In the context of the performance the audience is usually in the position of the listener, and I think that in contemporary art this attitude is often naturally honest – which is determined by the nature of emerging art. But I remember that you experimented with the position of listener in one (or more?) of your projects – how did you experience the listening from the place where you are expected to 'talk'?

<sup>4</sup> 'Jean-Yves Petiteau notably practises the method of the "itinerary", an investigative approach that questions the place given to word and image. During the day of the itinerary, the other becomes a guide. He establishes a path over a territory and enunciates it as he travels up and down it. The sociologist goes with him ... The territory is simultaneously the one which is experimented and travelled in the space-time of that day, and the one of the metaphoric narration. The interviewee gives us in situation a history in the present tense and the staging of this particular day confers on his narration the scope of a parable. In this project, narration is considered as that which gives sense to reality, or more precisely, meaning develops with the story. It reinvents itself in the present. It comes into being as it progresses in time. In its development, the story reveals places. It offers a new apprehension of the territory'.



I try to not forget the question, but immediately, Jean-Yves Petiteau is friends with Baudrillard, and 'parcours', guide, narration, 'territoire' and especially itinerary – which is one of my favourite subjects – become so appealing that I need to let myself go that way for a while ... I find out that JYP was working with Straub and Huillet on a film called *L'itinéraire de Jean Bricard*, a film in which they follow the course of the river Loire. So I also followed the course of the river; I am swimming through it. I see images of the river banks, trees and I imagine a film in slowness, which also speaks about death. 'Nuestras vidas son los ríos que van a dar a la mar, que es el morir ...'<sup>5</sup> So life itself as an itinerary. Daniel Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub were the subject of one of Costa's films – in French – which is called: *Danièle Huillet, Jean-Marie Straub, Filmmakers - Where Does Your Hidden Smile Lie?*

In this film, in the process of editing a film, they discover that the smile of one character does not take place in the mouth (a privileged organ for communication and language) but in the eye. It is a silent smile that travels from mouth to eye, and the position of the film-maker is actually to be listening.

Silence as a possibility for listening and understanding. Silence as communication. I think what you describe is the position of the observer.

So this is the beginning of our itinerary that connects silence, JYP, Straub and Pedro Costa with a concrete question: how do I experience the listening from the place where I am expected to 'talk'?

I could say:

I do not understand performance as the place where I am supposed to talk. In performance you are expected to talk, act, give, produce ... 'But I also want to be silent and not make. For me there is also another way of making in performance which has to do with creating the conditions for the audience to talk, give, produce together with the performer and also to be silent together, to be quiet, to receive and not produce anything' ... And even to question the very idea of producing nothing more than feelings or impressions.

Performance could be a wider term. At a pass there is a lot of talk. I usually like to listen, first because I feel I have not that much to say and second, because in listening there is also the possibility to identify textures, personalities, gestures, interests and projections that are difficult to perceive if you are

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<sup>5</sup> 'Nuestras vidas son los ríos que van a dar a la mar, que es el morir ...' ('Our lives are like rivers that go to the sea, which is like death ...'), Jorge Manrique, *Coplas por la muerte de su padre*.

involved in the conversation. I mistrust words. I listen while I draw, because drawing has always been a mechanism of concentration for me. To draw is to trace also an itinerary.<sup>6</sup> I am experiencing the listening from the place where I am expected to 'talk' as a mechanism for understanding and experimenting the shift of positions, a possibility and as a play.

There is also one line you referred to about JYP: 'And he also referred to listening as an action admitting that one doesn't "know" that makes me think in another possible itinerary'. In her first question addressed to me Lilia asked me for Francis Ponge. It is curious that one of the characteristics of his poetry is precisely to place himself as a subject that "doesn't know". Through this strategy, he is able to look at things as if they were completely new. No prejudices, no expectations ... Just as I like to imagine myself as an audience.

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<sup>6</sup> Ingold, Tim. *Being Alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description*. New York: Routledge, 2011. And Lines: A Brief History.

## CECILIA'S QUESTION TO PHILIPPINE

Querida Philippine,

I share with you three desires on your research. I apologize, because they are long introductions, but I find them necessary in order to communicate the way those ideas came to me.

### On distance

I went to bed thinking about the question I should ask you today and trying to dream it. (I love that idea from Mala's last answer). Instead of dreaming it, I dreamt of an old guy I once found in Majorca. I was having a beer with some friends and the man wanted a cigarette. Since no one had anything but rolling cigarettes and the man did not know how to roll, a friend started to roll it for him and in the meantime he turned to me and proposed a game. The game consisted of moving five coins on a table and with the minimum amount of moves getting those that were on the edges together, or something like that (I do not remember very well). Of course I failed the task since I have never been good at that kind of logical game, and the guy ended up showing me how to do it.

The trick consisted in leaving a distance in-between the coins so you can flip another one in there, so in one move you somehow manage to move more than one. The guy said in my dream: 'Everything in life is a matter of distance.'

I woke up this morning in Madrid with the question around my head. The question got wet underneath the shower, it almost fell down when I opened the fridge, and it got a bit sticky with the honey. But it came back again after breakfast in perfect shape when I thought: I have been in Brussels for one month and I have not yet managed to really connect with the city. This morning I find myself actually missing Brussels.



Drawing of Philippine from Cecilia's first notebook in a-pass during the score meetings.

### Distance.

Can you think of any mechanism for taking distance from yourself when being part of a performative work?

Is that distance *really* possible in any other kind of creative work (i.e., installation work)?

What is the difference between 'being present' through a work of art where you are not directly (re)present(ed) but still there, and yourself become 'the object' in a performative work?

Do you think it is possible to achieve through practice an objective vision of your work as a performer?

How would you present yourself as an 'object'?

### On mirrors.

Then I made one of those teas with messages – which I love and follow as a kind of daily oracle – and it says: 'We can find ourselves only in someone's mirror'. I recognize a slight smell of 'new age' fragrance in the message but it is still revealing, because during the last session of yours I thought of mirrors. I like the idea that it was actually you asking yourself a question. And I think it cannot be better since I think it is a problem you have with your own perception, your own image in performative work and maybe it cannot be answered from anybody else but you.

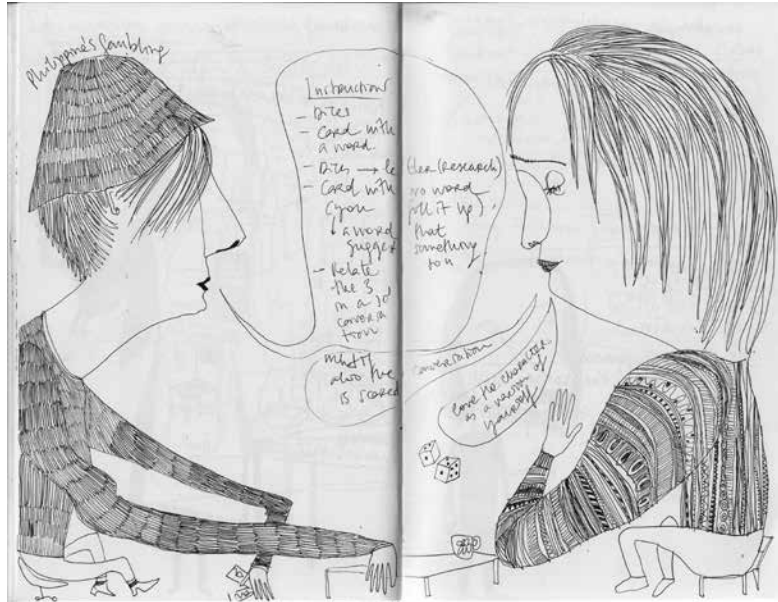
I read on Jacques-Alain Miller: 'The first link of the subject to the other, in terms of desire, is recognition.'<sup>7</sup>

So, could the others as an audience work as a mirror for you? Could that 'solve' the problem of your own self-perception?

On copies and originals. I was deeply touched by that idea of yours that 'there is an essential loss that occurs within the resurrection of the copy that reflects onto the original, that reveals or emphasizes the frailty or finiteness of that original'.

These days I am also fascinated by the idea of detail in relation with copies and originals and more precisely with Giovanni Morelli who invented the Morellian Method<sup>8</sup> to recognize original paintings from copies in Renaissance paintings.

7 Miller, Jacques-Alain, *Los divinos detalles*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2010.



Drawing of Philippine and Gaja from Cecilia's first notebook in a pass during the Half Way Days

Morelli is also the character of one of my favorite novels by Cortázar: *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*).<sup>9</sup> I am interested in him because through the writings of Morelli, Cortázar explores the mechanisms for the construction of the novel, mainly the desire to write with the reader (as a co-conspirator) and I think of the possibilities of applying such a method to the performative work.

Both Morellis are somehow for me interested in the notion of 'authenticity' within the shape of things.

So do you think that in the exercise of these 'details' on your performative work you could find a way for something? (This question is still an intuition)

8 As an art historian, he developed the 'Morellian' technique of scholarship, identifying the characteristic 'hands' of painters through scrutiny of diagnostic minor details that revealed artists' scarcely conscious shorthand and conventions for portraying, for example, ears. (Wikipedia)

9 *Hopscotch* is an introspective stream-of-consciousness novel where characters fluctuate and play with the subjective mind of the reader, and it has multiple endings. This novel is often referred to as a counter-novel, as it was by Cortázar himself. (Wikipedia)

## CECILIA'S ANSWER TO HANS<sup>10</sup>

Dear Hans,

I love your question, thanks a lot. I am indeed always busy with my sketchbook.

I will start by the end.

### Epilogue: When the *analogue* meets the *sterile digital*<sup>11</sup> or the *infertile itinerary* of a *hygienic system*.

I have been always fascinated by those things/processes that transform their 'nature' into something else, i.e., dynamos (from mechanics to light); sublimation (from solid to gas); transubstantiation, from bread to body; or those cassettes for the car that transform the MP3 digital signal into analogue. In sum, all kinds of substances and converters that fulfill the characteristic of 'in-between'.

Somehow I perceive my work as a mix of those different media, but also the media as intimate approaches that are diverse and different in their conditions and manifestations and hold different relationships with technology.

### First Chapter: The Treasure Island and the map

According to this, my notebook is important and is not. It is for sure *just* a notebook and it is also *the* notebook. That will change with time, like all affections and some other notebook will come to occupy my heart. But at this moment, the animal you have seen several times hidden in my hands or peeping out from my bag – black and white, made out of sheets and traces – is an animal of memory. So in that sense, yes, it is an extension of myself. I guess I like the idea of a register, because I also like diaries, photocopies or photographs. After some time you look at the notebook and you do not recognize it as yours. So memory interweaves with forgetfulness as they are part of the same phenomenon.

In a pass the notebook also works as a tool to allow concentration to happen.

10 Dear Cecilia, I could not help but notice that you are always busy with your sketchbook, taking notes, drawing. So I wonder what the importance and status is of your sketchbook. Is it interchangeable and just a notebook? Or is it an extension of yourself which you treasure? Is there a certain kind of sketchbook, paper, pen, pencil ... you prefer or do you use whatever is at hand? And how does this personal, sensitive, graphic, analogue approach end up on more sterile websites and (online) questionnaires?

11 Online questionnaire: <http://fguillen.github.io/PerformanceInterview/dist>

I cannot be for so long in the same activity without moving, especially if this activity is related with thinking. I like to think while drawing or walking.

About the notebook itself, I pay attention to the pages, the shape, the quality ... This one I bought at Schleiper's. That morning, it took me ages to choose one. A friend of mine was visiting me and he was deadily bored with the waiting. He thought I was a maniac. But it is difficult to choose a notebook, for sure you know ... I bought it but I was not completely happy with this one, because the cover is too 'important', too luxurious and the notebook is quite heavy to carry in my bag. Besides, the pages are of too good quality to sketch, you know? I prefer a medium-quality paper so I am not under pressure to make something 'up to scratch' but can just scratch the paper. But I like the fact that it seems quite honest as a notebook and even docile. It ended up not being docile at all but on the contrary it had a strong personality. I realize that somehow the quality of the paper has provoked a not very usual way of drawing for me. All the drawings I have made are quite clean and composed ... That is not so good ... But I am already submissive to it.

I was using a black 0.4 pencil, but now it is over and I am using another one, not that specific. Sometimes a pencil or ink is also OK.



Drawings from Cecilia's first notebook in a pass.

## CECILIA'S QUESTION TO ANNA

2 March 2014

Anna Sörenson  
Head of Department

Delaunoystraat 58-64, B17  
1080 Brussels (Molenbeek)  
Belgium

Dear Miss Sörenson,

'The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries, with vast air shafts between, surrounded by very low railings. From any of the hexagons one can see, interminably, the upper and lower floors. The distribution of the galleries is invariable. (...) The Library is unlimited and cyclical. If an eternal traveller were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which, thus repeated, would be an order: the Order). My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope.'<sup>12</sup>

In our last conversation, we talked about Paul Cortazar Otlet, the creator of the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) 'which provides a systematic arrangement of all branches of human knowledge organized as a coherent system in which knowledge fields are related and inter-linked'.

I keep on thinking in order and organization related with your bureaucratic machine. Is the notion of 'order' a consequence or the generator of the system? In what ways do classification and categorization feed the system? What kind of intimate operations does a system of classification imply? Is it possible to imagine an order which is driven by disorganization? Is chaos a possible order? How would you place the concept of apparatus/system into your organization?

Sincerely,

Cecilia Bartleby  
Scrivener. IWPNT Co.

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<sup>12</sup> *The library of Babel*, Jorge Luis Borges.

## CECILIA'S QUESTION TO JULIA

**What we do not know yet.**

Lucrecia Martel once said that to choose the script, to prepare the technical and human resources ... all the mechanics of the film, is like putting together and organizing all the elements we know in order to enable something to happen that we do not know yet.

I thought about it when you mentioned your *gut feeling* when you are making decisions while editing a film or when you mentioned the intuitive way you make it or how sometimes fragments grab each other.

As a film-maker (as a creator ...) what do you think: are we only able to create the scenario for things to happen and organize themselves? To what extent do we 'decide' consciously in our work?

**Alice in Wonderland, foxholes and landscapes.**

For a long time, when a director we liked died, a friend and I would celebrate his/her death by eating in a restaurant from his original country (Antonioni: an Italian restaurant, Bergman: a Swedish one, Angelopoulos: a Greek one, etc.) and we dressed for the occasion as one of the characters of his films. Alain Resnais died last week. The day he died, I decided to watch one of his films, because my friend is far away so I cannot go to a French restaurant and wear an elegant dress.

I chose: *Nuit et brouillard*. In the film he walks across the concentration camp in order to reconstruct the horror of the war. I was impressed by the eloquent emptiness of those spaces and their 'weight'. Related with your films: How does the landscape appear in your films since it is not occupied but rather 'landless', dispossessed from its wounds, from its footprints? How is it to inhabit that 'landscape after the battle' but within a fake recreation going on? Is there a memory that resides in the landscape?

### Posing.

I remember a character in one of your films and how his main concern was how the presence of the camera could act, 'changing' the meaning of what happened (the scene at the 'fake' graveyard). I related it with the idea of the 'pose' by Roland Barthes 'in the process of 'posing,' 'I pose, I know I am posing, I want you to know that I am posing. [...] What I want, in short, is that my (mobile) image [...] coincides with my (profound) self' (Barthes, *Camera Lucida*). How is it to make a portrait of those who are already in a pose of a pose? How would you relate with the idea of a camera as an instrument that can steal your soul? Is there something similar nowadays with the obsession for controlling our own image?

### On editing

In *Notre Musique*<sup>13</sup>, Godard says at a conference:

'For instance, two actual photographs that present the same moment in history. Then we see that truth has two faces. (...) In 1948 the Israelis "threw" themselves to the sea towards the Promised Land and the Palestinians did so to drown. Shot-countershot. Shot-countershot. The Israeli people come back to fiction. The Palestinian people fall into documentary.'

'Les Israéliens retrouvent la fiction. Les Palestiniens tombent dans le documentaire.' How would you apply this sentence to your films? Is there any relation with the 'making' of the characters and with the editing processes and how do you place the images? Or how do you intervene in some narrative elements like music, or the disposition of the fragments or the very decision of which fragments are in the film and which are not?

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13 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQJUCnsDFIE>

### CECILIA'S ANSWER TO KRISTIEN<sup>14</sup>

Airport. Interior. Day. A strong light is coming from the left. A whole wall made out of glass. Announcements of flights. People passing by. Something in-between an incessant movement and slowness. *Because the night*<sup>15</sup> by Patti Smith is playing in a bar. THE FELLOW TRAVELLER is drawing the passengers in her notebook. There is a man with a particularly extreme profile, the kind she likes to draw.

Kristien is looking through the window of her apartment. It is night and Brussels is full of lights. Silence. She drinks tea, while starting to scratch a question out of her notes. She does not have a clear idea yet of what to ask.

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14 So C,

My fellow traveller was about to tear your Hopscotch in two because it is too monolithic to accompany us on the road. Just in time I fetishist said, if you so please, then any book, but not this one, because even though it speaks of two sides I had been jumping around inside it and intended to continue so. Instead I squeezed the tiny Handbook for the Itinerant by Brandon LaBelle in the little rucksack. And a pencil. I marked something for you. Night made from this crowd of the interior life – a collectivity inside; that echo and resound, to make contact with the outside, life on the street, and in the world. A double-life, not of the self, but of the crowd: *the self and the crowd*. A crowded self. That is, a self full of ambiguity. A night-self. A night-step. Searching for another geography – a night-time geography for encountering more than meets the eye. Where the visibility of the city disappears, into the smooth darkness that throws shadows into new perspectives. The night has no map, only the passion and longing of the step; of meeting the other. The night displaces the centrality of the gaze in favor of embodied sensuality, orienting speech and word, and the power of the look, toward nocturnal languages: one of laughter and tiredness, dreamy utterance and dreamy steps – the step and the voice. Strangers. (...) love, and loneliness: the emptiness of the night takes over, tossing us into the mysterious quiet. Such quiet though, is where new friendships are made: in this space of emptiness, under the shadowy drapes of night your words pierce me – to find their way under the skin. A whisper that breaks down not only the city, as a functional construction, but this body: in other words, we drift. (...) There is no absolute perspective in such a scene, no outside reference by which to organize our words, our steps. *Pure restlessness; pure night*. And those speech-steps drumming out their own pattern: like when we'd lie back in the grass, not knowing exactly, but sensing in the pull of the wind that more would come. To dream. Might this be the production of the night – to set the heart beating, to unsettle the patterns of the day and let loose other thoughts, other words? (...) Once more I become the copyist. I wanted to ask you about diaries and other writings. When is the time of writing for you? Or when is the time for which writing? I remember you saying that you attempt to resist a masculine writing – is it then its siteoppo that you set out to grasp, a feminine writing? You immediately denounced 'the little feminist' as something of your past. In *Hopscotch* I marked 'Only Oliveira knew that La Maga was always reaching those great timeless plateaus that they were all seeking through dialectics'. I have to read on to learn about La Maga. And if I read on will I learn to know you? What 'strategies' – if that is the right word – do you use to reach great timeless plateaus – if that is what you reach for – in-between day-night, masculine-feminine, work-life ...?

15 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2AK5eIKL8c>

She herself is thinking of writing a diary at some point ... Never found the time. So she starts to think about the precise time for writing.

Kristien: I wanted to ask you about diaries and other writings. When, for you, is the time of writing?

Or when is the time for which writing?

THE FELLOW TRAVELLER: To write a diary is to be committed to a practice. It is also a way of being aware, it is a kind of memory and a trace. Usually I am a morning diary writer and a night letter writer. In the morning I like to write almost when I have woken up, I like to write my dreams, sometimes I like to write about the previous day and it flows ... My night self is lighter, I sometimes need to write also. The writing then is more ambiguous, filled with possible directions and vague. It is dreamy and watery like night itself.

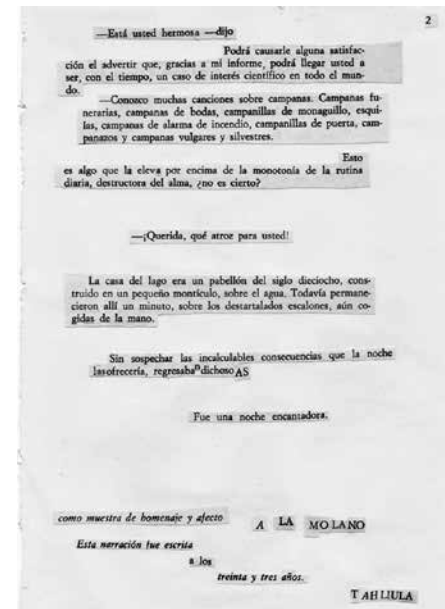
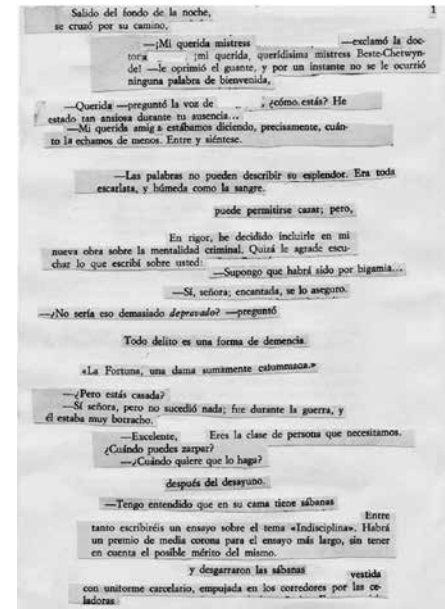
Kristien has a sip of her tea. It is getting cold. Same space. Both of them. Kristien looks at the notes from last conversation with THE FELLOW TRAVELLER, there it is ... They speak about 'feminine writing'.

Kristien (typing on her computer): I remember you saying that you attempt to resist a masculine writing - is it then its 'siteoppo' that you set out to grasp, a feminine writing?

The music from the bar has stopped and there is an insistent chain of ads instead. Light is even more bright in contrast with the soft lighted room at Kristien's. THE FELLOW TRAVELLER takes her headphones and start to listen to *Love will tear us apart*<sup>16</sup> on her computer while she writes her next answer:

THE FELLOW TRAVELLER: Miss Salama is a lady who only writes by tearing books into words, sentences or paragraphs. She takes the book onto her table, weighs it in her hands, takes the scissors, glue and a piece of thick paper. She chooses carefully the material from the book and builds a new text by placing the selected elements together in a new way. Most of the time, she works with just one book. She loves nineteenth-century novels because they are full of words and long sentences. She creates a new text out of the original, by diving in the new meanings that appear between the new structures. I also think something similar might happen when you learn a book or when your copyist self takes over. In both cases, you need to break the book and then reconstruct it. Maybe any reading does so. You try to be faithful to what was written before.

16 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GL9rSAz\\_oc4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GL9rSAz_oc4)



"Divertimentos" by Arancha Salama

But necessarily in that exercise, there is a break that comes out from memory, from the very exercise of it or just from interpretation.

When I refer to 'feminine writing' or *écriture féminine*, I think of breaking, drawing, gluing, appropriating and weaving the text. I think of many possible practices of writing that do not privilege the 'masculine' (but also white, European, middle class ...) privileged discourse of reason. I think in structures that respond to themselves, not to a pre-existent structure in which your words are supposed to fit. In that sense, yes. I move towards that type of writing. I wonder: how to embody other voices? Accents, particularities, differences, imprecisions, non-linear structured discourses, emotions, memories or even pieces as Miss Salama does.

One more character has entered the scene. THE FETISHISTIC SELF moves slowly in his tall high heels. He just heard about tearing books apart, and he wants to protect us from such practices. THE FETISHISTIC SELF is almost always a conservative figure. Obsessed with objects, collections and rituals. They ask us for stillness. He decides to sit down and listen.

Kristien is thinking, she remembers THE FELLOW TRAVELLER said something like 'the little feminist inside her'. How does it relate with that writing?

Kristien: You immediately denounced 'the little feminist' as something of your past ...

THE FELLOW TRAVELLER and THE FETISHISTIC SELF move nervously in their sites. They do not agree. THE FELLOW TRAVELLER just realized that, of course, THE FETISHISTIC SELF does not like to talk about 'past'. THE FELLOW TRAVELLER starts to write quickly. THE FETISHISTIC SELF looks over her shoulder.

THE FELLOW TRAVELLER: I do not remember using the expression 'little feminist' but for sure there was a little feminist 'I', since I have six sisters, my house had plenty of women and I was conscious quite early about inequalities and violence toward women in many senses. I have a clear memory of reading *The Second Sex* and *A Room of One's Own* when I was about 11 years old. Those two books were on my sister's shelf in the room we shared. From there, to be conscientious about what is called 'woman's condition' and be active in feminist and lesbian groups. I do not consider the little feminist as something of my past but present in a different way, from essentialist feminism of my early years, the queer-LGTB feminism. So I guess it is again not that much about feminism but feminisms.

Kristien is again looking through the window. THE FETISHISTIC SELF is beside her and takes Hopscotch in his hands. Kristien smiles ... Maybe that book does not belong to her anymore since he was the one who saved it. They look at the book together, pages start to fly up to a point where Kristien has underlined a passage.

Kristien: 'Only Oliveira knew that La Maga was always reaching those great timeless plateaus that they were all seeking through dialectics'. I have to read on to know about La Maga. And if I read on will I know about you? What 'strategies' - if that is the right word - do you use to reach great timeless plateaus - if that is what you reach for - in-between day-night, masculine-feminine, work-life ...?

THE FELLOW TRAVELLER is a bit distracted. There is suddenly a long queue of people in front of the counter. It is already time to fly? Why do people wait standing up instead of sitting down and relaxing? But Kristien's question brings her to a memory. She thinks of the expression in the Spanish edition of the book: 'Ella navegaba los ríos metafísicos ...' That is what Oliveira says about la Maga. Is it possible to translate 'ríos metafísicos' into 'timeless plateaus' (there should be another sentence that she does not remember from the text).

'Hay ríos metafísicos, ella los nada como esa golondrina está nadando en el aire (...) Yo describo y defino y deseo esos ríos, ella los nada. Yo los busco, los encuentro, los miro desde el puente, ella los nada. (...) Ah, déjame entrar, déjame ver algún día como ven tus ojos'.<sup>17</sup>

THE FELLOW TRAVELLER answers: I sometimes feel much more like Oliveira ... This question is beautiful. In Rayuela, what is disturbing to me is that idealization of La Maga as an intuitive being, natural and instinctive just because she is a woman. While Oliveira is trying to grasp any meaning out of his life through thoughts and binary systems that he depreciates but cannot scape, La Maga apprehends meanings without any analysis, in that intuitive and 'wild' way. I should read it again, but that is what I remember. What interests me about Rayuela is not its content (which is also beautiful) but the shape of the book and the beautiful idea of a book that talks about the mechanics of building itself and allows the reader to find his/her own way through the text. I look at things from the side of the river. It is rare that I manage to dive in them. And for sure it is not by thoughts, not even by words ... But I feel indeed night-morning-feminine-masculine-life-work without any strategy to reach those timeless plateaus more than withdraw and try to let them come towards me.

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<sup>17</sup> 'There are metaphysical rivers, she swims in them, like that swallow is swimming in the air (...) I describe and define these rivers and desire these rivers, she swims. I look for them, I find them, I look at them from the bridge, she swims in them. (...) Oh, let me in, let me see some day as your eyes see'.



## CECILIA'S QUESTION TO DAMLA

Dear Damla fish,  
navigator of urban seas.

The last time we talked you showed an interest for Leopoldo María Panero, the poet I was working with on the video work<sup>18</sup> for the General Intellect Workshop. I brought Panero to the scene, because I would like to think of solitude within the frame of community and how to relate concepts like intimacy, the personal and the public, the communal ... the 'discussion' during the workshop on differences and equalities.

There is a sentence in the video and I would like to ask you what it brings you, since you have also been working with Foucault and public disengagement.

'In prison, the hateful dichotomy between public and private ... breaks the detestable social configuration of isolation. It is the only place where friendship is possible. A friendship that lasts the time that the imprisonment lasts ... Because later I have met outside the prison friends from jail and that has been a disaster (...) outside, the 'I' gets stronger and it commences the most inutile and bloody war, the war of 'being I'.

For what it would be a need that the other did not exist. This is what generates the exchange of humiliation that structures today's society, rather than market exchange'.

What does this paragraph mean to you within the context of your research question? Why did Panero interest you?

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18 <http://vimeo.com/88435658>

## Annexe 1

### C's Proposition.

#### *A conversation of dissolution for resolution* **A conversation of ignition for resolution**

*This score is for depicting or elaborating on opposing arguments/point of views or for resolving an existing conflict by analysing and condensing it.*  
This score was developed to turn a communication block into something else.  
*This score was developed by reducing a conversation block into its basic orientations.*  
Imagine, that relating towards a situation together imposes itself on two of you.  
*We got a task and had different approaches about how to work it, the miscommunication reached such a degree that we didn't know how to talk about it.*  
You don't agree about the way to deal with it but feel shy to talk about it.  
As a way out of this dead end, we propose the following:  
*In case of similar oppositions, or maybe even to intensify or create some the following scores could be used by one, two or we haven't tried but maybe even by more people.*

#### I Scoring score

1. Sit down together, with pen and paper each.
2. go to the website <http://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html> or use another list of connectors.
3. Scroll down the list and alternately formulate sentences starting with the connectors that you read as you go along.
4. Note the beginnings of each sentence and some content **while talking**. This noting while talking will slow down your conversation, but don't rush.
5. Go through the notes together, and fuse separate notes into one script that logs only the connectors or phrases that determine the direction of the conversation, leaving aside the content. This log constitutes the "Score" column.
6. You can think about supplementary columns that logs other elements of the conversation, such as content or quality/tone.
7. You can use your score now as:
  - 7.a a tool of analysis of conflict,
  - filling in other content in the same connecting script.
  - 7.b a theatrical scene
  - 7.c a starting point to develop a practice of bodily expression

#### II Score for Interpretation:

- 1.) Choose a partner in the group or split into two personas on your own.
- 2.) Decide on a content for the conversation that you have opposing approaches or that you could develop into a conflict.
- 3.) Decide on who is A and who is B.
- 4.) Use the pieces of sentences on the score column to produce and shape the chosen content through this given frame, following the rows in given order. (You can then intentionally change order, or use one or more columns of the table in variance)

Persona	Score	Content	Quality	Tone	Movement
B	Contrary to what C wants, I rather...		Proposes opposition		
A	Sorry, I really can't ...		Blocks proposition		
A	Do you mind ... ?		Proposes a pragmatic procedure		
B	OK, but ...		Questioning the pragmatic procedure		
A	In the first place ...		Initiating explanation in favour of pragmatic procedure		
	As much as ...,		Affirms Bs position		
B + A	(silence)				
A	sometimes I really like ...		Establishes opposite starting point to B's position		
B	(silence)				
A	As a way into ...		Elaborating trajectory from starting point		
B	(silence)				
A	... because ...		Reasoning		

B	(silence)				
A	In case you don't want ... we can ...		Suggestion of alternative		
B	In reality, although I ... but ... because I wanted you to do X ...		Explanation of action Exp. of B's intention (metaphorical) for A		
A	With this in mind: (does X)		(literally)		
B	I wonder ...		Demanding clarification		
A	As a result of ... but I prefer ... to ...		Resumes		
B	I don't understand!				
A	Wait! I did this because ... So, is this like ... ?		Postponing Explanation Asking feedback to comparison		
B	Exactly not this! Because, although I don't want what C wants, still I prefer to do what C wants, because I just wanted ... at the beginning.		Rejection Comparison Of Preferences		
A	What did you want (...)?		Asking clarification		
B	I don't think ... now.				
A	I disagree, because ..				
B	I don't want ... anymore.				

## PROBABLY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO TALK ABOUT ...

NICOLAS Y GALEAZZI

*Nicolas asks Nicolas:*

What are the conditions for productive fragilities?

fragility = chaos (=) crisis ?

fragility ≠ liquidity; but liquidity might be chaos

fragility = inconsistency (inconsistent constructs of thoughts)

productive = generative, transformative

**FIRST IMAGE: BURSTING BUBBLES. I GATHER MANY CONCENTRIC BUBBLES IN MANY OF MY PARALLEL ACTIVE SPHERES. THEY VIBRATE AGAINST AND WITH EACH OTHER AND ONLY BY COINCIDENCE THEY DO NOT TOUCH EACH OTHER WHEN THEY BURST. IT WOULD CAUSE A CHAIN REACTION LEADING TO TOTAL COLLAPSE. IF I TRUST THE VIBRANCY, I TRUST THE COINCIDENTAL.**

*Mala asks Nicolas:*

What kind of entities are fragilities? Are they material or immaterial? Hypothetical or actual?

•

Dear Mala,

'Fragilities' might be quite a wacky concept in my head as yet. I am carrying the word before my inner eyes, turn and twist it around and I try to make sense of it.

Looking at 'fragilities', it seems hard for me to decide whether it is a symptom or a condition.

Fragilities as a symptom: this could be an unavoidable reaction to something stable, or a concrete action in reaction to something dynamic, or a tense interplay between entities.

Or do we have to see fragilities as a condition? A constant mode of being? A situation under constant change? An entity of distrust? Or an entity of permeability?

As a symptom it is immaterial. As a condition it is inherent to a certain material.

Most likely, I do not have to decide. I experience it in both conditions.

•

*Mala asks Nicolas:*

Once conditions are there for them to be, what do they themselves produce? What is their specific modus operandi and in what way does it relate to inconsistency, which you say equals fragility? Or are there many? How do they relate to themselves and the other(s)? And how do they affect the other?

•

For example, a pass:

I was reacting with my entry question on a discussion we had during a general evaluation meeting with Elke and Peter Strijdonk. Peter was invited as an organizational developer (coach) for an official evaluation procedure. Together we found out that we need to frame these evaluations under the aspect of 'sustainable liquidity'.

Sustainable liquidity – is this what a.pass is heading for?

I would say that most of us would agree that a.pass on the one hand needs to remain hyper-transformative and on the other needs something that conducts this transformation into a constant, good flow. Liquidity is the uninterrupted access to the sources as well as the current meandering of information between situations.

The aim per se is not the problem; the different interpretations of it and the different experiences we all did with such ‘flows’ are the curtail momentums, where the constant transformation might become a fragile entity. This fragility is the daily, actual work. In this sense, fragility is not hypothetical, it is there, and it is experienced as the permanent entity we react to.

Since occupying the role of programme coordinator, I have discovered on a daily basis new factors in play. They all have their fixed points, their grey zones and their loose momentums. I would love to see the structure we have to compromise on in order to keep the free space for jumping into the artistic unknown as a playground.

It has to be the fixed points that turn the potential liquidity into fragile challenges, which will finally keep the liquidity running.

**SECOND IMAGE: TRUST. SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT SMALL WACKY PLANK HERE, UNDER MY FEET, WILL LET ME CROSS THE ABYSS. PROBABLY NOT THE PLANK, BUT SOMETHING ELSE PROBABLY NOT EVEN SOMETHING ELSE, BUT MY SELF. I TRUST, DESPITE THE FACT THAT I KNOW THE OPPOSITE!**

*Nicolas asks Mala:*

Dear Mala,

I would be interested in knowing a bit more about **dreaming**. Did it last night, though. But it appeared to be such a multilayered concept that in the morning I did not know anymore what not-**dreaming** is. I even **dreamed** about thinking about **dreaming** and tried to formulate my sentences to you, Mala, while my head lay under a pillow and my imagined hand failed to draw a ‘diagram’ for you. Consciousness folding into half-consciousness and sub-consciousness flashing into concrete thoughts.

How do you experience these manifold multilayered **dreaming** modes in the collective **dreaming**?



‘Risk’ has to come into play! Risk is the tool that keeps fragilities liquid. Fragilities without risk will immediately evoke structures, limits and borders of established mechanisms of thinking and acting. Fragilities without risk will hold themselves onto the shivering existence of their built-in breaking points.

Fragilities need risk, and in order to risk, you need to know at least one rule of the game: one eye closed, one half-open. – Or, what does it mean again to go blind? Which senses, which alertness do I need to activate to feel free within the risk? I do not want to say that one needs a stable ground in order to reach beyond. No, we need those tools at hand which enable us to challenge the fragile.

**THIRD IMAGE: STORM OF DISTURBANCE. PERIODS OF RECREATING MY CENTRE POINT ARE THE MOST PRODUCTIVE PHASES THOSE TRANSFORMATIONS FROM ONE STATE INTO ANOTHER. GLOBALIZED ECONOMY IS MISUNDERSTANDING GROWTH: IT SEES GROWTH AS LINEAR AND NUMERIC. BUT GROWTH IS A HORIZONTAL STRETCH AND PASSAGE AT THE SAME TIME. IT IS WALKING WITHIN THE STORM WITH A STORM IN MYSELF.**

*Nicolas asks Silvia*

Dear Silvia,

You knew very clearly what Elke tried to describe when she was talking about her experience by watching Darr Tah Lei's burning ice. She described it as a nicely disturbing feeling, which she could not pin down 'critically' to a clear experience. You spontaneously called it a *post-dualistic* experience.

I kind of understood what you meant at that moment, but I remember thinking it might be a bit short taken. I could not believe that the image 'only' talks about the problematic dualisms ice/fire, real/fake, black/white, and makes a statement about the grey zones in-between. I understood it as a message, and not as a performative vertigo.

After the evening today, seeing Kenneth Anger's films and learning about your relation to him, I started to smell the abyss in performing the post-dualistic vertigo, and I would love to hear more about it.

It is obvious to me that the whole omniadversus project is very 'vertiginously' performative, but I wonder how this performativity is entering the different zones and layers of your concrete works and **practice**.

•

Production or operation:

If fragilities are symptoms, they would not be products, they would be consequences. Insofar as fragilities as conditions would have to be operations, which produce consequences. Together they are fragilities as performance. It creates an outcome in the form of a crisis.

This thought sounds inconsistent – and while **writing** this I feel the inconsistency in my head and immediately I would like to blame myself for being so abstract. 'Abstract' is a fixed point in my head. It comes with a fixed desire to be in concrete flow. – And suddenly I find myself caught between the fixed points, which turn the proposed fragility into a synonym for weakness. –

I look to the islands, I look to the horizon: somewhere out there, there has to be its strength.

**FOURTH IMAGE: ISLANDS. I ALWAYS NEED TO FEEL JUST ENOUGH STRENGTH IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO SWIM BETWEEN THE ISLANDS. SOMETIMES IT HELPS TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE ISLANDS IN FRONT OF ME, BEHIND ME, SURROUNDING ME. REAL CALM, THOUGH, I GET BY LOOKING AT THE CLEAR AND EMPTY HORIZON. REAL DISTURBANCE I GET BY SHAKING THE WAVES (WAG THE DOG). REAL INSIGHT I GET WHEN THE SEA IS CLEARING UP AND I CAN SEE FOR A SHORT SECOND HOW THE STORMS ARE CHANGING THE GROUNDS.**

*Mala asks Nicolas:*

Is your Shadow Parliament a productive fragility? If so, how does (could) it operate and what does (could) it produce in relation to the context that contextualizes it? How do fragilities act while remaining fragile?

•

*... and Anna asks Nicolas:*

Dear Nicolas,

How are things in the Shadow Government? How is the day-to-day work going? In the Department of Therapy here in Stockholm we wonder if we spend too much **time** thinking about our own mental health while too little **time** is spent thinking of the mental health of the people? What do we want mental health to look like in the future? Any thoughts on the matter?

Dear Anna,

I have to admit the Shadow Government is relaxing in the shade! Day by day it opens its eyes for a sec, for a glimpse, to take a short glance of the world – or let us say the ‘state of the arts’.

For now the Shadow Government is only working as a fantasy and I would be very happy if it would be transformed into a phantom at least, making its rounds to different people and groups and doing its mischief.

I know, procrastinating such an idea is very dangerous, and probably not at all healthy! Such a suspension is symptomatic of the diseases you are talking about. The only real treatment would lie in its reanimation.

What could be the measurements and medications of such reanimation? Who will do it? What kind of substances would we have to inhale to be cured? And what are the logics and principles of action behind these treatments?

Let us take a homeopathic cure.

We would have to treat the disease with its own illness: ‘too much **time** thinking about our own mental health!’

What is the problem? In order to take a precise diagnosis we have to ask what symptoms are in the foreground? Is it ‘too much **time**’ or is it rather ‘our own’? The real problem is our relation to ‘our own’; the ‘too much **time**’ is rather a consequence of this relation. So we can say we should spend diluted portions of **time** on thinking about this subject – if possible, with people! A homeo pill-like art event, hyper self-centred on global health. (In German we call the pills ‘Globuli’)

So, what is the state of our own mental health? Here it is important to understand what it means, that what we normally consider as ‘our own’ is not at all our own anymore. This place is occupied by common sense, which I naively would see here as the direct opposite of the general intellect. True, Pierre? Does this mean that when we think we spend too much **time** thinking about our own, we are in fact thinking about something we share with everyone and therefore we are always thinking in a common body of ‘the people’. The homeopathic dilution of this thought could make us ask, how come we consider the own not always as ‘the people’s’ and what consequences does this have for the people and for ourselves – that we are not doing it – if we are not doing it?

What could be an institutional cure:

In terms of the Shadow Government we would have to consider it in relation to other potentials of existing institutions. Let us first take a potential institution: Damla’s proposal for the ‘Disengagement Clinic’. A Shadow Government could engage this Clinic for some outsourced jobs (privatization), or it could force it under its wing, by making it one of its departments (socialization). Or you, Anna, could make the Shadow Government one of your departments and use the Clinic to wash your content (corruption). Or we could put everything into one pot and exploit these commonalities until we no longer know what we are talking about (condense).

We should take the same approach in relation to a pass, the Beursschouwburg, the whatever festival, and then let us grow – homeopathic dilution: then we infiltrate the Pirate party, the NV-A, the KVS, the VGC, Wallonia, etc. All of us, ourselves! Mental health!

In this sense we can say that the mental health of the people we want to see in future will have to be inseparable from our own mental health we are struggling to take prevention for today.

One last thing:

*Mala asks Nicolas:*

And so what is the force of the fragile?

Probably I could say that I see fragilities as affirmative products – products of affirming fragility. When I asked myself in my opening question after their productivity, I was thinking of something beyond this self-affirming creation of fragilities. I even hoped – I think – that the fragilities themselves would create affirmative products.

It is probably the longing for dynamic springboards which let me jump – dynamically swinging after I take off. – Sounds poetic; do not know what it means, to be honest.

**FIFTH IMAGE: TO BE DEVELOPED.**

# CONVERSATIONS

PHILIPPINE HOEGEN

## TRANSCRIPT OF A CONVERSATION WITH STEF MEUL AND MAURO ROMITO

13 JANUARY 2014

**P:** As a matter of fact, we need to rephrase the question: 'Are you here?' does not make clear if it is about the 'you', the 'here', or the 'being'.

**M:** True.

**S:** Also, you imply that you can be in two places at the same **time**. How?

**M:** I can disappear from here.

**P:** But you are still here.

**M:** I am here, but I am not here.

**P:** Then you have to be in two places, which is not the case.

**M:** But I am here.

**S:** To be in two places at the same **time** seems a contradiction.

**P:** It is a contradiction.

**M:** I love space and **time**.

**S:** Then being here and there, being a contradiction, might be a matter of words.

**P:** But we feel the being here. It is not purely semantics, unless we agree that all we do is codification and therefore semantics.

**M:** Of course I feel. But when you go away, do you know when you go away?

**S:** Like going away? So going away means to go to a place from a place?

**P:** You can say: 'I am here'. But you cannot really say: 'I am there', because you take yourself with you.

**M:** I am there in your eyes.

**P:** Ah! Yes ...

**S:** Also: the image lies in the eyes of the beholder.

**P:** And by the same token: the person lies in the eyes of the beholder.

**M:** Can you close your eyes please?

# FROM ORIGINALS AND COPIES TO VERSIONS

12 FEBRUARY 2014

Over the past weeks I have come to realize that the terms I have been using, especially 'original' and 'copy', are imprecise and misleading as regards what I am trying to talk about. Thinking for example about the performance by Kevin Atherton<sup>1</sup> to which I often refer – where the artist engages, through a video projection, in a semblance of a conversation with himself as a man 20 years younger – what fascinates here is the 'science-fiction-like' quality of this conjured situation. Imagine! To be able to talk to yourself as you were, then, whenever, 10 minutes or 20 years ago, it does not really matter: it is a kind of **time** travel paired with an out-of-body experience, both exhilarating and lugubrious. There is an aspect of 'overcoming' death, but at the same **time** it is utterly frightening because it is death: we cannot be alive and in two places at the same **time**, one of the two men must be dead. (Which one?!) However, we are quite able to indulge in the game, we can be thrilled by the fantasy which is being acted out. But part of the thrill surely comes from the horror, the **presence** of death suspended in our game. Both temporality and distance play a role in this game. Temporality creates distance, even if it is just minutes or seconds of **time**.

Joan Didion writes in her short but precious essay 'On Keeping a Notebook'<sup>2</sup>:

'It is a difficult point to admit. We are brought up in the ethic that others, any others, all others, are by definition more interesting than ourselves; taught to be diffident, just this side of self-effacing. (...) But our notebooks give us away, for however dutifully we record what we see around us, the common denominator of all we see is always, transparently, shamelessly, the implacable "I".

'(...) And **sometimes** even the maker has difficulty with the meaning. There does not seem to be, for example, any point in my knowing for the rest of my **life** that, during 1964, 720 tons of soot fell on every square mile of New York City, yet there it is in my notebook, labelled "FACT". Nor do I really need to remember that Ambrose Bierce liked to spell Leland Stanford's name "£eland \$tanford" or that "smart women almost always wear black in Cuba", a fashion hint without much potential for practical application. And does not the relevance of these notes seem marginal at best? (...) What kind of magpie keeps this notebook? "He was born the night the Titanic went down". That seems a nice enough line, and I even recall who said it, but is it not really a better line in **life** than it could ever be in fiction?

1) Kevin Atherton, In Two Minds, 1978-2011.

2) From Joan Didion's 1968 anthology Slouching Towards Bethlehem.

'But of course that is exactly it: not that I should ever use the line, but that I should remember the woman who said it and the afternoon I heard it.

'(...) It all comes back. Perhaps it is difficult to see the value in having one's self back in that kind of mood, but I do see it; I think we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we find them attractive company or not. Otherwise they turn up unannounced and surprise us, come hammering on the mind's door at 4 a.m. of a bad night and demand to know who deserted them, who betrayed them, who is going to make amends. (...) I have already lost touch with a couple of people I used to be ...'

The man talking to a projection of himself as he was some years ago is looking at a version of himself. **Time** and space, or a space of **time**, have intervened. It is that space of **time** that creates the distance and that distance creates the tension, the impossible made possible, the resurrection of a former self.

Perhaps then this is all about versions without any original. A former version of myself is just as original as the one I lug around now. To apply this line of thought to performativity, looking at oneself perform, taking a distance and the role of an audience: I think we look at ourselves through the audience, the eye of the beholder.

## MYSELF AS THE OTHER AND THE OTHER AS MYSELF

19 FEBRUARY 2014

In fact I think the whole point of performing, the desire to perform, to stand before the other, is to place oneself in the eyes of the other. We seek in the other, as in a mirror, an apparatus through which to see who we are, how we are perceived, how we would perceive ourselves if we could look through the eye of the beholder and, most importantly, to confirm that we *are*.

From trying to see myself as the other, I made a shift and experimented today with looking for myself in the other, searching in other people for possible versions of myself – for example, myself at a different age or as a different sex – and following that person to see where they would lead me. I first chose a girl, younger than me now, and blonde. But like me she had sharp facial features and she was fiddling with her phone and trying to decide whether or not to buy a ticket and being nervous about not finding the per-

son she was waiting for, even though she knew it was highly unlikely they would not find each other: in this behaviour I recognized myself. I followed her for quite a while, she finally found her travel companion: a girl with a baby, and then she revealed herself as being, in many ways, the opposite of me ... Efficient, organized and totally into the baby ... I left her when she got on a train.

Looking for a new self, I happened upon a middle-aged man with a beard, a black coat and a small backpack. I knew immediately that he was me as a middle-aged man for reasons I will explain. We took the metro, we sat close together. He had a short conversation with the man sitting next to me and he turned out to be British. I call him David and I wrote him a letter.

## A LETTER

19 FEBRUARY 2014

Dear David,

I was following you today. I chose you because you flap your right foot whilst you walk as if it is slightly out of your control, but in a pleasurable way, you like to let it do its own thing: comfortably confident that it won't run away from you, you let it skip and play on the end of your leg.

I chose you because I too have a flappy right foot, you see.

I felt very happy in your company. You are clearly a really nice person and we get on ever so well. We don't even need to talk. We just sit together, our knees almost touching and as I am thinking how lucky I am to have found you, that I am delighted that you are my middle-aged male version, you do this extraordinary thing: you take out a paperback book, I stretch my eyes, they are almost turning a corner to catch sight of the title and their reward is: *The Examined Life: How We Lose and Find Ourselves*.

Sadly, soon after, the first part of the subtitle already happens: I lose you-who-is me.

But I know I will find you again because you told me so yourself.

In the meantime I will find out as much as possible about what you are telling me. I looked for your book on the internet and found a review. Apparently the writer, Stephen Grosz, is a psychotherapist and in the book he discusses cases and people he has treated. I read the following lines in the review:



With Anthony, who at 29 has been diagnosed with HIV and begins sleeping through his sessions, Grosz finds himself losing all sense of **time**: 'whole sessions could go by in what felt like minutes, or just the opposite'. In 'Through Silence', my favourite piece of **writing** here, they together come to understand these supervised naps as a kind of rehearsal for death.

Well, David, I must say you are very astute. You are quite right that I associate the fascination with 'different versions of the self' with death: paradoxically both with overcoming death and with dying. Overcoming, because to find oneself in the company of another version of oneself is a perpetuation, a transcending of the one-body-one-soul finite and singular being, into a multiple or multipliable being.

Death is there because, of course, such a thing is impossible. I cannot be I both as I and as you. So one of us is not. One of us is gone, dead, if not actually, then at least as a premonition, a promise. Like the painted portrait of the grandfather hanging over the fireplace promises, embodies, his passing, even when he is still with us. It is waiting for him to die so it can become the version of him that remains.

A rehearsal of death is such an interesting way to put it.

In view of the fact that you, with your flappy right foot, are me as a middle-aged man, or the male middle-aged version of me, what happened to you when I came into existence? Did I change you? And what will happen to me when you die? Will I lose something or will I, on the contrary, become more me? Less diluted because spread out over less versions, will I become a little more concentratedly me?

And will your death be, for me, a rehearsal of my own?

In anticipation of our next encounter, I leave you,

With affection,

Philippine

## VERSIONS OF WORKS 15 AND 22 FEBRUARY 2014

In connection with Samah's presentation of her work *Where Are the Arabs?* at MoMA New York, this week, I was thinking about versions of a work. In presenting a video of a performance in a context very different from the one in which it was first performed, there is an array of transpositions that need to be carried out or that happen on their own accord. To name just the most obvious ones: the initial work, *Where Are the Arabs?*, is a live performance that took place in several public spaces and on TV in Jordan. The spoken language is Arabic. In MoMA, it finds itself in the museum context, in the form of a documentation of the original performance. There may be some subtitles indicating the meaning of the spoken words or an accompanying text. The sound of the words will fall very differently on the ears of this audience than it does on the ears of an Arab-, a Turkish-, or a Japanese-speaking audience. I asked Samah about how this version of her piece compares to other versions she has made in other contexts, and how this version reflects back on the initial versions of the performance as they occurred in the marketplace, on the street corner and on TV.

I was curious about the repercussions on the original performance that these other versions in different contexts have. So, what does the showing of the piece in MoMA do to the performance in the marketplace? It is a significant shift of context, and therefore it must create a shift in the content. For example, one could say that transposing the piece from the street to the institute de-politicizes it: in the art context the action is safer, less provocative, less political. The fact that the action in the street was destined to live on in the art context, the institutional context, even the international context, charges that first moment in a different way. It enters it, retroactively, into the realm of the aesthetic.

Conversely, one could say it makes the original performative act all the more political: this act is given a much wider visibility than the marketplace, so it is mediatised. It is transported to 'exotic' contexts (exotic to its primary place of occurrence) and 'let loose' on diverse audiences in diverse places. This, too, moves backwards through **time**, retroactively changing that market moment. That performance is no longer, as the audience and you yourself felt it at the **time**, just for you, in that particular space and **time**. No, now the world is there with you, looking over your shoulder with you and at you, through glasses with completely different colours, seeing, through their own particular interpretation, what is probably a significantly different occurrence. This has been added to that moment and therefore the moment, the event, the performance is changed.

## A SILENT CONVERSATION

27 FEBRUARY 2014

Notes on a silent conversation with Camila Restrepo.

C: If I found my double, would I see it, would I know?

P: Maybe it is not a question of 'could you see it' or 'know it' but would you choose to: would you want to **acknowledge** yourself (in the other)?

C: Would I be able to watch my double die?

P: (Would I be able not to? Could I look away?) Funny you should ask this, I was **writing** about this yesterday: if the man in the metro who is me dies, what happens to me?

Actually I would say that to **acknowledge** your double, or as I prefer to say, yourself in the other, is an ending that could be called death. The existence of another version of the self irrevocably changes the version it was, therefore what was, is gone, this is a kind of death.

C: If my double dies, do I die?

P: Following the same logic, yes.

C: (...) multiplying images in a hall of mirrors ... Does having a double make me immortal?

P: Following the same logic, yes.

C: How many **times** would I have to die?

P: Infinitely. (We are always dying.)

C: I never found my double.

P: Neither did I. What I found was not my double (in the sense of a physically very similar person). What I found was a version of me as a middle-aged man – so, a possibility of what I could be, or am.

C: Doubling is death is doubling, etc.?

P: Well yes, doubling is an end, a death, the end of what singularity. Once there is a plural there can never be singularity again. Or: plurality erases singularity, even retrospectively.

## MIRRORS AND TWINS

23 MARCH 2014

I was talking to a friend the other day, who is one half of identical twins. I asked him: do you consider your brother a version of yourself? He said, 'Yes, absolutely. In fact I even appropriate his history: I tell stories about things he experienced and forget that they happened to him, not to me. A similar thing goes for talents and capabilities: there are some things that he is really good at that I have somehow imbued into my own self-image: the fact that he can do them serves and suffices for the both of us'.

The mirror is both a symbol for doubling, and an apparatus with which we can play at doubling, a simulator. Technology offers more sophisticated options: video projections, avatars ... These toys and the games that we play with them fascinate me. We play them all the **time** and we play them in earnest. In fact I am beginning to seriously doubt if there is any difference – that is, any meaningful difference – between game and non-game in this case.

Philippine Hoegen

## ANETTE'S SUITCASE

### GOSIE VERVLOESSEM

During the **Scores Generator** workshop (a.pass, January 2014) we were encouraged to think about **scores** for artistic research that can map, question and challenge any research **practice** in any context. In response to this question, Anna Sörenson and I created Anette, a character overlapping and embodying different aspects of our individual research cases.

Over **time**, Anette overstepped the boundaries of her function. She became a mirror, a copy, a pain in the arse ... and a real person in my **life**.

On a rainy January morning Anette stood at my door, a little brown suitcase in her hand. I let her in, she unpacked the case and went straight to bed. She stayed for three months. She left me a microwave oven, a broken shoe, a handful of soil, a statue of a mountain and an all-consuming *horror vacui*.

### A MICROWAVE OVEN

I have always considered a microwave oven a useless device. Maybe not so much useless, rather redundant. We do not use it to actually cook (few people do, indeed), but just to warm up food. And on top of that the result is mostly rather messy and tasteless.

Since Anette moved in with me, we have a microwave prominently standing on the fridge. One of her fundamental beliefs in **life** is based on the use of the microwave oven. 'If something fits in my kitchen it also fits in my head', she shouts out at any occasion. A microwave oven is approximately the size of a head, so the trick is to make everything fit in a microwave so as to be able to smoothly devour or, better said, digest it.

Anette microwaves ... the whole world ... to - in the end - munch it.

According to her, it is not the result of the digesting process - the excrement - which is most important. It is the digestion itself that rewards **attention**. The result of the process is mostly disappointing. But what could in the end be considered a failure is the result of a process that provokes a dynamic in which Anette realizes that the body is limited and the tools - in this case, her precious microwave oven - even more.

It is this struggle, these deficiencies that Anette exposes shamelessly. She surrenders over and over again, and yes, this certainly looks like an extremely liberating act.

Of course, the digestive process is a path to be followed. Of course there are usually no sideways and there is no turning back. It is obviously a path that has to be accepted in all its consequences.

I fully agree with some of the logic that follows from Anette's microwave axiom. I agree with her when she talks about the process of digestion as rewarding and underrated. We listen silently to the sound of our stomachs after dinner. Depending on the menu, the noises are weak and airy or muddy and lugubrious. And while we prick up our ears, I remember the *Reader's Digest* magazines lingering around the toilet in my parents' house. They still make me feel nauseous.

I agree that we put too much shit on shit, as she claims. But I have one major remark about her microwave axiom. From my point of view, she chooses the wrong tools, and therefore the axiom is flawed. I try to convince her to convert to my fermentation hypothesis. I hypothesize that if we tune our predigestion to the speed or, better said, slowness of our actual digestion, the fact of taking in food would be less shocking to our body and as a result the world would become more appetizing. She partly agrees. But I suspect that the shock itself, the shock provoked by the difference in pace, secretly thrills her.

Am I naive? Is she naive? Or is this a naive question?

The word, at least, intrigues me.

Apparently, 'naive' comes from 'nativus', next to the digestive path, another path to be followed, the path that leads us into this world. The naivety that I observe and experience in my own **life** is a way of dealing with the same world, an attempt to understand or accept that actually we cannot understand. Never challenge the gods!

Will I ever be up to some gently massaging of the border between me and the world, the in and the out, the light and the dark. Anette lends me a book by Lévi-Strauss. I read about the dance of the fools in the twilight zone and the world tastes sweet as mead.

### A BROKEN SHOE

A young shoemaker lives around the corner of our street, in a house filled with shoes and surrounded by the smell of them. He is a gifted tango dancer, people say. I have the feeling that nowadays people easily confuse different folkloric dance styles. He definitely has a flamenco attitude! Anyway, he is a real master at fixing demolished heels, but **sometimes** he encounters more complex problems, and then it gets really interesting.

'Good morning, good morning, is it possible to fix my shoe?'

Anette and I sit down and we watch him doubting, frowning, trying, thinking and **dreaming** about elegant solutions. A whole process unfolds before our eyes. Anette falls in love. For her, his craftsmanship opens up a whole new universe of infinite possibilities, the possibilities created by failure, errors and difficulties. She states that without doubt, my shoemaker presents the ungraspable through a process of constant and unremitting experimentation where failure is a defining element, errors are being exposed on a fundamental basis and in the end, the client leaves with a shoe that is even more damaged than before. How beautiful **life** can be! As she stumbles over her own words, I fall over my own feet.

## A HANDFUL OF SOIL

On our way back from a lovely weekend at my brother's place, we visit Anette's former colleagues, Bouvard and Pécuchet – I still wonder whether they are gay. Anette and the two men used to work together as copiers, in Paris. Anyway, Bouvard and Pécuchet currently live on a farm in old English style (apparently one of them received a huge heritage), where they try to apply their copied **knowledge** directly to the soil. But you can tell from a distance that they will never succeed. They have perfect wild-flower borders around their garden, but the vegetable beds swarm with larvae.

The visit made me think. It seems that, like Bouvard and Pécuchet, Anette tries out different recipes of **life** in the microwave oven and like her ex-colleagues she seems to fail big **time**. I firmly believe that if you really want it to be real, you have to go down and touch it. The world in their garden and in Anette's microwave oven is less reliable than you and I might think.

Contrary to her colleagues, Anette has no desire to succeed. She eats one tasteless lasagna after the other. Overcoming failure is not her driving force.

Failure always carries with it a certain degree of existential threat. From the short **time** I have known her, I can tell Anette adores these sudden outbursts of nothingness. The tasteless lasagna shows her the cracks in the fabric of being and knowing, the cracks in the mirror, the cracks in me. She seems to joyfully undergo the failure that can be experienced, but never grasped. Over and over again, she approaches the cliff and takes a glimpse of what is beyond. And this again suggests a path. Is it not so that in the end we are all designed to fail?

## A STATUE OF A MOUNTAIN

At a certain moment, Anette challenges me to approach a real limit. She tells me that after living for a few months in a flat country, she is now longing for heights. We climb Mount Ararat, the mountain on which Noah's Ark ran aground after the Great Flood. The moment we pass the tree line, the air gets thinner, I feel myself shrinking. As much as I want to accept failure and use it as a driving force in my **life**, the failure of my own body is a rather difficult one to deal with. The height petrifies me. I turn into solid rock. Anette literally talks to me the whole way to the top. How come she is in such good shape? She eats greasy microwaved lasagnas by the thousands.

Anyway, when we reach the top of the 5167-metre giant, she finally surrenders. We are overwhelmed by our heavy breathing, by the dizziness due to high blood pressure and by a racing heartbeat. We cry hysterically in each other's arms. We are unable to look over the edge, and the only thing we experience are each other's armpits. We cannot face the crack in the mirror – rather we are the crack in the mirror.

Stumbling back to sea level, my thoughts wander from Noah and his descendants to Sister Rumolda, the most famous former inhabitant of my home town. Sister Rumolda was the head of the Saint Elisabeth hospital in Herentals. Besides being short of breath and suffering from high blood pressure, Sister Rumolda had the stigmata, the wounds of Jesus on the cross. Doctors examined her and diagnosed her with severe hysteria. The high blood pressure tore her hands open like a mid-oceanic rift zone. According to her medical report, she realized her hysteria not in an upward **movement**, as most hysteric women do (back home, Anette shows me pictures of the hysterical mountain-shaped women in La Salpêtrière), but in a downward **movement** through caves and gaping holes that were constantly spitting lava. 'The bleeding cracks in the mirror!', Anette whispers enthusiastically.

Informed about Sister Rumolda's condition, the nuns working in the hospital went on strike until the diagnosis was abrogated and Sister Rumolda started a career as a saint.

Anette adores the story. She cannot get enough of Sister Rumolda and her mid-oceanic rift zones. She asks me to tell the story over and over again.

Some weeks after the Ararat adventure, Anette vanishes into thin air.

## AN ALL-CONSUMING HORROR VACUI

*April 2014, dedicated to Anette and with thanks to Anna*

# THE EXHAUSTION OF THE COMMON <sup>(1)</sup>

ELKE VAN CAMPENHOUT

## 1. THE MISTRUST OF THE COLLECTIVE

It sounds harsh, but after having worked for more than 10 years in collective research set-ups, I am starting to question their functioning as possible motors for change. What I would like to understand better is what I actually consider to be the ground for the collectivity/commonality/togetherness-to-come we all seem so desperately in search of. What is it rooted in, or what is the line of flight that stirs its movement. All too often I feel we build our imagination of a potential togetherness on borrowed terms like the revolution, emancipation, desindividuation, ... But useful as they are, they lack a practice to express the crisis of our contemporaneity. What does the embrace of these vocabularies concretely produce as modes of togetherness, of creation, of imagination?

*(Change of Perspective. Self-Critical Mode. Me and My Sense of Belonging - Part 1*

*Reluctantly, I would probably have to say that I belong to the self-proclaimed experimental and critical international arts community: the assemblage of artistic workers that is always again opening up new marginal practices that contest the status quo of the 'common sense' of a society, or attempt to do so. I belong to a group of people that try to think out of the economic logics of a neo-liberalized arts market, and have experienced that coming to terms with alternative forms of self-organization has consequences on all other practices of life, and especially on our ways of consuming, organizing the hierarchies and production logics of our work, building a shared attention to ecologies, thinking of different ways to live collectively, love experimentally, and allowing the idiot inside us to take over from the discursive specialist on a regular basis. I belong to a group of people that question themselves on such a regular basis that sometimes it seems that the questions have come to replace the actions. And to the group of people that try to break out of that suffocating corset, unfortunately regularly starting to resemble a flock of disabled birds frantically flapping their wings. I am part of a collective that tries to recapture time, reclaim the temporal construction of subjectivity that is always situational and in the moment, that attempts to step out of the idea that time is money, or tries to come up with another currency if this is the case. I am part of a togetherness that is built on practice rather than ideology, on try rather than conviction, on play rather than certainty, on affectivity rather than effectivity, on inspiration rather than truth.)*

The collective is an amoral construction - organic and inorganic / mineral, vegetal, human / historical, sociological, geological / progressive and cyclical / indifferent and constantly moved - that conducts the energy of life through all its cells, that has the agency to turn things 'real', in the sense that collectively practiced ideas produce far-reaching consequences. The collective agency is what produces change, for better or for worse. A strong collective agency has the tendency to proliferate, to contaminate the communities around it. It has the power to change the grid that constitutes the ground we stand on.

If used in an experimental setting, the community is a place of resonance, an environment in which ideas bump against their very 'real' and material limits: of understanding, of feasibility, of the potential of sharing. The community at that point is the place where thoughts and ideas get concrete, become obstacles, get digested and excreted, get enhanced or destroyed. It is in this process of permanent crisis that the common is constructed, the ground of reference for the community-to-come, a potential in most cases never to be realized.

## 2. QUESTIONS TO THE COLLECTIVE:

1) I want to know how the creation of a sense of collectivity can be a means for opening up to an outside world, rather than closing down in a reflex of self-protection and obscurization. How the collective/the collaborative practice can be a platform to make idiosyncratic ideas and practices appear, rather than defining a common ground for polite adaptation and negotiation leading up to the smallest common denominator of the urgencies present.

2) I want to know if we can redraw an architecture of inclusion that doesn't become so porous that it falls apart at the merest touch, or so indistinct becomes it blends into its environment without leaving a trace. What is the means of creating a clear voice without creating a closed ideology? How can I contribute to the construction of this collective voice without losing my own?

3) I want to experiment on how to create artistic models for togetherness and research, that can break to status quo on understanding 'value' and especially 'the value of knowledge'. And I want to see how the models we create for togetherness and sharing in these experimental settings can be implemented in the 'outside' world, can be practiced in daily life: in the organization of work, life and love.

4) I would like to use the 'I' as a social territory for experimentation rather than as an expression of a psychological 'self' or 'identity': what if I am only in as far as I'm part of. How would that change my view on politics, ethics, of what constitutes work, and what constitutes responsibility.

In other words: I want to experiment the construction of the 'I' as an outcome of social relations and ethics, following the hypothesis that I formulated in my work with Bureau d'Espoir: the 'I' doesn't exist but as a point of intensity created by the relations that cross it. The body is the carrier and marker of economic, social, psychological, geological, materials, that at some point cross through us, an outcome of the forces that build up our common space. Every I-body has the power to affirm or to block these energies, making some relations stronger and more powerful in the common social body or blocking others, which constitutes my contribution to the whole. So, what's it going to be?

5) I would like to liberate our common discourse from the constraints of the 'common sense', and let another kind of vocabulary enter into our understanding of what might relate us. Not solely a discourse of politics, arts and philosophy but also one of tantric practice, quantum physics, ethological research, sensory experimentation, ...

### 3. LET THE CARDS SPEAK

In my work I try to devise tools that somehow overstep the border of my individual concerns, practices that point to the interstices that make up our common fabric. The Tarot of Hope, developed in my research 'Bureau d'Espoir' (2) is one of them: "If you wanted to come up with a language that could be understood by anyone, and that allows for different ways to adapt to the situation, but that still speaks about what concerns us all, the Tarot is the way to go. (...) Reading the cards is not a question of discovering the truth in the wink of an eye. More important than the cards themselves are the relations they enter into, and what the gaps between the different figures or ideas tell us about our situation. The Tarot as a whole actually works as a mirror for our desires, our self-doubt, our greed or lack thereof. Often what we see is an incomplete picture of the person we could become, or of the ideas we have that might be worth hanging on to. The Tarot in that sense is a perfect tool for the development of Hope, here understood as 'the potential for change'. The Tarot of Hope is never used as a tool for clairvoyance or predicting the future. It is rather a tool for the questioner to get a better idea of what it is he or she actually thinks, feels or wants. Or which are the fields of experience they are obstinately refusing to see and deal with." (3)

So to get a grip on what I'm actually asking when I'm asking about the Collective, I will lay out the cards, and read what they have to suggest. As a general question I put: 'What to do with our desire for the Collective?'. I use a simple 3 card spread in which card 1 clarifies the issue, card 2 points to an important contextual factor and card 3 provides a key to the answer.



#### CARD 1: WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The **Swarms** in the Tarot of Hope express our sense of togetherness, of belonging to a larger group or community. This is the Suit that indicates our desire to think not only out of the individual position, but to connect our personal interests to the interests of a larger whole. In swarm theory this connection is created in a very specific way: not through a kind of top-down regulatory system devised to realize a pre-set ideal system. But through the self-organization of small groups of individuals, adapting their behavior to the ones that are closest to them, and as such creating the emergence of a bottom-up, often complex and intricate meta-system of relations and communication.

In the Swarm the togetherness of the whole is created through the self-organized and often quite spontaneous movement of the individual cells. They follow rather simple rules that only through a system of interdependent combinations evolve into a rich tapestry of colors, textures and interlinked movements.

In other words, a swarm 'blossoms' into life without the authority of a central coordinating system to guide the individual elements. For example, looking at animal swarms, studies indicate that most of them are mainly based on three simple rules: move in the same direction as your neighbours, remain close to your neighbours and avoid collisions... If we look at a flock of birds, we see that this pattern of flying together in constantly shifting formations economizes on the amount of energy that is needed for, let's say, a goose to move from one point to another. What is interesting here is how every trace that is left by the minimal self-organization of movement of one of these small animal clusters, gets picked up to be transformed into another action, and morphs from one cluster of action into another, not necessarily performed by the same agents. Through building on the traces of another sub-group, at a certain point a system emerges that carries within itself a complex, and self-balancing system of logics, not necessarily known or understood by any of the individual cells within it.

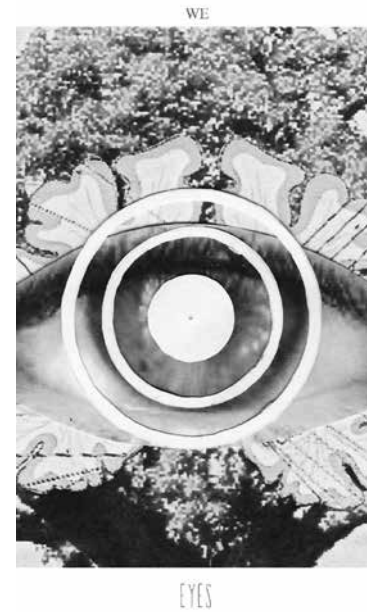
When applied to societal activity, the model of the swarm thus proposes a mechanism of self-organization, which stimulates the seeping through of information from one part of society to another, to create a coherent and self-regulative system that respects the local needs of every one of its cells. This is an organizing principle that is not ruled by preconceived global ideas of classification and division, but emerges from the interests of localized groups that have arrived at a form of collaboration or mutual profit that suits all.

In this card, the Swarms are expressed in the number **Five**, which is the **Card of Ethics**. Which in this case means that I can only understand myself in relation to the other, or even as created through all the connecting lines that run through me. In contrast to morals, ethics are woven through myriad threads of interaction crossing in a particular time and space. This ethical moment can not be measured by universal standards. There is no 'good' or 'bad' connection. There are only fortunate or disastrous outcomes from the endless crossing of threads weaving our decisions, each thread adding complexity to choices made on any level, since it will bleed into the others. Ethics only exist in a particular situation, where every decision made on how to proceed, is a choice that is placed firmly in the concrete. In the way you position yourself in the world, you situate yourself in a network of relations. You are part of this interconnectedness of history, economy, culture, crossing through that particular spot that marks 'you'. A lot of these intersecting lines have already been drawn out for you, they probably even created you: your culture, your color, your place of birth etcetera. But a lot of other ones are being made up as you go. And every choice that you make to connect or disconnect from a particular relation, will respond by changing you. These are your ethical choices to make: the decisions you take in creating a small piece of the world by adding or subtracting your support to the relations you want to strengthen or weaken.

### FIVE OF SWARMS: RADICAL

In Five (ethics), the sense of togetherness takes on a color of radical reappraisal. Radical is the card that asks you reinvent the rules of your togetherness. As a thought experiment, or as a tentative practice. If there wasn't anyone protecting you from having to think for yourself, how would you like to connect to people, construct common space, allow for different attitudes of life to converge and create new spaces to connect, to work, to live. How would you like for things to be (non)organized. This card is a bit of a provocation to wake you up to the fact that you DO have the power to construct spaces for meeting and exchange. That you are not completely dependent on what is offered or denied to you by diverse governing bodies.

In this reading the Five of Swarms might indicate that the question asked is not only dependent on a thorough understanding of what Collective means, but also on the circumstances in which you research this notion. If the Collective idea has started to produce frustration that might mean that the set-ups in which its potential was tested were not radical enough, were not embracing real risk, were not open to the changes that were asked in the practice. Frustration in this sense might rather be an indication that you have to rewrite your practices, and allow for a more deeply engaged collectivity that does not surf on discourse alone, but also engages all its members to join in a spirit of risk, radical openness and a willingness to lose what seemed most important.



### CARD 2: WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THIS ISSUE?

The *We* of Eyes is the *We* that runs our institutions. The *We* that apparently knows what we need to know. It is the *We* of the universities, the sciences, the research departments of the Industries, and the *We* of the governing instances. In this scheme it is important to point out the power of canonization this group of people represents, creating our common histories on the foundations of gender bias, racial and cultural prejudice, favoritism of the like-minded and cronyist strategies in deciding on what there is to research, to know and to teach. We live in a society that has been crippled by its poor education levels, a system that produces people that are hardly capable of, let alone interested in, thinking for themselves to know what they want. Only what they want more of. This is the Dystopia of the power of the *We* in our times.

In a reading this card points to our agency in rewriting the rules of knowledge and intellect. To redefine the values of what is desirable and important to learn and to share, and what is not. To invent alternative libraries filled not only with books, but also with objects, ideas and movement. To create more truly public schools where we share our findings. To reinvent our institutes as tender institutes. Bottom-up. Out of the urgency of our desire to gather and speak. Independent of bureaucratic architectures that represent the power of the Institute. It is time we embrace the desire to know all the things we don't know. Because no one ever thought it important enough to put on the curriculum.

Negatively this card stands for the reactionary forces of the great intellectuals that close their hearts to the speech on the ones that don't speak their language.



### CARD 3: POSSIBLE KEY

Care is the Card that indicates the state of attention, practice, intuition, and environmental awareness.

Care in the Tarot of Hope comes just after Affect: the moment we become touched again by what surrounds us. Care is the card that emphasizes the need to become aware of our environments and the role they play in who and what we are. At this point of the journey of hope, this is primarily a physical undertaking: Care is about opening up your senses, and all your sensitivity, to the world around you.

On the card we see the world and the 'workers' taking care of it, molding it

through acting out their mutual connection. Care is often put in relation to Mother Nature, but this might be misleading, since there is no such thing as a pre-cultural 'raw nature' as opposed to a 'cultured', artificial 'other world'. In Care nature is not a raw state of things, but she is transformation, life itself. She is the transformative power of creative connections that materialize in the world. She is the energy that connects people with people, with animals, with things. That connects minerals with plastics, and history with the future. And she is the one that molds and transforms our utmost being, and the relation we have to ourselves.

Every relation is one of transformation: if things are dealt with as resources only, they lose their ability to become anything else, they get fixed in our perception of reality. But in doing so we ignore everything they can be 'as well': every 'thing' carries in itself a myriad of connecting, crossing, and sometimes even contradictory relations. The way we perceive them, or how we 'consume' them, always reinforces certain pathways, ignoring others. Rendering some perspectives visible and other ones obscure. In that sense nature is what we make of it: how we carve out habits through time will slowly start to transform and rule our potential dealings with the world, until they have become as self-evident as 'nature' itself. Every action we put into motion has an infinite depth of resonance. An echo that can not be foreseen. That is the ecology of our practices.

Care is the card that invites you to experience your relations to the world more intensely, and take care of the affects that indicate you being touched by what surrounds you. Care is a kind of attitude, an 'environmentalism': it is the awareness of the relations that shape us and the ones we construct to shape our environments. It is the state of attention that is needed for the world to enter, to break up the subject/object dichotomy that rules our experience of life. By taking care you make a space within yourself for life to appear. Not life as you know it, but the life that is common to all of us. It becomes a simultaneous movement of accepting and transforming. The hands in the card are not forming an assembly line, they do not produce sameness. These hands are opened to carry on the affect, the movement that connects us all. It is a transformational process that touches both yourself and the world around you.

Taking care of the self in this extended sense is therefore always subversive to the ruling ideology, religion or political system you live in. It places you directly in the experience of life, and makes you the 'worker', the transformer of your own ethics and beliefs. In relation to Capital, Care proposes a different attitude towards time, towards attention, towards our environment and the way we value our relations. Care is about giving up on yourself as you know it.

So in a positive sense, Care is the card of potential transformation that starts from the body as an indicator of possible reconnections. It is a card of pleasure, of unapologetic beauty, of elegance. But the card doesn't stand only for happy experiences: death, decay and loss are also necessarily part of transformation. And only the moment we give up on the duality of life (black/white, night/day, pain/pleasure), and recognize life and death as complementary, are we able to move on. Only then we stop being petrified by the fear of losing our dearest relations and possessions.



Care is created through insistence, through attention to our practices. In a negative sense, this card can also stand for the embrace of conservative notions about Nature, reducing her to a categorical cycle of life and death that doesn't leave space for creativity and enjoyment. It is important to be attentive to this categorical potential of the card, and be wary of its possible consequences: when Care loses its power to transform the situation, it is time to revive and reinvent your practice. Open up the doors and windows of your habits to free the Alien that is lurking inside.

## CONCLUSION OF THE READING:

The answer to the question is one of rewriting our Ethics of togetherness, to not only include our mutual (self-)interest in the collaboration but also the very diverse other affective lines that run through the practice. It is important not to close off the practice from an outside world, to realize that any kind of research is related and resonating with a larger problematic, with the memes of the time. To amplify this ethical embeddedness in the research, possibly saves it from the indulgence of the 'We': of the repetition of authorizes discourses and power positions, of the institutionalization of what it is we come to know through our togetherness. The embrace of the conflict, the risk, the frustration are important tools in activating another sense of togetherness, of collectivity. One that is based on care, on the experience of the body, on the practice that goes beyond dichotomies of good and bad, in and out, relevant or irrelevant. But that insists on paying attention to what is happening IN the situation, what is needed IN that place of sharing and practice. And that at the same time doesn't hide behind naïve preconceptions about the quality of that togetherness. Collectivity has no pre-inscribed positive or negative characteristics. It only has the power to enforce more outspokenly the lines of flight of our collectively produced desires. Be careful what you wish for...

(1) In answer to Mala's question in session VIII of the scores, and in response to the questionnaire by Pierre Rubio we started the workshop General Intellect with.

(2) Bureau d'Espoir is a research bureau that is looking into the possibility of creating new engagements with the concept of hope, both on a political, social, physical and spiritual level. The Bureau started up in 2009 with the simple question: 'why do something rather than nothing?'. Since then the project has evolved into an active work hub for the development of different collaborative research projects, concerned with the import, export and communal development of hope.

Bureau d'Espoir develops different projects that deal with the difficulty of trying to work in a social-economic reality that seems to mold any critical initiatives to fitting a prescribed and limiting format of entertainment or social effectiveness. In such a context it has become hard to believe in the work you produce, or to grant value to your personal choices, since they always seem to be caught in the middle of machinations that are way beyond our powers of transformation or change. But looking at the societal machineries that form and mold our individual motives and drives, it is one thing to look away to try and avoid their influence, but it is another to look 'awry': to produce sense by turning towards the machineries that shape our realities, and try, through a performative over-embrace to turn their effectivity around. To make affective, experientiable, what is effective: in the way we are being produced every day.

In a series of performance practices, developed under the collective title 'Bureau d'Espoir', the office imports some of these 'machines' into a social performative context, and tries to use them as tools for change and for the redefinition of the social body we are part of. For this the Bureau borrows tools for social communication as diverse as spiritual body practices, blindness, critical and political theory, durational isolation, hunger practices and anorexic strategies, and shamanic intoxications.

Bureau d'Espoir wants to lay bare the absurd and affective nonsensical by-products of a global economy and our present global system of institutionalized bureaucracy. Through these practices the Bureau also wants to redefine the highly moralized and capitalized categories of value, as they are employed in the assessment of (artistic) knowledge today. By questioning the academic frameworks of knowledge production from the more vulnerable position of performance practice, the Bureau is developing a critical language for thinking about what we claim is important today, without positioning itself in a clearly defined field of affinities.

With the Tarot of Hope, Bureau d'Espoir proposes a tool for rethinking our relation to the world, using bits and pieces of material that have been gleaned over the working years of the Hope project.

[www.bureaudespoir.org](http://www.bureaudespoir.org)

(3) Excerpt from the intro to the publication 'The Tarot of Hope', Elke Van Campenhout & Amanda Creswell.

# NOTES

# SCORES REVISITED

After the three-month's writing and reading practice documented in the Scores in Process, the researchers looked back to the contents they produced, and reassembled the material. Simultaneously a critical comment, a clarification, a re-positioning and a communication, these texts bring order into the chaos. They step back from the communal project and reclaim the material by situating it once again within the context of the individual concerns of the researcher. Sharpening the argument, and making it resound in a larger context.

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and scenography studies

This is a publication by the a.pass research centre, created from the Scores Writing practice proposed by associate program coordinator Lilia Mestre during the a.pass block January - May 2014

a.pass (advanced performance and scenography studies) is an international research and training centre for artists and theoreticians, based on the principles of self-organization, collaboration and trans-disciplinarity.

Out of the notions of performativity and the performative space, a.pass offers researchers the possibility to develop their skills as independent artistic researchers in a collective learning environment, constructing their individualized curriculum in constant dialogue with the other inhabitants.

a.pass wants to develop, archive and share tools for a qualitative and societally relevant research practice.

[www.apass.be](http://www.apass.be)

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