

SCENES

ELEMENTS

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2017

An exegesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Art & Design
Auckland University of Technology

where the stranger's gesture
resonates in our own

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma of a university or institution of higher learning.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Acknowledgements & Dedication

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mark Jackson: thank you, Mark, for encouraging me to pursue a *practice-led* Phd. I feel privileged and grateful to have had three years doing what I love, and to have had the support of the institution to do so. I thank Dr. Johannes Birringer for his curiosity—a wonderful quality of *wanting to know* more, that has led me to bring more to expression. Dr. Fred Landers I have the privilege of calling a friend, colleague and confidant, and a fellow combatant in the malaise of neoliberalism. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Ruth Irwin for her enthusiastic support in the early stages of this project.

To the Minuses, the members of Minus Theatre group, past and present, I owe the greatest debt of thanks: thank you all! It has been a constant pleasure, source of surprise and of pride, to come to know you through this work: if there is any life in the pages that follow, it is thanks to you. (I should note at this point that I have used pseudonyms for members of Minus throughout the body of the following text.)

I would like, finally, to offer a dedication, in which members of Minus are included, because it is to my family—present and present past. To Jo—and I am sure the Minuses will agree with me, having been the recipients of her love, care and cookery—I dedicate this work, as well as to Millicent and Zachary, the coming generation; to my niece Iris, and to her brilliant father, Dominic—and to my mother and father I dedicate it—with whom we are without, but without whom where would the lot of us be?!—to Ianthe and Anthony Taylor. At last, they would say, you're doing what you ought to be.

Abstract

Minus Theatre: scenes, elements experiments with theatre as the art, method and technique, to explore processes of individuation. It entitles a PhD thesis, undertaken at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT), consisting of artistic research in theatre, conducted from March 2014 with the group called Minus, under the direction of the candidate, over the duration of the candidacy, to achieve completion early 2017 in a written exegesis and theatre production.

In Minus Theatre the primary agency of the actor is no longer the given of theatrical display or dramatic performance because the unity of form of the individual, of the acting physical agency and of the speaking linguistic subject, is subtracted. The human actor is neither the object of the scenographic composition, nor the subject of dramaturgical exposition. In individuation, the individual ceases to be either the locus of judgement or source of coherence marshalling, governing and bringing into harmony and order forces and powers which exceed it. It is these forces and powers, in the tensions of their disharmony and disorder, that become intensive materials and energetic compounds in the process of individuation. These are the focus of the practice, its *scenes*.

From the negation of the unity presumed of the individual, from the minusing of the individual, comes not less but rather more. Where the addition of a mask marks the theatre presupposing human agency of individual actors with the multiplication of characters, performing their dramatic, nondramatic or postdramatic actions in a setting social for being based on the individual, Minus Theatre turns this insight of theatre onto individuation by way of the multiplicity of characters and masks, psychic, social, cultural and linguistic, of which the individual mask is just

one more—and can be gone without. This multiplicity includes the figure, mask or character, which are its representative means and would conventionally integrate it. Comprising asignifying and impersonal belongings, not beings, these are characteristic singularities constitutive of unique points of view—so many as Simondon gives to them the terms *metastability* and *transindividual*, since from their propensity to de-phase, to fall out of phase with one other, flow states, which go beyond them, of becoming and transformation.

The study encounters *elements* as that which supports life. Since they are not granted to all to enjoy or endure but are limited in duration and restricted in the sustenance they deliver, the elements are not primordial or universal conditions but provisional understandings. Such understandings the Anthropocene carries forth in terms of imposing an internal geotemporal limit to human life on the basis of which the prospect of its extinction emerges. The importance to the study of this notion is that it also individuate, as elemental of a causation more profound, and in surpassing the given. Prompting the negation of the individual in the practice is that such an understanding as is offered by extinction lead to new possibilities of life that affirm its provisionality and transitory nature, understood *elementally* in theatre as the ephemeral art *par excellence*.

With a voluntary membership of performers from divers disciplines, including drama, dance and music, each with different levels of skill and experience, rather than teach, moderate and resolve differences, I have in Minus, as director, devised to encourage their expression, in a form of theatre we have, as a group, called a *theatre of individual life*—*theatre* as what expresses and *life* as what exceeds the individual in individuation. From this form of theatre has developed *thief* as a directorial method. The method (*thief*—acronym for *theatre of imitation, expression and f__ery*) opens the way for the imitation of what each member of Minus

perceives and can understand to be part of the multiplicity of asignifying and impersonal forces and energies involved in the process of another performer's individuation. The *f__ery* comes about with the exacerbation of, the introduction of disorder into, the metastable field of material forces and energetic compounds, distributed over the space and temporally, over the duration of the scene, so as to intensify differences and promote the dephasing of individuation.

The use in performance of English and of spoken languages other than English as expressive elements rather than as means of communicative exchange, informing the social construction of the linguistic subject, aids in this intensification. Languages and cultures contributing to the individuation of the group have included Korean, Russian, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese), Congolese (Swahili, Ugandan, Xhosa), Brazilian, Guadalupean (Creole), Mexican, Macedonian, Indian (Hindi), Solomon Islands (Pidgin), UK, US and NZ (Maori, Pakeha).

The study closely follows the development of Minus's theatrical and my own directorial practices, through to our continuing work with and research into a *theatre of elements*, which understands elements to be what supports life in its impermanence, transience and ongoing transformation. This impermanence, transience and ongoing transformation is of individuals, scenes and elements. *Theatre of elements* extends, and contrasts with, the approach of *thief* in a method of assembling cultures and languages, the human, with the inhuman, the inside with what is without it—in the giving of exteriority as such.

Foreword

The following exegesis follows the work I have been doing with Minus Theatre as a director. The first problem is how to have a practice in theatre in which one engages in artistic research adequate to the task of producing a practice-led PhD. The second problem is how to write an exegesis, invoking its etymology in the Greek *ek* (ἐξ), meaning *out of* (hence *ex-*) and *hēgēomai* (ἡγέομαι), first person singular of *to lead* or *to guide* (whence also *hegemony*), led by a practice. Contributing to both problems is the group nature of theatre: the problem of the group serving a task that is the first person singular's; the problem that the first person singular is not the one leading, in writing exegetically, but the one following—being led by work conducted *as part of* a group, whose claim to hegemony, in the role of director, must be mitigated and revised, in the role of exegete. One directs the research by following it. That, at least, is the case here.

The problem of practice has in any case to assume it can be followed. The problem of writing is of how to break the circular logic inscribing in the research its own assumption and the assumptions of its findings. Is research genuinely at stake in the practice? Does the researcher who writes the exegesis double back and plant evidence, bury bones, in order for the practitioner to claim them found there, in practice?

The evidence is too easily falsified that the first problem has been solved:

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a practice engaging in artistic research adequate to the task of producing a PhD. It is too easily resolved in, I would say, conventional terms, the terms in which the exegesis is conventionally articulated. Its points of conventional articulation reinforce the circularity of its logic—an introduction presupposing in what follows the adequation of the practice to the task at hand; a literary review that is a digest of existing research in the field, which would, *a posteriori*, have to preexist it in a logical rearguard action; a methodology falsifying the field as preconstituted, as concrete, on which the practice lays out its grid and diagrammes; a discussion perhaps not presuming *findings* but staking a claim on their origination in the field of practice induced in them in order an original contribution is able to be deduced from them; leading to a conclusion already reached.

While there is nothing wrong with this model it has not suited me here and it has not seemed to me to suit the practice, neither to follow its outline nor to limn its contents. This is because the research in practice, the artistic research, in which Minus Theatre is engaged does not turn on points in succession but on moments of success. It progresses by moments when we are happy; we are happy and can call it success and progress when there is a breakthrough, when a new field of possibilities and potentialities opens out before us for exploration and experimentation—not when we say *This is now theatre!* or when I am able to say and the group is happy to hear me say *This is now research!* We have been happy to say these things as well of course and to hear them said. But this acknowledgement, on the part of those in Minus or of others, recognises an excitement which precedes it—when I can ask *Is this research?* and *Is this even theatre?* It happens regardless of the field

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and regardless of the portion of it staked out by the practice: it is excessive to both.

These moments in the practice of Minus are therefore also moments of inadequation, to both practical and exegetical tasks, as instances of the failure and inadequacy of what we were thinking, were thinking we were doing, and occasions throwing into doubt our notions of the fields in which we considered ourselves to be doing it. This is not to temper the notion of *breakthrough* with *breakdown*, but to suggest a discontinuity of outline and a disarray of contents that *lead*: they lead in directions followed in the practice because they produce excitement, interest and intensity. The research engages these scenes as its materials, is taken up in the pursuit of their energetic encounter. So that the exegesis, in turn engaging the research, starts with the scenes, is taken up in each instance by the energy they release, and follows the breaks between them, accenting the cut to a new scene, cutting to another aspect of Minus.

What is proposed at the level of the practice is that this energy is given freely and instantly expended. It is also proposed that an attention is possible which goes to its increase. Minus finds for a sensitivity in sensation, generosity in reception and a clarity in presentation, that are found in inaction. The properly scenic inaction is in the cut. The actor walks into the scene and is instantly taken up in it. But a moment before she was not, a moment after and he is acting; but it is more specific than that: her place in the scene is not general; his role is distinct and yet is not declared in a purpose, a motivation or a serial intention of subsequence or consequence. What is proposed at the level of the

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practice is that this instant of creation, in which no gap, is, at each instance, an energetic expenditure without return, and without need of recompense. The practice of Minus is to accent—on behalf of an audience, with and without one—the inaction of spontaneous creation. In other words Minus takes as what makes the scene what usually goes unseen in theatre—the actor outside it, before it arises for him or befalls her, before embodiment in character, before action, reaction or interaction are engendered, innately genital, before transfiguration, rapt with the energy to be released and the lust that surges through a body in transubstantiation (Lingis, 1994a:120). The singular moment of presentness affirms once and each time what is spontaneously extemporised in the practice.

A further problem consists in the singularity of the practice-led thesis. Aside from the first problem of research and the second of exegesis, its uniqueness becomes a trap of relativity, in which, caught in a circle (the logical or hermeneutic circle), its claims and elements are relative only to itself, and, nonequivalent, inexchangeable, nonrelatable, untransferable or translatable. The autopoietic process is differentiation and individuation: it succeeds insofar as it becomes individual. Its success can only be measured in its own terms, as to how well or badly it resolves its own problematic, which is that belonging not simply to its field of operations, but to fields it instantiates, to fields of its instantiation, that, in phantasmatic outline ever clearer, are ever more intractable, indefensible and uncapturable or recuperable. They consist in being, their consistency is that informing, the problematic horizon of becoming individual that belongs to the practice, Minus Theatre.

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The problematic bearing the scenes presented in the following has then to do with an individual life and vitality over the duration and course of its development, the development of what is to become characteristic of the proper name, not as its inert properties, but as characteristic inclinations, sensitivities and affects unique to Minus. This problematic background carries also both the question of how to write following Minus's lead and that of Minus bearing up to the task, the question of what artistic research might mean: to which only one answer can be given, whether or not that answer resonates for other practices and other practice-led projects.

The exegesis plots Minus's course of development, over its duration so far, from the point of view of the actual practices engaged. Since my own practices as a director come from heuristics and techniques developed with the group, this has meant distinguishing and itemising the scenes of actual practical engagement and exercise in respect of these heuristics and techniques. By heuristics I mean how we have in Minus been happy to talk about what we are doing, the representations made within the group of its own technical accomplishments, while techniques is said in connection with actual methods and physical processes and elements.

Each scene plotted introduces and stages a distinct encounter between the two, heuristics and techniques, living images of Minus and its living processes. In writing on scenes, the different claims of the practice-as-research and of the practice-led exegesis are resolved in favour of the former to which the latter defers. Because the director is led by it, and because the exegete follows it, practice-as-research puts Minus's actual practice, in the plurality of its heuristics and techniques,

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before the hegemony of either one. The preference is for the lower position: this then is my position in view of Minus's practical hegemony and is the principle, rather than any metaphorical or performative conceit, guiding the division into scenes of Minus's development through the encounter of ways of talking about what we are doing and of ways we do it.

Each heuristic connects to a scene, or carries its scene with it, implicit in it. This is what gives to the moment when for a particular way of doing things is found a way of talking about it its properly *scenic* quality. It allows two things to happen: techniques, methods, heuristics developed with the group can be taken up in directorial practices; and Minus is given the lead in the exegetical work.

The work following explicates the scene that is for each heuristic like a background which it invokes. The selection of scenes reflects those shifts, movements and changes in the practice around which have arisen images, halos, mirages—a whole scenic panoply, necessitated, made needful, at moments of practical difficulty and of tension—provoking and begging description in technical heuristics. The insufficiency of the heuristic device or image means that it then has to be returned to, revised, to find images and devices of increasing sufficiency. So it collects around it significations that mark its significance and importance for the practice. The selection of scenes has been of those most rich and difficult and in large part adheres to the timeline—scenes are largely selected in the order of occurrence of shifts, movements and changes in Minus Theatre, from the establishment of the group in 2014 to the preparation of the coming production, *Visit Me Genius*, scheduled for June 2017.

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Calling forth a background entails of each scene its calling on a literature conforming to a precedence by which the heuristic description is enriched and which it holds in review for the practical purpose of representing and conveying to participants in Minus workshops what it is at important moments that we have *so far* considered them, as ourselves, to be doing. In addition, it entails of each scene that it take up a disposition in view of method of which it is, in the provision of a distinct and particular methodology, the sufficiently proximate discursive image. Furthermore, it entails of each scene that its contribution originate in the encounter with practice adequate images and that these are its *findings*, its specific knowledge and knowhow. Lastly, and summatively, to be properly scenic is to be situated, in space and time, to have a place as well as to take place; it is entailed of each scene that it has a place, from which it takes place: For the first in sequence that deals with *theatre as language*, it is Lima, 1973.

For the next, entitled *walking*, it is Berlin, 1982, at the Max Reinhardt school. This concrete situation is how it enters the work, its backstory. Without it, the heuristic description given of the exercise, *walking*, could not have come to be part of the practice, could not be entailed of the scene, or allow for its uptake in a directorial practice—less a point of origin, than one enabling engagement and participation, enabling also *your* engagement and participation in the scene. *Representation* handles of a bifurcation between the assumption and the possibility of having a practice adequate to the task of producing a practice-led PhD, in which assumption is dispensed with as running before a possibility that has to play catchup in the scene of Minus's establishment, at AUT in 2014.

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The scene of *Mythology of a body* is that of the primal scene of psychoanalysis and of psychological drama, from which it splits, and takes the schizo stroll of Lenz, Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari. The image it finds for is that of a body without organs and a methodology of disorganisation. This is the *Theatre of an other*, that has the Anthropocene as its scene of shame and humiliation, where a trust is engendered in which the individual's own powers of expression are unfolded. *Resonance* takes the scene to be music, languages for music and the piece of theatre of Minus Theatre to have the musical diagramme of a resonating system.

Life Stories 2 appears to return us to the scene from Lima, 1973, of *theatre as language*, but in fact travels in time to account for the time of its diagramme as the extemporisation at stake in Minus's improvisatory practice. The scene of *Essences* is a seventeenth-century masque. The masque belongs to a theatrical lineage alternative to that inherited from nineteenth century psychological drama, and in fact older, having its essential qualities in the “lavishing of resources” and in the “contagious holiness” of convention and ritual spectacle (Wain, 1977:193-5). *Life Stories 3* takes as its scene a workshop held by Minus, with open attendance, on Waiheke Island, in 2016. It pits Minus's alternative theatrical lineage against psychodrama. *Decomposition*, finally, goes to the primal cosmic scene and declares for the chaos of the actor rapt in inaction, bearing the technical heuristic as an ethicopoetic understanding: *nothing you do can be bad; there is no bad decision, no bad action; but you can get better at so acting, by not performing*—Minus Theatre.

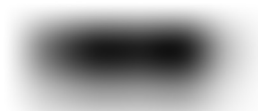


white flower

Chen Chen
Maria Kim
Jeffrey Gane
Tallulah Holly-Massey
Natalia Spreys

director Simon Taylor

MINUS



THEATRE



Life Stories 1

Augusto Boal explains that in 1973 a series of experiments were carried out in the Peruvian cities of Lima and Chiclayo within a universal literacy programme derived from the ideas of the educationalist Paulo Freire, the principles and politics of whose *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) in 1968 Boal followed in his *Teatro do Oprimido* (*Theatre of the Oppressed*) of 1974, from which this account is taken (1985:120-5). The programme was known by its acronym as the ALFIN Plan (Operación Alfabetización Integral). These experiments, undertaken by Estela Linares, were not in theatre but in photography. They serve Boal's project by providing an answer in part to the question of the transfer of power, of the means of artistic or theatrical production, as much as any other, into the hands of the people, the oppressed.

Under Estela Linares's direction cameras were handed out to a group in Lima undergoing the experiment, and the group was taught how to operate them. Boal suggests a more obvious utilisation of photography in a literacy programme might have been for the organisers of the experiment themselves to take photos representing things to be shown and discussed. But this would not be to give the people the means of production, a principle as fundamental for Freire's work in education, from which the ALFIN Plan took its objectives, as for Boal's in theatre. After lessons on how to use the cameras, the organisers proposed to the group the following:

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We are going to ask you some questions. For this purpose we will speak in Spanish. And you must answer us. But you can not speak in Spanish: you must speak in "photography." We ask you things in Spanish, which is a language. You answer us in photography, which is also a language. (Boal, 1985:122-3)

The type of questions asked the group were simple, notes Boal, for example, *Where do you live?* Once the photographic answers, using the language of photography, had been, in those days, developed, every detail was discussed: its subject, in the case of the example question, a place; whether people were present or absent; along with formal and technical details, like the plane of focus and the angle from which the shot was taken (1985:123). Boal records that not one of these details is without special meaning.

A one-room shack is shown. It is shared by a family living in such close "promiscuity", Boal writes, that brothers and sisters engage in sexual acts, "simply as an imitation of their parents." (123) Another photograph shows a river. The Rímac runs through Lima and regularly floods, making life hazardous for those who live along its banks, especially children. It is a source of constant anxiety for the parents, from whose number the photographer comes. How can the photographer work, Boal asks, with this constant worry? (123). One photograph does not show a place or feature of a place. In it a child's face is shown. The group tell the photographer he has not understood the question. But he does not concede his mistake. On the contrary, "Here is my answer," he says. "Here is where I live." (124) In the photo, there is blood on the face, a detail easily missed. The photographer relates the series of events leading him to choose his subject.

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Like many in this part of Lima, the child lives on the banks of the Rímac, which, not only prone to flooding, is also infested with rats. Dogs are kept by the families here, to eat the rats. But recently, before the photo was taken, a mange epidemic caused the city dog-catchers to be called in. They took away the dogs. The parents of the child in the photo used to go to work during the day, leaving the child in the care of the family's dog, before it was removed. "A few days ago," explains the photographer, "when you asked me where I lived, the rats had come while the child was sleeping and had eaten part of his nose." (Boal, 1985:124) "I live," he concludes, "in a place where things like this still happen." (124)

Minus Theatre introduced the telling of life stories in the *language of theatre*. For this is the lesson, apart from extracting a political morality at every point, that Boal draws from the experiments of Linares. He writes: "The means for producing a photograph are embodied in the camera, which is relatively easy to handle, but the means of producing theater are made up of man himself, obviously more difficult to manage." (1985:125) He continues that the *first word* of theatrical production, its primary means and main source of *sound and movement*, comes from a vocabulary of the body: like photography, theatre can also be a language (125). But for Boal, it does not suffice simply to have a body to presume one already possesses innately or inchoately this language, which comes from the body, that constitutes the means of production of theatre. The body has been alienated by its use, usages and social role. It is first the body of a peasant, a Catholic cardinal, an artist, a soldier or a landowner.

Teaching the language of theatre begins in a *theatre of the oppressed* with knowing the body, "its limitations and possibilities, its social distortions and possibilities of rehabilitation." (Boal, 1985:126) But it is

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important in teaching this language not to alienate those who may have no experience of theatre, or who may think of it in terms more familiar to them from film and television, with their “emphasis on sentimentality”, as Boal writes (127). Even if the teacher or educator leading a group comes from the same cultural background and socioeconomic circumstance, the role of teacher, as of director, is itself a potential source of alienation. The teacher or educator should not start, therefore, from the imposition of therapeutic or theatrical techniques designed to re-educate participants or *cure* them of acquired habits (127). Such methods are always coercive and always alienating. Rather, the members of a group should start to learn through games and exercises from what is least alien to them—their own bodies (127).

Learning to know the body is the first stage. The knowledge of the body with which Boal seeks to overcome “muscular alienation” is not aimed, however, at eradicating or weakening its hold, the hold of what might also be called *body memory*, but at raising it to the level of consciousness (128). The aim is consciousness of the specific points on the body at which each individual is governed, has been, and has marshalled itself, to do the tasks it is set (128). The second stage in acquiring what may be called *body literacy*, upon gaining this knowledge of a vocabulary of the body, is in learning how to make the known body expressive, articulating it in ways that are unfamiliar and that break with “common and habitual forms of expression” (126).

It is not until the third stage, called *theatre as language*, that one begins the practice of theatre, as a “living and *present*” language, “not as a finished product displaying images from the past” (1985:126). At the end of the chapter, Boal's notes include a chart of languages, among them,

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spoken-written languages, as well as artistic languages, music, painting and cinema. The chart defines theatre to be the “*Sum of all imaginable languages: words, colors, forms, movements, sounds, etc.*” (156) But beyond this stage, of the practice of theatre as summative and living language, there is yet a fourth stage in Boal's pedagogical approach. It is that of *theatre as discourse*, where the practitioner, the “spectator-actor” as Boal says, having been provided with the means of production, chooses what to make, and what to show, according to what themes and actions demand to be discussed and to be represented (126). Boal lists seven forms of theatre as discourse, including *Invisible theatre* (126). *Forum theatre*, for which Boal is also well-known, appears as a *third degree* of *theatre as language*, in which “spectators intervene directly in the dramatic action and act” (126). They become thereby *spectator-actors* of an oppressed, of an audience, freed to act, whom Jacques Rancière frees, once again, to spectate (2009).

Photography as a language—a shack, a river in Peru, the child's face—seems to go further than universal literacy. Just as the question, Boalian in inspiration, in Minus Theatre, each time it is asked, produces something more like an idiolect than a language: *Using theatre as a language, and in four minutes, can you perform for us the story of your life?* I have put this question, with variations, as a proposition—*You have four minutes in which, using theatre as a language, to give us the story of your life*—to each new member of Minus Theatre at their first workshop with the group.

When I asked Xiaohui, who joined Minus in early 2014, before the group's first performance in front of an audience, *White Flower*, on June 13th of that year, to perform the story of her life, after a moment's reflection, she

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walked forward, step by carefully considered step, away from where the group stood, at one end of the studio, watching her. Every step forward took her out into a space which is predominantly black, its sound dampened by heavy black drapes, under harsh fluorescent lights. She became a small figure in the black volume of vibrating light, like a figure in a desert. She kept to the left of the studio. Following its perimeter, she walked in a straight line until she reached a point perhaps 10 metres away. She turned to her right. Directing her gaze to the path in front of her, with intense concentration, at the same steady and slow pace, she crossed to the opposite side. Turning to her right, she approached us. At the end of the studio where we stood, the only part of the room in semi-shadow, she turned again to her right, crossing in front of us. Before reaching her previous path, no more than a metre from it, once more she turned right and took a line that ran parallel with it. Before meeting the path furthest from us crossing the space, no more than a metre from it, again she directed her movement into a turn. She walked in a straight line and, no more than a metre from the path that brought her towards us, she turned again. She crossed in front of us, and, following the same pattern, walked inside, by no more than a metre, the line she had previously taken. How long this took, I do not know. The time-frame of four minutes is, in any case, somewhat arbitrary, and, more suggestive than meaningful, part of the ritual framing the proposition.

The path Xiaohui took described a square, spiralling into another square, leading in to another square inside it, with, inside it, another square, each smaller than the last. She was like a figure in the Peruvian desert, on its high plateau, following the pattern of the Nazca Lines, set down to be walked in trance, aeons before. At the centre of the square spiral, the form's geometrical regression having reached its point of terminus, she

Life Stories 1

lifted her gaze for the first time away from her task, her life story, and came and joined us.

She explained, although she was not called on to do so, her performance as follows: *In life, we are always looking for something. This is the meaning of the walking. But we never find it. We look for something everywhere. But in the end we never find it.*

At the end, I come out and join the audience, because I think, in life, we are both spectator and actor.

The theatre is a weapon, writes Boal, for the revolution, in the hands of the oppressed (1985:122). It is language, as Linares's experiments show, that effects the transfer of its means of production into their hands. For Minus, theatre is minus a weapon.



walking

I.

You arrive at the workshop a few minutes before 6pm. I show you through to the Green Room, with green sofas and two flat-screen monitors affixed to the wall. I make a joke, to put you at your ease, of how well-appointed the facilities are: the monitors, without cameras to see or mics to hear what is happening in the studio, no matter how impressive are merely decorative. An ambulatory leads past the green room door to two doors marked Dressing Room One and Dressing Room Two, which I show you, since there is a toilet in each, in a wet-room, with a shower, wheel-chair accessible, according to regulation. I indicate a door opposite as the studio where we will be working.

Bill is there already. He seems friendly. He only *seems* friendly, I say, introducing him as someone with whom I have worked in theatre for many years. "Many. Some would say *too* many!" he reinforces. We laugh. Three young Chinese women sit on in a row on the other green sofa: Xiaohui, Xiaolian and May. Xiaohui is a film-maker, I say. Xiaolian is a trouble-maker. May is an English name. May says, "Pleased to meet you." Xiaolian repeats her with mock formality and offers her hand, which you have no choice but to take.

walking

I am called away briefly, since the doors—plural, as if we have to pass through an airlock—are security-card-entry, to let in Rose and Gabe, the former a trained actress, the latter a trained musician, brought in under false pretences, I say—both of them. You ask where they are from and they tell you, with the unnecessary specificity of locals, that they may presently live in Auckland, but are not originally from here. Mancio arrives: a great actor from Brazil, I say. “Not *really*!” he laughs.

We sit together as if expecting more arrivals and I ask you some questions: where you heard about Minus; what you do; what your interest is in what we do, even though you have no idea what we do. “That’s all right,” Bill puts in. “Nor do we!” I start to take my shoes off, telling you I prefer to work in bare feet, but others wear socks; that it is up to you, but it is better not to wear shoes; and the floors in the studio are good, although they are not necessarily always clean. Perhaps you ask, *What do you mean* work? I answer hopefully that will become clear.

Ushered through into the studio, you are struck by the size of the space. I explain that it was designed both for performance and sound-recording, hence the acoustic baffles around the walls and a control room behind glass set high at one end. It also has lighting bars, controlled independently by electric winches, but, as you see, no luminaires. We have to work under the fluorescents, an unpleasantness for which the size and quality of the studio entirely compensates.

You notice a change of mood. The talk and laughter has died down. The group, having dispersed over the space, its members face inward, in an uneven circle, waiting. Something is supposed to happen. After a pause, in which the anticipation has everything to do with the familiarity to the

walking

group of what it is, I ask the group to start walking. What we do now, I say, is walk. Walk, I say, for yourself.

This is your walk. You can do with it what you want, fast or slow, changing directions, changing speeds. It is an opportunity for you to direct your awareness onto yourself. Take the time to become aware of what perhaps you push aside because of more pressing demands from outside. Allow how your body feels to emerge as you walk, in your walk. Give the time, as you walk and in your walk, to letting emerge what you feel. It is your walk to do with as you want. Is it boring? Is it interesting? It is your walk.

If it is interesting, make it less interesting. If it is boring, make it more boring. Add less and less. Take more away. If the slowness is interesting, take it away. If you are scuffing or dragging your feet, if the scuffing or dragging is interesting, take it away. If the speed is interesting, change it. If the speed is interesting, or the change in speed, remove it. Remove interest from your walk, all interest. Remove your interest from changing directions. Change directions without interest, not even in when you have to because you've reached the side of the room. Turn, when you've reached the side of the room, without any interest. Change without interest. Choose your direction without interest. Choose again.

Repeat the choice, with less and less interest, until it does not matter where you go. Choose your pace without interest, change it without interest in either going faster or slower. Lose all interest in walking. Lose all interest in even placing one foot in front of another. Make less and less matter. Take it all away. Still, walk.

walking

Still, you may notice things: the floor on which you walk; variations in it, variations in how it supports you, variations in its surface; where the panels, that make it up, meet; where the screws are countersunk which hold it down; where a thin layer of dust or dirt, changing its surface quality, makes it more or less slippery; or where a particle or bit of rubbish, or tape, interrupts it; where light reflects or is absorbed across the floor, leading it in some places to look or feel less solid, more liquid; where the shadows fall that make it seem less secure; and where there are objects which project out onto it, chairs, or curtains, other things, mounted on the wall, or hanging down, that change the quality of the floor of extending in front, behind, and on either side of you. Notice where they interrupt your walk, interrupting the quality of support the floor lends to your movement, as you walk. Notice every obstruction and, whether in front, behind, on either side of you, where it is, so that, without looking to see, you know how far the floor will support you, walking.

Notice the walls that describe the limits to the space and the materials of which they are made. You may touch anything. Notice the felt panels set into the walls and the slots in the sound baffles; where the surfaces are hard, where soft, where broken; the curtains, the weight of them, the feel of them; where the exits are; the plastic chairs. Go anywhere.

Use your voice to find out how the different parts of the room sound, behind the curtains, and above. Use your voice to reach where you can not, and listen. The fluoros have a distinct frequency. The air-conditioning ducts hum. The lighting bars hang. Hear your voice bounce off the various textures and surfaces, in the ceiling. Can you reach, with your voice, from one end of the room to the other? Hear your

walking

voice come back at you, off the metal of the ducts in the ceiling, off the floor, in the door cavities. You do not have to be loud, you hear me whisper, behind a curtain. You can talk softly to find out how the parts of the room sound.

Notice the light, where there are shadows, because it is not consistent. Notice how it gives the room distinct spaces. One end of the room is darker. Feel the light in the centre and where it falls away.

Perhaps there are parts of the room you have been avoiding. Go there now. If there is a single square inch of the room you have not been in, go there now.

Finally, some would say, the most important elements in the room—notice the people. From where you are now, see where they are and how they are moving; how fast or slow, in what direction. Use your eyes to see where everyone is. Make eye contact with each person you pass.

Your eyes meet mine, as I too, pass among the members of the group. You may be used to this sort of thing, used to making eye-contact with a group of people, but there is a degree of intimacy with the individual with whom your eyes make contact that cannot help but bring out a self-consciousness, however slight. Perhaps you smile, as you see some of the group here doing when they share that moment, in mutual acknowledgement, as if at the tiniest shock, no more than a spark, a small vibration of embarrassment, quickly buried, moving past the other.

If you keep seeing the same people, or if you are avoiding someone, break the pattern. Become aware of how each person is moving, where they are

walking

moving. Start to form a map or a diagramme of where everyone is in the room, whether in front, behind you, or to either side. The best way to get a sense of how they move, where they are, is to pass close to them. Use your eyes, but start to use your other senses to form an idea of where, at any point, each one might be: listen; more importantly, use your extra senses. Feel, try to feel, the movement, the speed, the path of each person in the room, so that you know, without turning around, who is behind you, or to either side, and where they are going; where and whether they change directions. Feel the current of each person as they pass.

Go faster. Move around the outside of the room, cutting through the middle. Change directions, keep on cutting through—faster. Keep a sense of where people are so that you can cut through the middle of the room without colliding—faster. Listen, feel where everyone is. If you try to see it will not be fast enough. You can go faster. Maintain a direct line through the room so that you are not swerving or having to change directions. Cut straight through the middle—faster. Go as fast as you can.

You hear me call out, as we all run, some skidding in their socks, that we can go even faster. Bodies hurtle past. Some crash. Quick politenesses take place and laughter. I want you to go, I think you can go, faster. People bounce off the walls, or disappear for a second into the blacks, the drapes, before bouncing back out and sprinting through the middle, without time to calculate who they might hit. You do not want to crash, but you do, your arms come up defensively. Perhaps you have to help somebody up you have knocked down. Perhaps you have to be helped up before you are trampled. Once you are up, you are running again, and you find that you are able to plot a path, as you run, straight through the

walking

centre of the room. You find you are capable of mapping the moving bodies not according to an energy summed up, however dynamically, in the group but according to the differences of the bodies in their different uptakes of fast-as-you-can and on their different trajectories: Gabe runs like this; Bill swerves like this; May pads through; Rose sprints, taking a second before she throws herself back in; Xiaolian runs with complete abandon.

We slow down to a walk again, collecting our breath. Introduce yourself, I say, in your first language, to the next person you pass. Perhaps you wonder that I would use the term *first language*. You ask if it matters what language you use. René, who was with the group, from Congo, would oscillate between languages, sometimes speaking in one of the languages of Uganda, sometimes French, sometimes Xhosa. Chara, although resident in New Zealand, and fluent in French as well, would choose her native Creole, that of Guadelupe. Xiaohui introduces herself to you in Mandarin. Mancio speaks in Brazilian Portuguese. May uses her Chinese name when she greets you in the Cantonese of Shanghai, which is quite distinct from the Cantonese of Xiaolian. Gabe, Bill and I introduce ourselves in accented English. Rose, because she can, chooses French.

Conversations break out between people as they meet, as if it has been longer than a week since the last Minus workshop. You are struck, maybe, or have been earlier, by how well this disparate group, ranging in ages, from late teens to mid-sixties, and in cultures and ethnicities, seems to get along, when we are, to crib the title of one of Alphonso Lingis's books, a community of those who have nothing in common (1994). The next time you pass someone, I say, trying to get everyone's attention, greet them with *their* name. Acknowledging this places you at a disadvantage, I ask

walking

that the other volunteer it if you do not recall a name.

You find out that Rose trained in acting at the national drama school, Toi Whakaari, and that she has recently been a member of the Pop-Up Globe's full-time company presenting Shakespeare. Gabe tells you how, having been asked to join us as musician and composer for performances as part of the *Textured Passages* exhibition at St. Paul St. Gallery, in September 2014, he found himself acting with the group when the musical part was ditched of *Boneseed*, in early 2015, and, as he found it was something he could do, and enjoyed it, he continued. You ask about Xiaohui's work in film, part of her PhD practice, and Mancio tells you about the little theatre group he performed with in Brazil, that, although popular, kept getting in trouble with the officials for appearing nude.

One more thing I ask we do before moving on: walking again around the room, I would like one person to pick up from me after I have finished speaking and carry on, in their first language; and when they have stopped, for another voice to pick up the thread, carry it on; and so on, one after another, to weave the voices together, like, I say, a braided river. For this listening is as important as speaking, if not more important, to listen to where, at which point, your voice can cross the stream of the other voice, the other voices, picking up on its energy, and taking it further, until it too is joined by another voice, which forks from it and carries it downstream. Sensitivity, listening to when and where your voice can come in, is necessary, as well as generosity, allowing space for the other voice and voices to enter. What you say does not matter as much as how it sounds, how it flows from the voice it follows.

Rose begins in a strong, trained voice. Xiaohui comes in at a level barely

walking

over a whisper. After a pause, Bill's staccato English takes over, then Mancio's fluent Brazilian Portuguese breaks in with a flood of vocal images, from which Xiaolian takes a single strand, and, as if threading it around outlying rocks, carries it downstream, where perhaps you bring your voice into the flow. Other voices enter and withdraw, some, overlapping, are given another part, a deeper current of bass notes, or, above, vocalisations that border on song, in overtones. Sometimes the rhythm pulses, with breath, at others, it fails and breaks down. When it gets to being at its most musical, after some time, the sound becomes attenuated. It fades away. Everyone stops walking, looks to one another, as if to discover where it went, the vocal thread, and laughter bursts out, as if in punctuation or in explanation.

II.

In 2012, at a conference called to address the titular question, of *How Performance Thinks*, Esa Kirkkopelto presented a paper entitled “An Actor Never Thinks with Elements Smaller Than a World”. The paper sets out a model based on a long term research project in actor training. Run by its author at the Theatre Academy Helsinki from 2008, the project repositions the actor at the centre of the decision-making process in dramaturgical and scenographic composition. It thus displaces the roles of director, dramaturg, playwright, designer, or stage manager as that, and those, with creative jurisdiction *outside* the performance, rehearsal or workshop. Having committed to what Kirkkopelto names an “archi-ethics of performance” (127), the principle of which devolves on a “matter of distributing, using of *sharing*, power” (123), the answer the paper proposes to *How Performance Thinks* is that the actor thinks, is the

walking

one doing the thinking. It is not a body from without, an observer who *thinks*, but no other than the performer in performance.

Even before saying it rests with the actor or performer, or determining how it might function if it does, this is to give performance a certain power of thinking. It is to affirm a power of thought belonging to performance as noncontingent on agencies external to it, as not being contingent, for instance, on a written text or a plan, plot or concept preceding it or proceeding from it. It is to assert that this is what performance does, it thinks, before apportioning its power, ethically, archi-ethically or otherwise.

In their brief introduction to the volume collecting the conference papers from which Kirkkopelto's comes, conveners Laura Cull, John Mullarkey and Helen Julia Minors put a number of questions to the assumption that performance thinks, which is at base a provocation to engage the performances of conferees rather than the proposition they are being called on, in their different ways, to stage (2012). Among the questions, they ask whether to "extend or democratize" a conception of 'thought', appropriating it to performance, renders the term meaningless and, with particular reference to practice-as-research, about what kind of contribution performance can make to knowledge (4-5). The lines being blurred here, demarcating the boundaries between knowledge, thought and practice, I would suggest, are not so much those supposed to have been brought to maximum visibility, not to say clarity, under the governing optic of the conference. But, given its bifocalism, with one eye on philosophy, one on performance, they are rather the lines before, irresolvable in parallax at such close range, belonging to the impulse to map out the singular territory the conveners write is "the emerging

walking

sub-field of 'Performance Philosophy'" (4), as the frame or outline in which it is posited.

The impulse framing the practical and philosophical questions at stake, limning the outline that answers are expected to fill, I can find no better expressed than in the parting wish of an email forwarded to me yesterday from someone I did not know: "find ways to bind your ethics to your politics." (B. Spatz, personal communication, 28 September, 2016) Kirkkopelto's paper does not break with the consensus that draws its politics from the framework of ethical commitments, limiting exploration of *How Performance Thinks*, philosophically and practically, to a consensual politics, closing the circuit of common acceptance and affordance. The ethical undertaking, that there ought to be a redistribution of power relations in theatre, is not only taken for granted but also becomes determinative at a philosophical level of who thinks in the thinking of performance. The ethical commitment, by way of a political intervention in the traditional roles of theatre, becomes a philosophical commitment to a reversal of the idea that because the performer thinks, the performance thinks: because performance thinks, it says, it *ought to be* the performer or the actor who is doing the thinking.

At a practical level, Kirkkopelto's model offers an account of how the actor thinks in performance. This account itself is a thinking of performance, in a kind of mimetic recovery or recapitulation. Through the technical vocabulary developed, there is a recursivity which imposes itself. Each term alternates with the other, from account to model, then from model to account; from thinking to performance, then back around to thinking. It is a cycle. The cycle begins with *attuning*, which is a pathic equalisation of the disparate forces all the performers bring. Attuning

walking

does not denote their unification in an ensemble, group or company. It rather opens a *sensory field*, which is that *outside* with which each participant, singly, enters into relation, as a shared experience, feeling or affect. It is in the relation each enters into with the sensory field that attunement, equalisation, takes place.

Attuning must take place, it is “essential” writes Kirkkopelto, for the sake of mediation, which he terms *transition*, or, in Finnish, *välinen* (2012: 126). The Finnish bears further connotations of *being in-between*, as contained in the Latin source of the word *interest*, *inter-esse*, literally *between-being*, that make it worth retaining and returning to in later sections. Suffice it to say at this point, it is where the interest lies, in Kirkkopelto's account and theoretical model. It is also what enables the cyclic transition from one term to the other, just as it effectively locates the scenographic and dramaturgical *thinking* that the performer does in performance. To alter the diagramme provided by Kirkkopelto (“attuning > in-between > state of being” (125)), this might be shown in the following form:

attuning > (thinking) > performance

Note that *thinking* happens in the gap. Each attunement is in preparation for what breaks it, for what introduces false intervals and disharmony and, even, *dissensus*, since it breaks from the consensus whereby all actors, all performers, all potential *thinkers*, were brought into relation with the same sensory field. You might consider the latter the frame or outline of a common knowledge, despite and because of the fact that it is only entered into upon being opened up, upon becoming a field of interest. The diagramme in recursion would look like this:

walking

performance > attuning > (thinking) > performance

Or, harkening back to questions around the possible contribution of practice-as-research to knowledge, with an equivalence and re-cycling of terms:

**practice > knowledge > (thought/research) > practice
> knowledge ...**

III.

Had you attended an earlier workshop, the walking would not have been codified or formalised in the way it was. It has assumed the form of an attunement it takes here through an elaboration and consolidation of three basic sensory fields. The first is that of interiority, of *walking solo* or *for oneself*, which in this instance became caught up with boredom, in a progressive emptying out of affective interest. I have often moved in the opposite direction, to provoke the most physically dynamic interest, or to engage intense psychic and affective attention. Participants have been asked to imagine an interior landscape, and, projecting it onto their surroundings, physically to traverse it. Such landscapes have included precipices, fields of broken glass, surfaces slippery for the feet, like river rocks, or for the mind to grasp, like living cartilage or a shark's back. Alternatively, and in line with this occasion, I have asked participants to go deeply into their own walk, to contemplate it in each of its gestural and functional elements, to look at it in detail, to find out what makes it unique and theirs alone. I have then suggested they either exaggerate

walking

each of its particular details in turn or else empty it of personal idiosyncracies, to wind up with an empty walk, a walk that could be anybody's whatsoever.

The second sensory field opened up to you, by *walking in the room*, was only notionally an outside with respect to the first. It too was constituted in the relations you and each of the members of the group formed with it. It too has a reality that is at a minimum twofold: the room, the studio, and the objects in it, in all their pressing and persistent immediacy to sensory experience and empirical verification; and, in addition, the room you attended to, one constituted as field in relational consistency, that is, in and by the singular relations you brought to it, of you *inside it*. The exteriority of the studio unfolds into relations of interiority, relating back to or pointing at you, and relations with external directions, indicated for example by the sound of your voice projected at a far wall or the smell, taste or touch of the air-conditioned air. This part of the walking attunes you to the room as a space with limits and obstacles useful to know about and to be able to negotiate. But it also goes to an attunement of your physical and psychic resources, powers of movement, and a moving perception and cognition, with the site's tectonic resources, of reflection, deflection, absorption of surfaces and reticulation of coordinated points. It opens up a texture and structure with which you may compose and recompose your own—it opens the field to composition and to the prospect of the sort of scenographic and dramaturgical thinking and decision-making which are by rights, for Kirkkopelto, the actor's, the performer's.

As with each of these sensory fields, it prepares you for another kind of action, which is why walking is an *exercise*: it prepares you for what

walking

breaks it, for what disorders attunement, which I would like to contrast with *composition*, and putative ethico-political rights thereto, by calling *decomposition*. I introduce this concept here which I will be dealing with at length in later sections. A few more words are necessary, however, in light of how both *välinen* (*in-between*) and *decomposition* break attunement. The gap the former introduces, where Kirkkopelto locates thinking, and the breakdown or breakup, that remains to be seen, of the latter, I would prefer to claim the ethical, political commitment, not to say philosophical interest, of the present work. This would run contrary to the majority view that has been loosely sketched insofar as it is represented in the conference proceedings of *How Performance Thinks* (Minors, 2012), where an ethics and politics derived from classical humanism form an often unacknowledged framework and unquestioned horizon for Performance Studies and its subfield Performance Philosophy. The time I am expending with the walking exercise is time spent with a directorial practice that breaks, as does attunement, when what follows it follows.

To continue this thought of the unreconstructed directorial role imposing instruction from the outside, the at-minimum twofold sensory field of the room is, alike with its realities, by the director able in the exercise—always an exercise of power—to be constructed and populated with its unrealities, its irrealties. Having attended to usefully enumerating the obstacles to free movement and to circumscribing its outside limits in the space designated for performance, I have on other occasions extended that exploration of the room to imaginary things, including walls, doors, countrysides and cityscapes. Participants have been asked to fill the empty space with imaginary objects and scenery, with more and more, to reach the point where they can no longer move, like longterm hoarders. This imaginary contents is of as much interest to the group as its actual

walking

surroundings. In the same way, each performer projecting an internal landscape, which imagined is then traversed, generates as much interest, for some more, for some less, as introspection to ascertain actual mood or feeling.

The sensory field is therefore not simply a container for the movement of attuning. It is also not simply a construct imposed by the director. It is rather the product of the relations into which each participant enters with it. These relations are between inside and outside, are both subjective and objective. In them, the imaginary conditions of production of the sensory field are connected to its actual conditions of production. Such conditions include relations of power. Since it is a manifold, existent on the same level as both what it is conditioned by and what it conditions, a given sensory field might be said to be of imaginary, *transcendental*, as much as of empirical provenance.

The third sensory field, that of *walking with others*, took its coordinates from the presence of others in the room, with whom you were asked to enter into different kinds of relation, from physical, through social, signalled by the attribution of names, to cultural and linguistic relations, marked by the use of different languages by the group, and finally sonorous. Although I might have said earlier some would say people are the most important elements in the room, that does not make this the most important attunement. It is in fact of equal importance to discover the imaginative or actual resources presented to you by the room with which you can enter into composition as it is to find those in the other people with which you can enter into composition. Each sensory field has already so far as much involved the forming of social, linguistic, cultural and sonorous connections as this.

walking

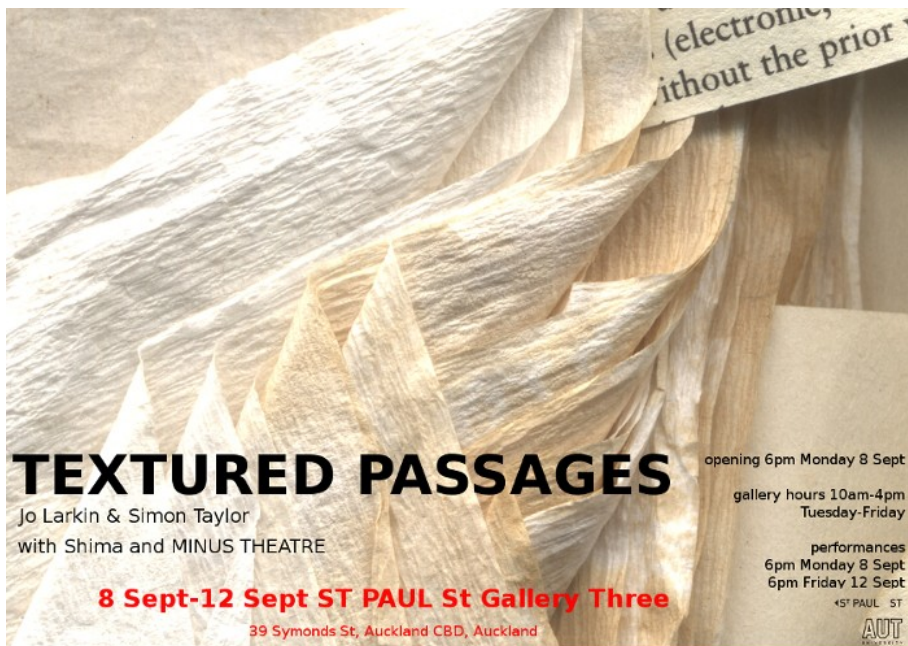
You have made links from the outset to the words I have spoken through language, and, possibly languages, sonorous links with your breath, your voice, with your own interior society and, through the imaginative act of drawing yourself away from its interests, becoming bored, perhaps other attunements occurred to you, pre-social connections back to the primitive satiation of a body walking without purpose, perhaps. You caught yourself walking, for no more than an instant, perhaps, purely for walking's sake. Catching yourself, the instant over, you recalled that instant as one in which any sense you were engaged in an exercise had been lost, one in which you forgot. Perhaps it was for you the most important thing that happened.

It is this forgetting that, in its original instigation, the exercise was, it seemed, intended to promote. It went on for up to four hours. Its purpose was never explained, which always seemed to me the act of a singular despotism I wondered whether was justifiable or forgiveable on the basis of its results. I first encountered it during my father's internship at what had been the Max-Rheinhardt-Schule für Schauspiel in Berlin, which had, by 1982, when I visited, become the Hochschule der Künste. It is now, since 2001, no longer school or high school but a University of the Arts, allegedly the largest in Europe.

In those days four hours walking in a workshop or rehearsal did not seem the height of profligacy, not in the Bundesrepublik (1949-1990), at least, where state subvention of a theatre could run as high as 90%, and six months was an acceptable period for rehearsal, that might sometimes be extended. However, importing the exercise back into New Zealand, where the standard rehearsal time for a professional production was three weeks, and government sponsorship rarely rose above 50%, certain

walking

concessions, as if to trade, had to be made. Budgetary constraints, after all, as I heard an unnamed voice on radio yesterday declare, both earnestly and defensively, are a way of life.



TEXTURED PASSAGES

Jo Larkin & Simon Taylor
with Shima and MINUS THEATRE

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representation

The first Minus Theatre Research Group workshop was held 25th March 2014, a Tuesday. Although scheduled from 1pm to 5pm, it took less than two hours. I presented the three friends who had come in a show of support with a series of propositions or theses which I said it would be the task of the practice and practices engaged by Minus to demolish or to decompose. Each thesis, paired playfully with its antithesis, expressed an assumption about theatre's current conditions of possibility in New Zealand, culminating at the start in the pair: Theatre cannot happen in New Zealand—it is impossible / Only New Zealand theatre can happen in New Zealand—theatre's sole condition of possibility is that it is somehow representative. Constraining theatre to endemicity as a condition of its possibility, to the representation of a recognisable national identity, is both an exaggeration and a reduction, as are all the theses. They are in fact theatrical exaggerations, throwing into relief certain facets of what is represented in order for it to be seen in, to catch, an ironic light.

It is as a result of applying reductive caricatures, as a result of their theatricality, that the theses I presented to a few sympathetic friends do not *play*, as we found out at this first workshop. They do not *carry over*, due to the weight of theatrical irony, and, because they are not fun or funny, like certain stand-up comic routines, they die. As positions to begin from, either affirming, for the thesis, or opposing, for the antithesis, in practice they are untenable, unavowable and inert. But they do retain a

representation

playfulness on paper, as well as indicating what, at the start of its journey, Minus left behind, that leads me to include them here.

<i>I.i</i> Theatre cannot happen in New Zealand	<i>I.ii</i> Only New Zealand theatre can happen in New Zealand <i>(telling our own stories in our own words)</i>
<i>II.iii</i> Theatre is not doing plays, theatre is not literature	<i>II.iv</i> Theatre is a bastard or a mongrel art, that encompasses literature, includes the visual and plastic arts, and the vital arts, as well as music, and crosses various diverse performance disciplines, acting, drama, physical theatre, dance and mime: it is an irreducible multiplicity
<i>III.v</i> Theatre is an art form in itself; theatre should be publicly funded: the theatre artist should not subsidise his or her own art form	<i>III.vi</i> Theatre is not an art form; society in general should not bear financial loss from unpopular endeavour: theatre should pay for itself
<i>IV.vii</i> Theatre is critical— politically and socially	<i>IV.viii</i> Theatre is entertainment <i>(bums on seats)</i>
<i>V.ix</i> Theatre is an egalitarian art form, has been the expressive means for those without means and has historically embraced misfits, the disaffected, and, in particular, erotic minorities <i>(the criminal element)</i>	<i>V.x</i> Theatre is an élitist art form; it is for the white middle class: it is a colonial art form <i>(Rule Britannia!)</i>

representation

<p style="text-align: center;">VI.xi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Theatres embody and preserve cultural memory <i>(in order to know where we are going, we must know where we have been)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">VI.xii</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Theatres are buildings used for theatre, which as an ephemeral art form, comes and goes, changes and grows</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">VII.xiii</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Theatre and theatre practices change out of artistic necessity <i>(only the work which is necessary is worth doing)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">VII.xiv</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Each new generation makes the theatre anew according to its needs <i>(the best thing for opera would be to burn down the opera houses)</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">VIII.xv</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A new production even of an old play has a responsibility to be new and to say something new <i>(otherwise, why bother?)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">VIII.xvi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A production of a play must respect the playwright's intentions and the historical period and context in which the play was written</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IX.xvii</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The author in theatre, whose intentions are either partially or completely realised in production, is the <i>company</i>; while the author of the play remains the playwright: there is no necessary connection between the play and the production in content or in form (a playwright is like a wheelwright, by whom the play is wrought)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">IX.xviii</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The director in theatre is the author, or <i>auteur</i>: an autocratic egoist and, often, a sadist, who treats actors like children and actresses like dogs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">X.ix</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Actors need directors</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">X.xx</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Actors do not need directors; theatre does not even need actors</p>

It is an added irony, since this would be the term Minus and its practices arced back to, that the task I set myself as a researcher in the medium of theatre at the outset was already in the name of a *decomposition*. But by

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decomposition was meant here radical critique. It was supposed to involve the examination, analysis, and undoing of each in a series of assumptions on which composition in theatre is based, however ludic, or ludicrously inaccurate, the presentation of each is considered. Decomposition was understood as a practice of depriving theatrical composition of its unacknowledged bases in theory, not as a break or interval interrupting composition, and not as a fracture or breakdown denoting structural failure, which risked perhaps even the complete catastrophe that would ensue. It was intended, through a practice of deprivation, *minusing*, its theoretical dependence, to research and, in practice, to actuate new conditions of possibility for theatre. In short, decomposition was supposed to carry out a Nietzschean critique such as that Deleuze turns on representation in *Difference and Repetition* (2004).

The critique of representation does three things, writes Joe Hughes in a commentary on *Difference and Repetition*: 1) nothing escapes it as it “rejoices in the annihilation of representation”; 2) it is positive, nonetheless, for bringing forth or revealing something new; and, at the same time as it undoes or decomposes, 3) it offers an account, in a genesis or genealogy, of how representation is made, composed and comes to be (2009:2-3). As it is used by Deleuze, a critique is radical when it goes all the way to the roots of the given, where it is tasked with destruction and negation as much as creation. At root, representation is found by Deleuze's critique to have latency rather in difference than in the same, a finding that forecloses on the identity presumed under representation in favour of *repetition*, which it also finds to have a latent subject in difference: what is repeated is no longer repetition of the same; repetition is no longer of the identical, of identity or the self-same, but of difference. What is thus disclosed is that what is repeated is not identical with itself,

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and it must also be allowed, since repetition itself must be of difference, that repetition be *not* of itself. Repetition's *of itself* and *not of itself* paradoxically closes the difference between representation, what is represented and what it represents. Not only this, but the difference made by the negation, *not of itself*, breaks down to its primary elements, which are positive differences. The negative case or the opposing scenario becomes no more nor less than a difference among other differences: negation, as such, takes place as positively as any other in its position of difference.

Although playful, inasmuch as they do not break with it, the theses presented above continue representation. Inasmuch as they intend a critique, albeit in an ironic dialectic, of theatre in a New Zealand context as a means of representing, they perpetuate this operation. Inasmuch as they assume the representation of a narrow set of historic, political, economic, and artistic (literary) interests for the sake of national integrity, they repeat those interests. They assume what belongs to the given and do not go beyond it, except to the set of assumptions represented by the given in the narrowly defined New Zealand context. What it represents is exactly that which is not brought to representation. Inasmuch as composition is representation in theatrical terms, not only do the theses carry forward an assumed beyond that is the very context the critique of which they intend, they also carry out in representation its composition. To direct against the composition, which continues without reaching to its actuating preconditions, a decomposition, although appearing to be locked in the logic of the paradox cancelling the difference within representation, forecloses on the circulation of the same. It follows a circular logic which does *not* close the gap allowing representation to break down, to decompose, because it does *not* hold

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representation to account for its beyond. This logic manages to maintain the opening in representation to what is represented and to what it represents. Finally, inasmuch as decomposition is posited in order to negate composition, through the ironic dialectic of the theses, it takes place as positively as any other difference. It becomes a positive compositional element. Inasmuch as repetition is indifferent to its negation, composition is indifferent to its negation, in decomposition, representation does not break down and there can be no rejoicing in its annihilation.

Called on to account for the beyond, the more basic assumption, informing those I said would provide the propositional framework to be broken down in subsequent Minus workshops, I told my friends that theatre is bad. It is so because it replicates in itself the conditions of representation, conditions bound to a narrow set of economic, political, historic and artistic (literary) determinations. It is so because of its complicity with interests other than its own. These things I did not say, I added rather that the practical work of Minus was going to entail the demolition of assumptions, of a basic assumption, that were mine alone.

Then, after two hours of talking, none of us felt like celebrating Minus's inception. We did not feel like rejoicing at the prospect of annihilating representation. A sense of sterility had descended, compounded by the blank corporate-styled newness of the studio, its carpetted ambulatories, unused dressing-rooms, all carefully labelled, but, like the flat-screen monitors in the green room, disconnected from purpose and indifferent to use. It was a disappointment, with all the resources on offer, both material and personal and experiential, as well as economic, artistic, historic and so on, that I had not been able to come up with anything

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better. In fact, I was counselled, I would be better to leave the aims of my research unspoken. Nothing could be more disappointing for young people volunteering to participate in Minus, volunteering because excited about theatre, than to be told theatre is bad.

In order to follow Deleuze's critique of representation, decomposition would be installed in the practice itself and not be applied to its bases in theory. Paradoxically, its introduction or interjection would open a gap or void closing that through which representation communicates both with what it is not, with the negative, and with what it posits, its beyond. Paradoxically, the difference decomposition makes would occur, from within the theatrical practice of composition, from within scenographic and dramaturgical practices, when it caused the collapse of the difference internal to representation, between negative and positive, as between what is represented and what it represents. Decomposition would bring about the breakdown of representation into compositional elements. These would be distributed on a single plane or level, a surface on and from which representation could positively designate nothing, refer to nothing and signify nothing but itself: a transcendental surface, then, the joyful designation, reference and significance of which would be the annihilation of representation.

After several more workshops, at which nothing more was spoken about the annihilation of representation or the assassination of theatre—as was Miró's understanding of his own paradoxical strategy: to assassinate painting by painting (Palermo, 2014:57)—it would be in the strategy of disorganisation that decomposition would once again enter into the practices of Minus. Decomposition would re-enter or resurface as a positive compositional element. At the end of March 2014, we adopted a

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strategy of disorganisation to name the way elements of composition, including decomposition, are distributed on a single plane.

Disorganisation, after the initial sterility of a practice or method based in decomposition, is a use of representation against representation and of theatre against theatre. Its own levels of both negative and positive difference having broken down, here theatre is not, as another more critical commentator on Deleuze, Peter Hallward claimed, “the art of *représentation* par excellence” (2006:128). But, as Miró's friend Duchamp might have put it, it seeks, rather by accident than excellence, to become the *anart* of a collapsed and disintegrated representation.

In arch acknowledgement of the place of Nietzsche behind the critique of representation, I gave the series of theses reproduced above the ironic title—“10 dissimulative theses: a sunrise dialectic unfolding in a decalogue of scenes”. The mention of scenes explains the Roman enumeration, dividing the series in fact into ten acts, each comprising two scenes. Of course, Nietzsche, in Deleuze's regard, is an anti-dialectician and the irony here is paper-thin: the impulse to negation acts in plain sight of its opposite number, with transparent intentions, like figures in Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Decalogue*, to which the title also nods.

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MINUS
~~THEATRE~~
THEATRE

AUT
UNIVERSITY

Thursday to Sunday
at 6pm

Performance Studio
WG210
Sir Paul Reeves
Bldg
AUT City Campus

Koha

with
Chenby Dien
Michael Ferriss
Jeffrey Gane
Lisa Greenfield
Tallulah Holly-
Massey
Thiago Moraes
Tresor Mukasa

Music by Shima

Directed by
Simon Taylor

12-15 Feb
Studio AUT





Mythology of a body

Over the past month we have settled into a routine. The make-up of the group has settled. I put out a call inviting people to join Minus, through all available channels, both inside the institution, AUT, and outside it. I sent emails to people I knew in theatre, and dance. I did a poster and flier run throughout the central city, hitting the University of Auckland as well as performance venues, theatres, galleries and libraries. Against expectation, it was those internal to the institution that were most successful in drawing in participants to workshops. The chief attraction was that the puff-line sent out stated English-as-second-language speakers were welcome. The result was Arabic, Korean, Russian speakers, along with a few New Zealand English speakers, most without performance experience—the ad also specified that no experience was necessary. But the life stories, which all found challenging, thinned the numbers. Asked to perform the story of her life in an invented language of sound, gesture and movement, a young Iranian woman went to the far end of the studio, climbed onto a table and, facing away from the rest of us watching, curled up into foetal position, from which she reluctantly released herself, only to resume a similar position nearer to us. Another young woman froze in self-consciousness, pulling her black top down at the front, where it rode up above her black pants, as if trying to disappear in the black studio, before executing a half-hearted star jump and sitting down, with hot tears on her face, the friend she came with comforting her. A young Korean man became an aeroplane and athletically

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criss-crossed the studio making engine noises. It was clear he was not coming in to land but wanted to show us his acrobatic prowess in muscular leaps, swoops and dives. A young man from somewhere south of Auckland upset himself by fixating on the separation of his parents, which then doubled his own separation anxiety as he left home to enter university. It came as a surprise to him, he said: he did not know he had still such strong feelings. Some said they would, but none of these came back, and there were drop-ins over the month, the majority, without explanation, not returning. The recognition of the ones who stayed that this would continue to be the case reinforced a sense of belonging in Minus, the feeling that we live here while you are only visiting. From it the group gained, to some degree, the satisfaction of a superiority that was expressed covertly, rather than overtly, in shared silences, guarded and proprietary looks. Minus's make-up, by the end of the month, including me, settled at six: Clarissa, the English name chosen by a young Korean speaker raised in Africa by missionary parents presently in Tonga; Nell, a professional dancer I have previously worked with, recently returned from Berlin; Yevgeniya, an immigrant to New Zealand with her husband, whom she met doing drama classes in Russia, whose accent, she feels, is an obstacle to her acting here; William, an actor I have worked with, directing, when I could, for over 20 years; and Xiaohui, who joined Minus most recently. For her life story, almost now a rite of initiation, Xiaohui asked if she could sing. She sang a traditional song in Mandarin, walking away from the group, her raised hands trembling with the tremulous delicacy of the song's subject, a white flower, the transience of which it mourns and celebrates. At its end the flower falls. Xiaohui sank slowly to her knees, bowing forward. Her hands out before her coming to rest on the ground gradually ceased to tremble. She then rose and, after a moment's reflection, again walked away from where the

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group stood, at one end of the studio, transfixed, step by carefully considered step. Without crossing her own path, with loaded deliberation, she inscribed a square spiral, like a labyrinth, on the space. Halting at its centre, she turned to face us and, in the end, as if the weight of the image all at once lifted, she calmly walked back to rejoin the group.

A routine has formed. We meet outside in Fitzroy Place and file through the Sir Paul Reeves Building, named after the archbishop, who spoke out against the turn of the Fourth Labour Government to market-driven public policy, under its glass ceiling, under a small architectural folly, signposted with “A Bridge to Nowhere,” through the double doors, through the foyer of the studio, into the green room, where we remove our shoes and leave our bags. The warm-up is some variation on the walking exercise and, according to the order I have put together, the workshop proceeds through games and exercises taken from Clive Barker's *Theatre Games* (1992), adapted from Boal, Herbert Blau (1982), or from Declan Donnellan's *The Actor and the Target* (2008), as well as from experience and hearsay. These are designed, like in Boal's case, not to alienate, but to be enjoyable, to *demythologise* theatre in general as an inclusive practice, as a language inclusive of all other languages in artistic and symbolic registers alike, and to *demythologise* acting in particular.

Boal considers the mythical elements surrounding theatre to be political and historically contingent (1985). His efforts are therefore directed at overcoming the political setup, which is immediately theatrical, whereby some, the great majority of people, are passive, while some, to whom are given ownership of the means to dramatic, as to economic production, act and are active. The *oppressed* are those, within his Marxist orientation,

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derived from the work in pedagogy of Paolo Freire, who lack the means to production, for reasons which are historically contingent and politically pertinent. This lack can be reversed and theatre, for Boal, education, for Freire, once it is placed in the hands of the people, can become a weapon in the revolution (1985:122). But Boal points to the oppression, in the case of a lack of ownership of the means to dramatic production in theatre, as being double. Whether it is in theatre or in the state, the oppressed are subject to the passivity of being an audience, whom the powers of the state and theatre make witnesses and victims: they are not in on the act. Political oppression consists in subjection. Boal reverses this kind of oppression by removing the historically accrued and politically enlisted mythology of a barrier between spectator and actor. There is, however, another source of oppression in the mythology of theatre, one that relates to the artistic form itself. It too is contingent and is a matter of an historic accrual that is politically enlisted. While Boal notices it, although his entire career may be seen in the light of assaying its reversal, he does not give to it the analysis he gives to the first kind, of the have-nots by the haves. It is in Foucault, and, as will be seen, Milan Kundera, that it finds an analysis. Foucault submits it to the analysis of a discursive power, one that is not exercised from a centre or from above or top down, as in class analysis, but spreads laterally; that does not subject and render passive, but one that solicits to action, inflecting and channelling action through the claims of a discourse, the statements of a mythology, the images of a morality (1980). Because it works by incitement, and is not found in subjection but in the production of subjects, where it is less *one* than of the *many* subjects it produces, it does not seem like oppression at all. Boal spots it in those whose only experience of drama is from TV and film, whose experience of the stuff of theatre comes from or is dictated by the discursive power of popular and

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commercial media. From the media of TV and film, says Boal, it takes the element of *sentimentality* (1985:127), or what Kundera calls *kitsch* (1984), which is then applied to theatre, constituting its mythology. By extension, where it takes its mythical element from circus and public spectacle, Boal claims that theatre becomes no more than frivolous entertainment, a leisure activity, lacking all, let alone political, consequence. The appearance of being without consequence is also, for Kundera in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, and attested to in his title, the essence of kitsch (2009). The subject produced by kitsch does not, once in possession of its means, then use theatre as a weapon in the revolution. But what is entailed here, in the power of kitsch, rather than being a political oppression, might best be termed a moral oppression. It is such insofar as kitsch is a moralising discourse, exclusive of shit, “in both the literal and figurative sense of the word”, Kundera writes (2009:248), belonging to a general humanity, the application of which to theatre is from experience relative to social, cultural and, essentially, *conventional* understandings. Above all, what is entailed is a subject of knowledge relative to the *moral* and, what Deleuze in a philosophical context calls (2004:167), *dogmatic image* of a mythology, under the oppressive historic circumstance of a power wielded discursively—hence the subtitle, in the French edition, of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, where he formulates this concept of a reticulated and discursive power: *la volonté de savoir* (the will to knowledge) (1980). Boal's answer, in the context of his discussion of a political oppression with moral implications, which he does not draw out, is to turn back to knowledge, to improving knowledge, and to a pedagogy leading to new experiences and understandings those whose understanding and experience of theatre has been solely in terms of kitsch sentimentality.

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It might be assumed that for Minus there would be no mythology of kitsch when it comes to theatre. There could prevail none, considering the disparate make-up of the group and the contingency of a mythology on specific cultural and historic factors. There would instead be as many understandings and experiences formed of theatre and drama as there were cultures and backgrounds represented, not to say disciplines, given Nell's training in dance. Afterall, the context in which Boal weaponises the oppressed peasantry of Lima, under the aegis of a literacy programme, is vastly different and distant from ours (1985:120-2). For Minus, demythologising would have to be for each person in the group. What theatre is, as for every notion, would be for each distinguished by natality and determined by filiation. Each would have her and his notion fixed by the distinct and relative claims of a discourse, the statements of a mythology, and the images of a morality. The singular notions, the values, of each would be incommensurable. They could not be incorporated under a single concept, even, as Kundera asserts of kitsch, one general to humanity (2009:256). But, Kundera implies, the concept of kitsch is not itself general: each form of it is selfishly guarded against other mythologies, the totalitarian against the communist, the revolutionary communist against the statist communist against the capitalist. Kundera writes that political movements "rest not so much on rational attitudes as on the fantasies, images, words and archetypes, that come together to make up this or that *political kitsch*." (257) The possibility arises, for which Kundera allows, that there is a kitsch to suit everyone (261). My own kitsch leads me to say to well-meaning friends and fellow practitioners that theatre is bad—in *New Zealand*. But the qualification is hardly necessary, because kitsch is bad in theatre. Perhaps theatre is inescapably kitsch and all theatre is kitsch. This is exactly what makes Deleuze choose the factory. Despite Foucault's praise of Deleuze's *Logic*

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of *Sense* and his *Difference and Repetition* together for being a *theatrum philosophicum* (2000:343-68), a theatre of philosophy, just like one might say a *theatrum mundi*, a theatre of the world, Deleuze chooses, after meeting Guattari, the factory over theatre. One might say, to continue to use the term, from Barthes (1991), Deleuze sheds the *mythology* of theatre he creates in his previous works of a *theatrum philosophicum*, to favour the factory and its machines.

In the first work of his collaboration with Guattari, in its initial paragraph, he verbalises all the things a factory *can* do because of its machines that theatre *cannot* do because of its kitsch: to breathe, to eat, to shit, to fuck, to drive, to connect, to couple, to produce (2008:1). These are all more or less involuntary productions of the body, what it cannot help doing, that rational discourse, religious or political belief or moral commitment, although they might try, cannot help it doing, which are missing from kitsch. Kitsch prefers to represent a body without effluvia or excreta—breathing, but without the smell of breath or airborne bacteria, eating, but free from mucus and saliva, without burping, farting or spitting and spewing up what is distasteful. Shitting and fucking are of course occluded: the body voids its waste and produces other bodies offstage and offscreen, unlike in the factory where waste goes in the bins provided and other bodies are the products. Kitsch representation misses out at both ends, both at the end of making and producing and at the end of disposal and decomposing. It is this twofold lack Deleuze and Guattari attend to in the definition of desire according to the kitsch proper to psychoanalysis, a Viennese kitsch, where desire is assumed to be lack (2008). So defined, both production and decomposition are excessive to it. Without excretions, secretions, odours and skin particles and fallen hair, desire becomes like a film, disembodied. It is Deleuze's preference

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for the disembodied, for film, since he devotes two books to it, more than to any other artform, that Hallward alleges in his comment theatre is “the art of *représentation* par excellence” (2006:128). By this he means to impugn Deleuze's philosophy for a lack of engagement with this-worldly affairs, namely politics, and for preferring abstract creation, or, despite its vitalism, *thought over life*—so the title of his book: *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (2008). For Hallward representation, or *représentation*, is a political modality and theatre a matter of all that kitsch representation would exclude. But it is Deleuze and Guattari's argument that in defining desire by lack, by the lack which is kitsch, psychoanalysis is committed to representation, to a theatre. This psychoanalysis, theatre, representation, inclusively, that I would bring into the purview of kitsch, they propose through *schizoanalysis* to overturn in the final part of *Anti-Oedipus*, writing: “To overturn the theater of representation into the order of desiring-production: this is the whole task of schizoanalysis.” (2008:294) *Desiring-production* supplants desire as lack, replacing Freud's definition with Marx's, for whom desire is passionate, a “natural and sensuous object”, and the productive source of the real, not its edited representation (28).

Along with the many things it might be, schizoanalysis would then be a technique of demythologising turned against, or overturning, the representation of desire kitsch commits itself to as well as the theatre where production is a metaphor, which together comprise a mythology of the body. Closer in, this body, this mythology, and the call for demythologising, can be appreciated when someone is asked simply to walk across the studio in view of other workshop participants and cannot do so without performing, performing walking and not just walking. This was one of our exercises or tasks, useful to descry the prevalence of a

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mythology of theatre as being about performance. Even an experienced actor will bring all his or her teaching to bear and overdo it. An actor will act it. A dancer will dance it. In inexperienced performers it will not be hesitancy or nervousness that gives them away but the performance of the task, a performance that leaves it unaccomplished. Alan Read will call it genetic, it is so pervasive, the *performance gene*, although by it he means something quite different (2013:195). But this is the sort of determinism Boal has in mind when, directly after noticing the characteristic of sentimentality in those whose only experience of theatre is from film and TV, he makes recourse to a practice analyzing physical stereotypes.

Wanting to avoid the possibility of the director, educator in literacy, outside expert becoming another oppressor, that is the possibility he is the oppressor, Boal writes the “theatrical experience should begin not with something alien to the people (theatrical techniques that are taught or imposed) but with the *bodies* of those who agree to participate in the experiment.” (1985:127) These bodies here in Lima he asks to compare the “muscular structure of a typist with that of the nightwatchman of a factory” (127). Each will have undergone *deformations* according to the demands of the kind of work they do, the typist sitting, arms, hands and fingers in intense activity, the watchman walking continuously over his shift, swinging his torch. Each suffers a “muscular alienation” imposed by work (127). Then comes the cardinal strolling in the Eternal City or the general marching and shouting orders. From these examples, participants are asked to understand, to see and to feel at what points *on* their bodies their own work is determinative *of* their bodies, not to take them apart, Boal writes, and not to weaken or destroy them, but “to raise them to the level of consciousness.” (128) Boal holds, in a way consistent

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with his own mythology of theatre as being about representative characters, or stereotypes, in keeping with the class analysis, that the *disjointing* and analysis of muscular structures, which are participants' own, will then enable them to assemble others, from other points, determined by other types of work, and from other social classes (128). Boal elaborates a whole system of knowledge, a curriculum of exercises (126ff), to train the bodies he is working with, starting from the realisation of the alienation of their musculatures which, for being imposed by social circumstance, is presupposed by a *type* of society and the *kinds* of the roles it imposes. These are, therefore, given full weight as political and economic determinations, which, for it to be revolutionary, are the true target of the training, and not social justice.

The interesting part about Boal's system is in its initial stage that it organises the body and engineers its escape from alienation and determinism by points. Analysis of the points proceeds by *disjointing*: "All the exercises of this series are in fact designed to disjoint." (128) Having established their own schizo-revolutionary programme against the kitsch representation of desire in psychoanalysis and against the private theatre of Oedipus, having listed all the things the factory, its machines and desiring-production can do which the former can not, dare not and dare not name, Deleuze and Guattari declare the same aim. They move, like Boal, from the alienation of the body, but this time from its own desire, to the body, or, from the alienation of the muscular structure to the deformation and alienation of the nervous structure, from the *nervous disorder* of schizophrenia, to the schizo body, in Artaud's *body without organs* (2008:9ff). They find, with Boal, this body, in the realisation or diagnosis of its alienation, to be the victim of a misplaced determinism, articulated in chemical and genetic terms according to discursive,

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medico-social norms—the habit today of representing the schizo as just a chemical imbalance in the brain, for example—when the decisive determinations are again economic and political. The points Boal disjoints are the organs of the schizo. The true enemy of the body without organs is not its organs but, because they form and are productive of a necessarily normalised organism, their organisation (8-9). One could equally say the oppression of peasant and worker organisms, as of the schizo organism, is their organisation and that history organises this oppression *in society*. The organism will again, for Deleuze and Guattari, be a kind of role in a type of society whose escape from its political, economic, its historic determinations lies in full or partial disorganisation, dispensing with that organ that, organising, tends to totalise, for example rationality in reason. Or, it will be in the exercise of making for oneself a body without organs that the psychic and physical determinism of the organised individual, the social person, the economic producer-consumer, its political identity and its personal history—the same for its alienation as for its deformation—will be escaped. This Deleuze and Guattari recommend in the chapter on this topic in volume 2 of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, How do you Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?* (2014:173-93). Boal and Deleuze and Guattari have the same conception of political action: it is revolution. It is not social justice. This is easily missed in the current age of liberal accommodation to social justice.

By laying out a thoroughgoing programme demythologising theatre as kitsch as much as the social body in its organisation by the state, it may seem that Boal goes further than Deleuze and Guattari, who stop at disjoining and at the body without organs. But in fact the caveats and cautions Deleuze and Guattari give in *A Thousand Plateaus* come from the body without organs construed to be where disjoining ends, its

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unreachable and ultimate horizon on which our hopes of finally having, or finally arriving at, a body without organs, or completing one in the endless task of making one, are lost, disappointed in the finality of cancer and death—as Artaud knew, they write, already in *Anti-Oedipus* (2008:9). The body without organs is the impossible rejection of *every* determination of the body as organism and, being brought to the level of consciousness, the destruction of every mythology: the repulsion, on all points, of its organisation, its assembly into and any (social) role for it—to refuse the common representative nature and the kitsch or sentimental good intention of your living body, self, soul and individual. Deleuze and Guattari therefore call for a disassembly of Boal's points without cease, as if this is indeed the revolutionary task, but without the revolutionary, the career revolutionary, like the theatre director and pedagogue Boal feared becoming, who only adds to the oppression of the already oppressed.

In some ways Deleuze and Guattari go further than Boal in demythologising the body, because Boal never asks, What is a body? For him a body is always its roles, deformed by alienation, and politically and economically determined oppression. For him, in theatre, a body moves from character to character, mask to mask, in the multiplication of characters, in the development of its professional dramatic capacity of reassembling points for the sake of expression. Here a body is organised by being trained and exercised in its representative organism to become *the* body. For Deleuze and Guattari a body is no less than what it can do. What a body can do are its affects, which, taking their cue from the ethology of Jakob von Uexküll (a source for Heidegger too), can be counted (2014:299-300). Boal's reassembly of points becomes a reassembly *with* the new, adding more affects, including possible experiences and understandings, and assembling from new points

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new machines—to drive, to connect, to couple, to produce. Of course, this machinic idea owes a lot to Simondon's work on the technical object that places it, as an individual, in an exteriority outside the purview and reach of any psychologism, engaged in an antipsychological and antisociological individuation (1980; Sauvagnargues, 2013:185ff).

The formula of exercises and games has settled in a pedagogy demythologising in Minus ideas that are, despite the diversity of the group's make-up, held in common, those mythical elements: the convention of a theatre generally organised around the trained body of the actor; the actor being the organisation of the kind of a role, before any other, in a type of society; the mythology of acting in particular, even at its most *organic* and natural, as performing, understood to be exactly what *comes together* in performance, rather than what *flies apart*. Then there is kitsch and what lies within its purview—where what must be brought to representation, in a politics of representation, according to power that circulates in discourse, rests on what must not and, morally, ought not be shown. This moral image mythology engages politically, through consensus, which is the true power of kitsch. The feeling it induces, writes Kundera, must be “a kind the multitudes can share.” (2009:251) It must, he writes, “derive from the basic images people have engraved in their memories.” (251) These are theatrical and sentimental images. In the context of national kitsch, implicit in the previous section, to the background of which the irony of the “10 Dissimulative Theses” is in broad stroke directed, they are snapshots of idealised coloniality, and they are literary, even when transposed to theatre: the wise old Maori woman, *kuia*, like her Pakeha counterpart, the white weatherboard begum, figures of matrilineal succession, of a power based in secrets and gossip; her granddaughter, *mokopuna*, her successor; to be protected

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from a drunk and violent husband-father-son, and so on, whose emotions a hard life has trapped and deformed in its intransigent mold. The timeless figures of early settlement, they are icons, and inhabit a realm of kitsch, where everything must be taken quite seriously (252). Irony is their enemy. If the “10” could not raise, in the practitioners exposed to them, a collective smile, that too may be accounted a token of enmity. Where kitsch reigns supreme, a deviation from the collective is, writes Kundera, “a spit in the eye of the smiling brotherhood” (252). So it was, and it would make no difference to speak, as Kundera does, in the original Czech, of the ungrateful daughter, of the woefully neglected father, or of the motherland betrayed; of first love, or children running on the grass, whose happiness can bring tears (251). The first tear will be for the children. But the second will be for us, like all kitsch theatre, for the community, where common sense and common standards prevail. It will say, “How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass!” (251) The tear that brings us together in sentimental communion is, says Kundera, what makes kitsch kitsch (251). These are different from Boal's stereotypes of class. But in making workers and peasants over in their images, in raising to the level of consciousness their oppression, deformation, alienation, is he not also raising it to the level of representation? In giving over ownership to the oppressed means to dramatic production, leading the formerly passive to become theatrically active, is it not the spect-actors those who have crossed the sentimental divide into the realm of kitsch? And are they not those who can lay claim in solidarity to the revolutionary kitsch, mythic in scope, of the “Grand March”, which is, after all, Kundera's topic (241-278)? For whom we should shed a tear, because they do? And, for which, we do.

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A “little United Nations,” representative of the 217 ethnicities currently resident in Auckland, or again to purloin Lingis's title, a community of those who have nothing in common (1994), Minus has settled, over the month, into its own organicity, forming a group, organised, by a teaching designed to demythologise it, around a mythology of the body. But it is the body that moves which is the problem, the body which moves that is not itself moved, in a performance where what is performed is exactly that which is left unaccomplished. The fact that we can see the difference between the two is central to the presentation Richard Huber gave at the hui and symposium, held in Dunedin at the beginning of 2016, at which I also presented, conducting a Minus workshop. Huber addressed it in terms of Butoh, of a particular exercise used in training performers in Hijikata's “Dance of Darkness” (Uno, 2012:45). Wanting to learn about Butoh, he participated in the exercise. Bodies lay on the floor. The task set by the teacher was for them to become like kelp. They would then roll backwards and forwards in a hopeful approximation of what it is to be moved by the swell. Doing it, Huber said he could not shake the feeling he was not being moved by the sea but by his own will. So, after a couple more rolls to and fro, he got up and walked off and watched, to see if he might gain some useful insight from the others, who had all shut their eyes and were, with greater and lesser degrees of willed concentration, rolling around the floor in simulation of kelp. He noticed at once the difference between the bodies being moved by internal command and those on which an external force was acting. The celerity with which he could see this struck him. The kelp exercise made him realise that what is at stake in Butoh is just this involuntarism of a body given up, albeit voluntarily, to external forces. He suddenly “got” Butoh. But more than this, he saw how attuned we are to noticing when movement is willed, voluntary and internally directed, or commanded, and when movement is

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not willed by the one moving but brought on by the directive of forces outside the body. That the one moving takes on the appearance to the observer of being moved by an external cause has a significance for performance in the degree of reality accorded it, and may be generalised across performance media. It is the speed of discernment of this reality, nothing intrinsic to it, making it real. The appearance is immediate and, because it is a matter of direct perception, not an acquired skill or capacity, it seems innate. It is so easy to sense when an actor is faking it even a child can tell. A child can tell, particularly, since it approaches performance without a culturally inculcated agenda. This is notoriously so for children's theatre, where audiences are seldom as accommodating of artistic effort, intent or affect, or as forgiving towards performers, as their adult counterparts, and, because children can tell, performers are *told* and not simply *seen*. They are told when they are not being real or playing for true, or *pretending* to play and not really *playing*, and their lack of accomplishment is not simply watched through to the end when we clap but exactly that—a lack of accomplishment in performance. The performance left *unaccomplished* consists in not moving the body of the watcher as it is moved. This is the reason that Hijikata said he performed for the dead, for an audience of the dead, Huber replied, when I asked him: the performer, like the dead, and the watcher, observer, spectator, audient, child or adult, like one dead, does not move, or will to be moved, but is moved from without (2016). To his credit, a similar understanding, of an outside force compelling both mover and watcher, is at work in Declan Donnellan's notion of the *target* throughout his *The Actor and the Target* (2008).

The make-up of Minus has settled. The organisation of workshops into exercises and games has, over a month, taken on the routine nature of an

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established formula. Even the group's identity, despite its diversity and mixture of backgrounds and levels of understanding and experience, has stabilised. It occurs to me now that the idea of performance as an added attribute, this mythology around training, exercising and playing games that they add something to the body of the performer, to the bodies of the participants in workshops, originates in an earlier idea of lack. In Boal it is signalled in the starting-point of a deformed and alienated body. For practitioners of Butoh, this is the end-point: the goal of an exacting and rigorous training programme. In either case, a discipline is involved. In one case, it is coordinated by an effort to wrest from the social order what, in being denied to the worker and peasant classes, they have lacked: ownership of the means to production. According to state mythology, the lack is natural; according to theatre mythology, spectators watch while actors act, the latter in possession of what the former lack. As we have seen, demythologising state, as theatre, mythologies entails consciousness-raising. Participants in Boal's experiment map onto their own bodies the precise points where the social order has, through imposed work conditions, turned them into types, casting them in kinds of roles which may be generalised and stereotyped. When these points are disordered the stereotypes are broken. But, as we have seen in comparing this break with that of Deleuze and Guattari's body without organs, they are broken to reconvene on, forming other stereotypes in accord with the needs of expression. The needs of expression coincide with representation, that is not for its sentimentality kitsch, although this contributes to it, and we shed a tear, but for its consensual nature kitsch —another tear, this one in *categorical agreement with being*, which, for Kundera, is the metaphysical meaning of kitsch (2009:248). It is a happy ending where deficiency is overcome, a success story for the will to, in this case, perform, like many others, that begin in lack, in want and in

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hardship.

In the other case, reaching its end-point in a seemingly alienated body, representing a deformed body, Butoh takes the social order to be an external force acting on the body of one training in its discipline. The training is, with the defensiveness of the body about its deficiency, about willing its deficiency. Performance involves the action of the social order, along with that of other, natural, unnatural and spiritual, forces, as it inflicts deformation and alienation in all their *initial malice*. The phrase is Artaud's, cited by Kuniichi Uno (2012:37). Butoh plays out the violence by which lack was imposed, inverting the moral image supported by it, and bringing to the surface what was occluded under kitsch representation. The inversion of one, starting from lack, by the other, ending in it, invokes a whole play of the will that may be best summed up by Artaud's *theatre of cruelty*, "relaunching, recreating everything", writes Uno, "in this "initial malice"." (37) Boal's disciplinary undertaking concerns a restoration, reassembly and reconstitution of the moral and political right to act, which, like Artaud's, refuses the moral image of "the already-existing theatre" (37), on the basis of lack. But Hijikata's dance refuses this refusal made on the basis or according to the rule of lack, and takes from Artaud the assumption that its *catastrophe*, introduced by him into "traditional Western theater", writes Uno, "could itself be theater." (36-7) It directs its will, as the body, in the way that was seen with Deleuze and Guattari's revolutionary project of a body without organs, towards disassembling, towards the disassembled, and disjoining, towards the disjointed—figures unfit to perform, without moral right, or uprightness, that do not come together in performance so much as fly apart.

Deforming itself in the performance of its mortifications, Uno writes

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Hijikata gave to his dance the formula “the corpse that risks its life to stand up” (55). Since the dead are simply those death moves, that moves us, it is in terms of an access of forces and their actions that these mortifications are explicable. Through the access gained to it by outside forces, including the exteriorisation of the body's own forces (55), the work of catastrophe, of cruelty, of ill will, goes to what is involuntarily produced by the body, to its desiring-production, of a body that fucks, shits, spits and spews. But where, with good will, desire is lack, the Viennese kitsch of psychoanalysis, like any other form of kitsch, filled with its good will and steady moral purpose, compensates for the part missing, for symbolic lack, through symbolic addition, that is through moral performance. But it is as if this castration were, in Butoh, in Hijikata's dance, supplanted by the golden phallus of Heliogabalus (Baird, 2012:123-6). For the dance, Hijikata drew from Artaud's work but also from the idea, current in Japan at the time, of *eien no kakumei* (eternal revolution) (125). He called it *Hijikata Tatsumi and Japanese People: Rebellion of the Body*. Baird notes that in Artaud's description of the Roman Emperor's erect gold-coated member it is “useless, innocuous”, and that, after the longest section of the dance with it on, Hijikata took it off, or it fell off, and that, now naked, he used it to “flog the brass panels” (125).

The question comes to me of Minus as a disciplinary undertaking, quite apart from its establishment, organisation and the stabilisation of the group's identity in the sense of the belonging of its members. By *disciplinary* I mean a kind of consistency that might begin from the insight of Butoh into the involuntarism of the body, that Uno, writing on Hijikata's distinctive vision and experience of it, calls *catastrophe* (2012:54). Hijikata himself wrote in 1969: “The dances of the world begin

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by standing upright. But I start with the fact of not being able to stand up. I was in a dead end. I was not a seeing body that pisses unconsciously before things happen.” (at 55) He goes on to speak of a *folded body* demonstrating “a form that could be used to regain strength” (at 55). For him, it would be the strength dance needs to begin, which, for him, starts from the experience of catastrophe, of not being able to stand upright or even stand up. It starts not from a vision. Where pissing cannot occur unconsciously there is no room for vision, for seeing what a body can do, for letting go and watching things happen, where even the bladder full cannot be let go. The strength able to be regained that could be used for dance to start is found because the folded body “has formed itself with a crack” (at 55). Where the body demonstrates in its folded form a crack is, for Hijikata, in relation to a native soil. But this native soil does not bear to the body the relation of a skeleton, it does not structure the body into points of articulation or fix it with the features of its natality. It does not fit the body with the characteristics of its filiation. Its landscape, he writes, is “like a mystery that has turned itself into an insect” (at 55).

A swarm, a fold, a crack—these figures could have been drawn from Deleuze and Deleuze in collaboration with Guattari. But by seeing in the involuntarism of Butoh that of *nobody*, even in relation to its native soil, it is from the point of view of *somebody*, in a relation with one's own native soil, that one sees. I leave the studio at the end of a month of workshops. There is nothing to differentiate what we are doing from standard disciplinary practice in theatre, I tell myself, so far. But its insufficiency is in respect of my own experience and understanding, which, inasmuch as they have not been extended through the consistency of the practice, and have been occluded from it, form a fold hidden from it. It occurs to me at this point that I should head in this direction, because there is no doubt

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the fold has formed itself with a crack. Behind the body of organisation along the lines of which I have modelled Minus hides another underneath, a catastrophic body. In the next workshop, I will admit to its disorganisation, without even the hope of standing up, before things happen.

Hijikata writes of “openly exteriorizing everything that has been hidden underneath” (at Uno, 2012:55). For him, this is a way of approaching his last work as a choreographer, *Sick Dancer*. “What will happen”, he asks, “if we drop a ladder deep into our own bodies and climb down it?” (at 56) He writes, “I would like to get closer to the world my childhood lived.” (at 55-6) In fact, because they allow the body to perform outside the folds of historical consciousness, of what formed it, to what it was fitted and fixed, and without the folds of self-consciousness, of shame and its ever-unfolding humiliation (which we saw in the girl wearing black who star-jumped), Butoh's exteriorisation of forces, the body's own (and which are not the body's own?), makes a fundamental contribution to a pedagogy in performance, to the proposition of training in and teaching performance and to the system of knowledge connected to it. The contribution it makes is in fact a subtraction, the subtraction of a discipline achieving consistency in the exhaustion and involuntarism of a corpse that risks its life standing up.



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Invisible and visible

Alongside the notion of decomposition, the idea grew of using the body without organs as a model, not for whatever we might eventually put in front of an audience, but for what Donnellan calls the “invisible work” (2008:7). This is the work that goes on in preparation, for all involved, in rehearsal, in its process of repetitions and trial and error, and in the studio workshop, in its exercises and experiments in devising. It is also, and more importantly, that which goes on for each involved, in researching, learning a role, mastering a movement, as much as in recalling later what one did, with shame or wonder, or considering how one betakes oneself in one's body and sensibility as the performer one perhaps never intended to be. The performance excludes the invisible work; but the invisible work includes “passages of visible work”, writes Donnellan (8). It might be said that what works in the invisible work is brought to visibility in performance.

What works in the invisible work is not necessarily an object of judgement, the subject of which, in its finality in performance, is the audience. The traditional view holds that the director in rehearsal represents an hypothesised audience, and therefore that it is the director's judgement which is itself up for judgement when preparations cease and work is put before an audience. But this view reduces theatre direction to a kind of gamble on second-guessing what an audience will

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like—and reduces it to bad luck if the gamble does not pay off, when an audience is not won over because the director got it wrong. Successful and popular directors—successful because popular—might support such a reductive view, while those who fail in the eyes of the audience will be thought to be out of touch.

The mixed metaphor is telling: the director who is a bad judge of what works in the invisible work sufficient to its being put before an audience is out of touch in its eyes. It is as Donnellan writes of the dark, in contrast with the invisible, that it has a shape as familiar as one's own shadow: it is made by getting in the way of the light (2008:10). The audience casts a long shadow and it is not necessary for the director to stand within it. This is the position the director takes when being a representative of the people and judge of the work.

The judgement as to what works is sooner internal to and a concomitant of the work Donnellan calls *invisible*, than an external and imposed or final determination. The invisible work possesses its law in itself, hence the *passages of visible work*. These are passages, as one might say *passages of colour* in a painting, as much as musical periods or pure rhythms. They are able to come to light only when the judgement of the visible is not casting its shadow and only on the basis of the invisible. The eye moves with them, and the ear. They take the senses through, or along—to continue the spatial metaphor—the passage of a lived duration. Invisibility is their fundamental condition insofar that, as Donnellan writes, “The actor must forget the invisible during the visible work, and trust that the invisible will remember itself.” (2008:87)

The preparation of the actor consists in invisible work. What the actor is preparing for, under the external eye of the director, is not the public

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performance, the visible work, and the finality of a judgement visible for being seen to be done, the visible judgement of the work in its final determination. What the actor's preparation in the invisible work is for is trust. Who that trust concerns is the actor. Each actor then is prepared through the invisible work to put trust before judgement. For each opens out a level of what works. It is not through forgoing, withholding or suspending judgement, or through being especially nice to oneself, but by trusting enough to forget all the judgements and determinations going into the preparatory work, that each one can also trust that judgement, like the invisible, will remember itself. The actor does not remember and reconstitute in body and sensibility the visible but acquires the trust necessary to disconnect and dismember the invisible.

Each new development in the invisible work of Minus restarts from the beginning the questioning. The question each individually asks is, *Can I trust this?* The question is only effectively asked through the invisible work, where each participant poses it in a way that concerns only her or himself, where it becomes, *Does this work for me?* In other words, *Does this method, technique, suggestion or model lead to what works?* Because it will first engage a relation to the self and to one's self-regard, of *what for me works*, because it is initially *from my point of view*, that the questioning recommences each time, the question is an ethical one. It asks what I would or would not do. It asks this in the situation where it is posed: *Are those around me trustworthy? Can I trust the source where the method, technique, suggestion or model originates? and the situation where it materialises?* But before it enters one's own reasoned judgement, what is proposed or suggested comes as a challenge, and *Can I do this?* ethically and rationally, is rather *Have I the power, the strength or resolve to do this?* It turns into a question about *courage—Have I the courage to do this?—*, that Lingis, following Aristotle, calls the “first of all

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the virtues” and the *transcendental* virtue because it is “the condition for the possibility of all the virtues.” (1994:107) Since it is of myself and in regard of myself that I ask it, the question of courage goes further than my own good sense, his or her good will, and what is accepted and agreed to in common, as far as my own powers of virtuous possibility, up to what I *could* be, not just *do*. It therefore bears less on the division between the invisible and the visible than it does on that between the invisible and the dark. What is dark is so for getting in the way of the light. The questioning then takes the form: *Have I the courage to stand, step, leap or dance, outside of my own shadow?*

Relation to self

The body without organs as a model was one thing. This relation to self was quite another. Out of the extremity of contemplating extinction (Colebrook, 2014), not as a shadow with the familiar shape of oneself, but as, if you will, a *judgement of the visible* (or *on the visible*), the idea grew that Donnellan's *visible work* in theatre, putting in front of an audience what works, does not serve the transcendental condition of theatre, one performer's risk and each one's potential for shame and humiliation, or bravery, so well as the *invisible work*. The invisible has the virtue of seeing in the dark because it turns on the question of challenge, risk and courage, not because it turns on the light and gives the dark up to visibility. The challenge—of a model, technique or suggestion—is impersonal, yet each performer takes it up in a different way. The risk is inside the relation to self, of hiding, stepping back in one's own shadow, or failing to leap out, and, like courage, finds itself at the extremity of differentiation in the individual, where it is yet a matter of relations. These relations are powers made asymmetrical by force of courage (as in

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Deleuze drawing on Nietzsche (2004:321-2)), since, in the latter, they have their real transcendental condition. The invisible work therefore proceeds by a thousand darknesses in a virtual politics or politics of virtue (as in Macchiavelli (2009)), requiring the visible not for its eventual resolution, endpoint or ultimate aim, in a thousand points of light and as many points of view, but for its test of the invisible. Passages of the visible are the result of the relation to self that test the basic rule of the invisible and its working principle—that there be no humiliation.

I cannot promise courage to those who act under my direction. I cannot guarantee that trust in the situation of the workshop or in the source of the ideas I am introducing, expecting you to act on them, even as you are courageous enough to trust and I am more or less trustworthy, will lead you to what works by your lights, from your point of view. This will be found, if it be found and when it be found, in the relation to self, where courage has its origin, and where shame too originates. Wayne Koestenbaum, in his book-length essay, *Humiliation*, speaks of the relation to self that is their joint origin as being a fold and of humiliation itself as constituting an *optic* (2011:9). On the inside of the fold, the invisible private experience of “perhaps any strong feeling”, he says, casts a shadow that is not seen (or felt) until it is exposed and brought to light (15). The unfolding can be violent, forced, as it often is under the conditions of humiliation that are Koestenbaum's topic. It is as if the action of unfolding makes the fold and produces its order. Here, in the crease, a shame I did not know was mine, you did not know was yours, until the humiliation of the other: Donnellan's visible work holds always this potential to be humiliation. Koestenbaum writes that humiliation “contains an entire theatrical apparatus even if only in the minds of the soiled parties (tyrant, victim, witness).” (9) In the minds of the perpetrator, the victim and the witness to it, humiliation is a theatre in the

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grand style, with proscenium, “ready-made orchestra pit”, specified for the swelling of the scything strings, curtain, audience, lights and ticket booth. Your invisible work holds always the potential of preparing your sacrifice, if not in the eyes of others then in your own. But this *own* is only owned as events unfold.

You are ashamed as well as shamed in the theatre of humiliation, which, as Koestenbaum recognises, resembles Artaud's theatre of cruelty (2011:140-5), and which every theatre has the potential to be. (Although for Artaud this assertion would bear a malice that inverts common understanding, a will to celebrate what was taken as the lowest form of life, shame, in the place of what had been set up as the highest, courage (cf. Lingis, 1994:51).) You have not just let them get to you, you the victim, before the audience, your witness, and you, as readily, the perpetrator. You have not just let them get to you, audience, critics, the other and the others, and you have not just decided to go there: what you feel has neither the force of a power externally inflicted, nor that of one willed, of a chosen affliction. But the feeling is itself the intensity that makes the fold. Running a nail down its seam, it folds your body with its shadow. Better said, it folds your *flesh*, since this is the word Aristotle uses, *sarx* (in Greek σάρξ (DAII.11,423a); the adjective survives in English, *sarcous*, and the prefixal form, *sarco-*). It does not bring to light, showing you and giving you to understand, what in you has responded, and how you got here, or that the shame is groundless and the humiliation your projection, and therefore your responsibility, the responsibility of an *optic*. The *sarcous*, for Aristotle, is rather, and before being the medium of any other sense, the medium (μεταξύ—*metaxu*) of touch (Kearney, 2015:19). It brings into contact, mediating between, because separating out, what you feel so that you feel it, in your flesh. It puts you directly, if not immediately, in touch with the two sides of the

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fold and forms a physical relation with what it mediates, which is, in the theatre of humiliation, or the theatre of cruelty, pain.

The sarcous

Shame and courage both result from the relation to self of the body in touch, that is in the *sarcous* body. But whereas the *somatic* body tends to the inherence of a self and to an integrity articulable in terms of identity, and whereas the somatic, like the *corporeal* which envelopes and incorporates, is identifiable and available to make a self-identification, the sarcous body betrays. (Jay Gayle attends to its femininity in its first use in the Greek translation of the Old Testament at Genesis 2:21, where it is the “sarx” that is closed upon the removal of Adam's rib. Its second use there is more telling, since it is said of Eve's birth that she is *flesh* out of *my flesh*: σὰρξ ἐκ τῆς σαρκός μου (Gayle, 2009).) It gives you the surprise of mistaken identity. It lifts the fig-leaf. It does not have the innocence of the body, but, the body's body, it is impertinent and always culpable. At the moment when you most want to keep it together, it flies apart. Or it does not perform.

Where the identity, the relation to the somatic body of self-identity—one-to-one with the darkness—acts out, the sarcous acts up, and refuses. It does not repeat the self but departs from it (in Greek, ἐκ, *ek* (Gayle, 2009)). It is not becoming to you, but it becomes other and alien. It leaves you in the dark, which you are prepared to trust, from your point of view in the darkened auditorium, or suffer, in an inner darkness, an inner closeness. Where the somatic polices its borders, the sarcous overflows them. It is all in the impression it gives that the body is out of control, which comes to you across the fold that the impression makes. The

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sarcous articulates individually as a loss of self. But it comes to you in the extremity of its differentiation, where, as an *other*, whose relation to *you* is proven, it is lost. This loss is a function of tolerable and intolerable intensities, which, it must be insisted upon, the sarcous mediates, folding, giving to be felt, the strong feelings enfolded.

Active sensation and shame

In shame, as Lingis writes of pain, you are *backed up against* yourself (1998:151). There you are in touch with what you are feeling to a degree all the more close and crushing for it being *nonimmediate*, but mediated by an *other*, whose intrusion interrupts or irrupts, with violence sometimes (Koestenbaum, 2011:160). Backed up against itself, the self, as in Artaud, becomes a will to its own privation, since humiliation is suffered to be the private destiny of what is an innate and *genital* shame (see Shaw, 2016). ("I am an innate genital," writes Artaud in a letter to his old doctor, Jacques Rivière (at Sauvagnargues, 2013:56). If there is one problem with Koestenbaum's book, it is his failure to appreciate, or feel, Artaud's malice, which—complicated by Nietzsche's (Lingis, 1994:51)—he shares in some ways with Deleuze and Guattari: a malice that understands humiliation to involve courage (2011).) For Koestenbaum, a writer, who looks on his own humiliation, without Artaud's malice, or suffering, as material, and on his shame with the eye of a sarcophagus, particularly when it is the other's shame that shame lets him feel, *shame*, like empathy, is a form of creativity, creative in the last instance of *identity* (2011:159). There is, of course, something in this, but it is close to Nietzsche's *ressentiment*, where the act of sensation is rehearsed for the sake of the visible judgement of a moral audience, under conditions of an optic of responsibility, and in the light, beyond any

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reasonable doubt, of culpability (1998:25). Nietzsche writes that it is a slave morality where 'bad' repeats 'good' and vice versa (25). Hence identity finds itself slavishly repeated as self-identity according to the resentment understanding shame to be virtuous and it a matter of virtue to be so humiliated.

There is something in the notion of shame accompanying the active exercise of sensation, particularly in the auto-affection of touch. Actively touching oneself is of the essence of a genital shame, off-stage. On-stage masturbation, when it is not for the audience to indulge itself in shameful resentment that cannot help but also be kitsch, and even when it is, requires courage, as in the last act of Wedekind's canonic work of dramatic modernism *Spring Awakening* (1891). (In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari refer to this work, writing, that in contrast with it, the theatre of representation, of psychoanalysis, is "not even an avant-garde theater, such as existed in Freud's day" (2008:62). To the former, they say: "Shit on your whole mortifying, imaginary, and symbolic theater." (367; at Fuchs, 1996:150)) Subtitled *A Children's Tragedy*, the play was adapted as a musical and enjoyed its Broadway premiere in 2006 (Sater & Sheik, 2007), a full (very full) century after its initial Berlin production under the direction of Max Reinhardt at the Deutsches Theater in 1906. Masturbation, of course, although it is literal in *Spring Awakening*, acts as a watchword for the self-absorption of the performer. It is perhaps apposite to say in this context that the *performer* is distinguishable from the *actor* according to the hierarchy of the visible and invisible work, that puts what happens in front of an audience above what happens outside its purview.

The act is shameful. A performer absorbed in herself or himself is, moreover, absorbed in a performance understood to be one which

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excludes the audience. It is as if she were absorbed by or fixated on an erotic dark, and as if his gaze fixed and his touch lingered on his own erotic self-image: a performer absorbed into the dark, as much as into the self. In witnessing the act, the audience does not feel anymore it makes a difference that sets a distance between the performer and herself and himself, in a general relation-to-self in which the audience is included. Instead, it feels its own difference in the too great a proximity of the performer to herself or himself. Instead, it is shame pressing the body of the performer, in its very performance of sensation, of active sensation, up against or into itself, where the audience cannot reach it and where it sees itself, and has to reconcile itself, as somehow not worthy of the performer's touch. At this moment it is no longer an audience but a gathering of spectators, each experiencing individually her and his shame before the spectacle. The alteration, of touch to sight, from a visible work that feels out the audience, that is touched by it, to one which makes its spectators complicit, enfolding each of them, in what ought not be seen, is significant. Equally significant is the effect shame has, that shame *individuates*.

Immunity and shame

The audience's shame before a performance from which it feels excluded is the same as that visited on the spectator singled out (or it need not be one, maybe more, maybe all) to participate in a show. Alan Read's consideration of *immunity*, in the final *approach* to performance, in his *Theatre in the Expanded Field: Seven Approaches to Performance*, flows from just such a shame (2013). A particular student tells Read of feeling shamed by the invitation to members of the audience to participate in the different contemporary theatre works of a diverse number of companies,

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Punchdrunk and Shunt from the UK, Fuerza Bruta from Argentina, Rimini Protokol from Germany, and Toneelgroep from the Netherlands (182-3). Their approaches to theatre, to performance, are quite distinct, yet what these companies hold in common, in the performances the student attended, is the practice of *interaction*. Read relates that the invitation to interact not only induces shame in the student, but that it issues from the student's suspicion of this practice.

The student's shame is not from having to confront an innate incapacity, holding her or him back from interacting, but also from resistance. In not going with the general acceptance of the audience's participation and their interaction with the performers in performance, he or she is made a spectator to her own, his own, resistance, its exercise now a shameful act, as well as to the interactive spectacle, with which she is, he is, complicit. The sense of shame is double, unfolding from the separation of the student from the action, according to an optic of judgement—the student's self-exclusion from interaction—and enfolding a failure to answer the call to participate, where it is felt again (the literal meaning of *ressentiment*). The student experiences the involution common to touching touch and seeing sight, enclosing in the sarcophagus of an inward shame an outward humiliation.

Read takes his diagnosis of the student's shame along a similar path. To the communitarian values theatre is presumed to possess and promote, through practices like audience interaction, where, regardless of their denominated functions of audience or acting company, those gathered participate together, he opposes an immunisatory paradigm. Read adapts the term *immunity* from the political philosophy of Roberto Esposito, where it signifies something like the policing of the somatic borders of the body I noted earlier, except that what threatens them is not a matter

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of what they include but of what they exclude (2013:196). Immunity is granted to the individual against the common, which is the community that, in immunisatory terms, is alien, and toxic. It is granted by the introduction into, or through, the somatic defenses, into the corporeal envelope, of a little of what is alien and toxic, in an operation of *inoculating* the individual.

A word which lends itself to metaphorical expansion, this inoculation pushes through the wall of the skin and into the sarcof medium of touch an eye, an oculus, that sees from the common point of view. What it sees, the common eye, say the straight eye, the male eye, the eye that measures, of correct ratio and good reason, it sees again, hence its imbrication in ressentiment. But in being pressed like a palpating bud, the oculus, up against and embedded in the fleshy folds, by the inoculation through which immunity is granted, impregnates the individual, grafting onto it the body in common, the body politic. It thus gives rise to an individualising of the collective, in its individual instance, of one, among others, finding oneself set apart. In the collective, from its viewpoint, the individual individualises. This individualisation, from the viewpoint of the collective, is the obverse and reversal of the operation of collective individuation from the viewpoint of the *transindividual*.

Before explaining what transindividual means in this context, it is worthwhile briefly to narrate Read's conclusion with regard to contemporary practices of theatre, in which the seven historically and geographically bracketted studies (*approaches*) of *Theatre in the Expanded Field* culminate, because it seems also to regain contact with the actual practices of Minus Theatre. From the thought of immunity and from the history he maps out, beginning in the shame of human spectatorship on the death of animals, and finishing in witness to the

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mass humiliation and slaughter of populations, known as the exercise of biopower (from which realm, in Esposito's work, 'immunity' is drawn), Read determines theatre must take seriously its stake in the *shame of being human*. (The phrase is Deleuze and Guattari's, made in reference to the account of Nazi death camps in Primo Levi, who is no less pivotal for Read's thinking here as well—that we should be in no doubt as to shame at what (1994:107).) For theatre to take seriously its stake in the shame of being human is not for it to find itself guilty. Read's ultimate example, provided by Levi, is of a theatre *in* the camp, where there is no question of its culpability or of its shame at being there (2013:199-201). Where it might be thought frivolous to dress up is exactly where dressing up is most telling. (In the passage from Levi, cited by Read, a muscle-man act is performed by a thin man in a fat suit, made from layers and layers of clothing, of which, in order to complete the task of lifting a barbell, he proceeds to divest himself, and winds up in his former emaciation—the camp cook (200-1).) Theatre's guilt or shame, coming from its complicity in the relationship between biological life and power, in which biopolitics subsists, must not be made a show of, either for its own sake, or for that of its audience. For its own sake, to draw on its little replica of that larger shame could only either serve the kitsch of the overdone and the resentment doubling shame, or else serve to exclude and alienate its audience, embarrassed and self-ashamed. While to include the audience, to win it over and, calculatedly, reveal its complicity in the shame of being human, is to form a community with it, if only for the duration of the show, based on the reciprocal effect of a mutual humiliation. For the latter purpose theatre is hardly necessary, except that it hold a mirror up to society, since society does it so much better. (From this comes the view bruited to assert its dependency of theatre's irrelevance, its redundancy, whence, as an archaic art and abandoned practice, its ruin (Bharucha, 2014:22-6; Read, 2013:197).)

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Community and theatre

Read concludes with an appeal to a theatre able both to reflect on its own stakes and engage not only in shame or the humiliating task of self-justification but more expansively, in the field that is at its most expanded—hence the *expanded* field of his title—where he calls it “the performance of a *human* history.” (2013:199) This reflection and engagement reaches its highest degree in the repudiation and abjuration of performance: theatre must resist at all costs and by any means available *its own* performance (199). It must do so in the face of the human, of its acceptable, and unacceptable face, and in dissent from all accepted publics and any *Public*, of actual or speculative preponderance (199). The human, the public, of the community, of the audience, are not in themselves here being expanded to include what Colebrook names as the *post*-human or *non*-human, or even the *in*-human (her preference (2014: 163)), the bestial and animal (to which Read also adduces (2013:xxvi)), but the very notion of theatre is being expanded as problematic field, as its *own* problematic field, and therefore to the exclusion of its self-consistency. It will exclude what has hitherto given it a certain climate, geography, history, in the deadly order of their global currency, and dissent from finding common cause with the community of witness.

Its dissent and refusal will not be out of shame, or out of a shameless pride. Its dissent from and refusal to find, or to make, common cause with the community of witness—witness to the performance and repeat performances of a human history of inhumanity—will come from the invisible work of immunity. It will happen so that the immunity to the common shame at human and inhuman community, of the communitarian principle, of the resilient performance of relationality and interactivity, will be left for the invisible work to remember, while the visible detaches

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itself. Immunity, with this sense of repudiating and repelling the self-same, individualises. The theatre Read calls for reflects on itself and engages with its own shadow, as constituting community in the most general and inclusive terms of acceptance and trust, to immunise itself.

The relation to other

The theatre is the ordeal (and not the *ideal*) of each actor having pressed up against him or her this general viewpoint of a common consciousness, which is nothing less than the self, to be inoculated by it. The actor in this theatre departs, when she can, when he is able, from the confining familiar outline. She jumps, skips, dances. She takes hold in the relation-to-self of the relation-to-other, in which the inner collectivity is enfolded. He goes as far from the confines of his own shadow as he possesses strength and courage to do. She recognises in the familiar outline herself. She sees herself in the purely visible, which her trust in the situation of the workshop allows her to disown. He segregates himself from the “shadow stuffed with organs” that he knows in the most general sense is how he is seen (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:138). She is capable, like Xiaolian, of outrageous leaps, in the invisible work, that in any other arena would not be countenanced, and yet, owing to its working principle, there ensues no humiliation. He is out of control to test the limits of what trust there is in the workshop. You know, like William, such limits to be physical, a matter of a politics of powers, in developing which each actor is singly engaged. These powers of active sensation are powers of action and movement itself. They are therefore *tactical*. They inform a tactics for a collective action in Minus that is outward, founded on an inward psychic and sentient segregation of powers, or virtues, as so many viewpoints of the sarcois, uncontainable. Instead of humiliation, there is laughter. It

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explodes upon passages of the visible, in the invisible work, at the moment we try to recollect ourselves, which are like the moment in an animated cartoon the character looks down to see nothing underneath its feet.

If we are resistant to performance, it is to its confirmation of the actual status of the performed reality. In accord with this reality, bodies are enveloped, but not with swarming potentialities. The world is visible, but *purely* visible, in contradistinction to the *tangible* visible of Merleau-Ponty, in whose vicinity we have long since been with our talk of the flesh, the *sarcous*, the invisible and visible (1968:134). An apparatus of visibility confers on the world represented onstage the status of an intangible speculation, requiring of its performers suppression of the invisible viewpoints guiding and giving rise to what is represented, as a type, a character, a figuration, and scenic configuration. In the theatre, the light is dark that bears the visible field to apprehension. It has the same darkness given a reality by the outlines comprehending it. It is even made of the selfsame *stuff*—flesh, in Merleau-Ponty (144). Except that the flesh of performance is, without corporeity, borne by and on the dark. The dark, like the visibility it bears, is pure, and does not swarm with visions. It agglutinates, envelopes. It sticks together, in bodies and parts of bodies, as the embodiments and their integuments (pellicles of the *quale*, in Merleau-Ponty (131)) that it integrates. It does not fly apart.

Performance and theatre

A performer is cast to have the status of a reality confined to a shadow, a dream. She does not detach herself, to skip and dance. He does not taste words between the words, in the linings of the words, but constrains

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himself just to the words and the properties of the words in their correct lineation. The words of others are not heard. Only those whose intention has been weighed and judged and identified as belonging to *us* are used. Singularities pass before the senses, for the ears to touch of the audience, for the eyes to savour of onlookers, in a succession familiar from the parable of the cave (*RepVII*, 514a^{ff}). The human performer stands at the extremity of identity with a viewpoint that is singular even when in succession. She does not survey herself in the limitless sight of thousands, but through a pinprick. He does not step into the limitless outside of the dark shape he maintains by standing in his light. Unlike in Plato, it is the spectators who are free. Not fettered, they are free to turn away, to turn to their respective interests, and to leave, while the spectacle is bound, and, bounded by perspective, limited. (As Read says, it is never immersive *enough* (2013:199).) Out of these constraints themselves are constituted the strictures and are elicited the liberties of the performative and the spectacular community, the *us* whose words are no other's and whose actions are our own. (As Read also says, it is never enough because of the wholly immersive of the global perspective (199).) It adheres to itself in them. It takes its rationale from them.

Only when the audience leaves may the seething darkness be seen, invisibly surrounding every thing shown. At the end of the show, the performance is over. We exit into another world which does not vouchsafe its creation, as if the performance were to establish in us an ideal performativity, relationality and interactivity, of the speculative community, none of which exist, where we resume the lives of others, outside it. It is not just the safety, wherever we find it, of the cave we desire; it is the dream and shadow world of performance, cast and confined in which the performer has a reason. We borrow from its status of reality the metaphors for the roles we take on in the chaos of our lives.

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The performance given in which an audience does not discover the ground has opened beneath its feet, but rather the performance desire produces, desire for self-recognition, self-expression, in the self-agreement of the audience, as to its desire for identity, ideality, ground and reason, cancels itself out: it performs but does not complete its task. It equalises in the communicative exchange of performance the speculative nature of the purely visible and intangible the audience projects onto the stage and the spectacular character of the visible work of the performers, whose verbalisations project a community of desire, which ramifies in the cohesive and coherent action that they reproduce. The cancellation is of like by like and a mutual reinforcement of social and societal destiny. Given through theatre, by theatre, in the *expanded* field of global sodality, an ambiguity persists, because of the insistence of the performed reality that protests too much its actual status and the reversability of this insistence: that the actual status of reality consists in the fact of its performance. This reversability mirrors spectacle with speculation. The two fold against one another, and assume the indivisibility of a sealed representation in fusion with the shared horizon of its conditioning desire. The former attends to the latter's intention—the one fatal, according to the fissile potentiality of the other. But the field so folded is structured in extensity for the reason that it is also the space of others, which Deleuze calls *structure of the other* (2004:323-5, 351-2; 2004a:341-58; as *Other-structure*, Joe Hughes places some emphasis upon it (2009:12-4, 177-8)), while it is structured intensively by the operation of an inner collectivity to which Gilbert Simondon gives the term *transindividual* (2013:165ff).

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The Other-structure and ensemble

In the context of working out the idea in practice, the structure of the other, or Other-structure, pertains to the part of the invisible work of preparation that is *ensemble*, together. But still this does not mean it is able to be seen, working together. Ensemble carries a distinct meaning of *resonating* in the group—which is why it is useful for talking about musical groupings, and why it is adopted by dramatic groupings—that will be discussed in the section to follow. Ensemble work is characterised by being tightly structured and integrated, but not necessarily in agreement or accord. Counterpoint and improvisation are especially apt to being labelled ensemble work in positive evaluation and as a term of validation. Disparate expressive forces then come together in work that is all the more virtuosic for lacking virtuosos: the greater the complexity, the difficulty in coming together, the greater the disparation in the group's expressive forces, the more highly regarded the ensemble. The Other-structure describes both something of the *how* and *where* of the ensemble.

I have already alluded by negative example to the performance which tracks an artistic intention attending only to its speculative line by disallowing to swarm the possibilities of which, in fact, it is the product. Such editing out of the momentary in favour of the durational belongs for its execution not only to the director in rehearsal, belongs as part not only of her, his, or my, job description. But the judgement of what works and of what can be considered a passage of the visible must concern just as much the actor in preparation. In the workshop, devising, on the floor, rehearsing, each actor will also look to the others. But she or he does not look for a confirming gesture, for approbation or for opprobrium. The judgement of the others is relegated to second place after the trust

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developed over hours, days and years of working together. It extends to everyone present, since every one who performs during the preparatory period risks a shame individually articulated, intensively, and the humiliation of showing parts of themselves, differences in themselves, externally and extensively, in the space formed by and for the invisible work. All present follow the principle that each is similarly vulnerable and at risk in any other. But this is to put it negatively and as a cancelation of difference in the concord and consensus of the group about a space free from negative emotions and of a general passivity where we are all empathy and exceedingly nice to one another. Rather it is the case that shame is not avoided however much the director, actors, anyone present would reinforce the active qualities, like courage or commitment. Put positively, what is understood, what I, as a director, require of myself to foster the understanding and acknowledgement of, is that the space of work is always dangerously alive with possibilities and tendencies for which there is no good measure and no decent rationale. This life is of the virtual, unconscious and irrational. It takes up the powers and virtues of each individual, but in a collective individuation, of the group's energetic expenditure, which in itself possesses the law that is of its condition or direction, on the horizon of the specific tolerances of its psychic and sensory materials. My job as a director is to monitor, to take the temperature of actions and to evaluate movements, tendencies and possibilities, to catch symptoms on the fly, as they surface in the space of the invisible work. But what explains how the space is a structure of the other is that each actor looks to every other one present for what they themselves cannot see, that can only be seen and felt from the other's standpoint, in the way, Deleuze writes, of "possible worlds" (2004:323). These are worlds the possibility of which condition the space: their possibilities both structure and constitute its own.

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A shared language, which, despite its linguistic diversity in performance, is, for Minus, English, enables both the acknowledgement and understanding of the space being structured by the other, from what is unseen and unfelt by any one, as well as providing the means to confer reality on the possible worlds constituting it and structuring it. (“[W]hence the foundation of the lie inscribed within language itself.” Deleuze writes (2004:324).) A shared language in the studio where we work confers reality on the possible—on *what is possible*—as such. After laughing, to recollect ourselves, we talk. Referring to the other's function as a centre of mutual envelopment and reciprocal implication in the relation-to-self, and, here, in the individuation of the group, Deleuze writes—“It is this role of language as a result of the values of implication or the centres of envelopment which endows it with its powers within internal resonance systems.” (324) The ensemble who works in the other-structured space is such an internal resonance system. So is the actor.

The transindividual

Although I am dealing with the structure of the other in the extensity of a space, in terms of the development of the ensemble and its spatial explication, Deleuze is drawing it in (2004:325), in centres of envelopment and implication, towards the intensity, that however expressive, is entailed in the interiorisation of difference, which I would rather ascribe to Simondon's transindividual. Deleuze writes it is “not the other which is another I, but the I which is an other, a fractured I.” (324) In considering Deleuze's Other-structure to be for the extensity of the ensemble what Simondon's transindividual is for the intensity of the actor, and the former to offer the collective what the latter does the relation-to-self, I am not valorising one over the other. Both are necessary, structure of other and

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transindividual.

Simondon's account differs from Deleuze's, in their respective concepts, by distinguishing between a collective individuation and a psychic individuation. In fact, the two accounts differ only in how they fold the issue. Just as Read's view of theatre is from the visible, in the expanded field of its publics, even as it repudiates representing a public and abjures the performance of pure visibility, and just as the view that I am presenting is from the standpoint of the invisible and from the invisibility in performance of my work with Minus as a director, one folds outwards, what the other folds inwards. The movement of one is centripetal, while that of the other is centrifugal. From this standpoint, there is implication in the somatic and envelopment in the corporeal, resonating in the space of the ensemble. While from the other, there is explication in the sarcous, and development by flying apart, in disorder, disorganisation and decomposition, when each of these is given a specific value.

The question of value is of the essence, because of the judgements that accumulate around even the smallest gesture made by an actor, that swarm around every side of an active intention. If there is here a law it is of the multiplicity, which is irreducible to the structure of the other, but which the transindividual takes up, in the gestures, movements and expressions, of Xiaohui or Nell, or Bill. These have no centres. They are *decentring*, even when propelled towards a centre. They fall out of step, and throw out of phase. This law of the multiplicity it is the nature of the sarcous to betray.

In the context of working out the idea in practice, the value of transindividuality is to go directly, but not immediately, since the role of flesh is to mediate, to the fracturing of the *I*. It goes to the death, by a

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thousand cuts or cracks, of any performance presupposing continuity or unity, to the performance that dies to itself, in the singular performance of Nietzsche's high-wire artist. He, it will be remembered, falls to his death from the single line on which he presumed to be suspended. For Simondon, the death of the high-wire artist has the power of a parable, since it causes the crowd to scatter, testing the resolve of Zarathustra.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra is, Simondon indicates, the model of the transindividual (2013:273). He is so for the test he undergoes, of solitude (273). His solitary ordeal begins in his choosing to stay, not to scatter like the others in the crowd, and, bearing the body of the high-wire artist like a brother on his shoulders, burying him, delivering his obsequies, it extends unto his new resolve. He resolves, from his mountain cave, to let his animals lead him and to lead himself only those who, breaking from the public mass and herd of people, wish to be (Nietzsche, 1969:47-53). On him is imposed an ordeal he alone, as *Zarathustra*, can undergo and which he must undergo alone. What is revealed by it, by its disconnection from others, is not, as in Deleuze, a world *without* others (2004a:341-58), but a sense of individuality, born in multiplicity, that, in transindividuality, surpasses it—of the others one *is*, in the sense of *becoming*, which is the only sense allowed, by either Simondon, Deleuze or Nietzsche.

Ensemble and transindividual

One is, one individuates, one becomes, by surpassing oneself. But, to surpass myself, I have to overcome the sense others give of me as much as my own *I am*. The transindividual, rather than the *individual*, is found in the insistence that here, at the extremity of individual differentiation, which is only the horizon of individual becoming, it is yet a matter of

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relations and of the law of relations found in the multiplicity. The transindividual multiplicity you encounter on your own is not reducible to people or to personological potentialities you find within yourself. But neither is the *ensemble* reducible to the others or even to the *us* constituting, constructing it. Both assert impersonal powers. Moreover, the impersonal powers the transindividual and Other-structure each bring into play can be said to be *de*-personalising. To become Zarathustra is not to fulfil a personal destiny any more than it signifies the fulfilment of a collective destiny, or signals the completed arc of a performance, auto-affection or characterisation. To become Zarathustra, as much as the role of the transindividual in psychic individuation, as much as the role of the ensemble in collective individuation, might be summarised as becoming creative.

Inner collectivity

Simondon's insight, Zarathustra's discovery, of the inner collectivity does not rest on its accord, the accord and congruence in the concept of the selfsame, but on its trial and contest. It does not dispense or allocate parts which would be the various and diverse parts of the self. Simondon's statement that the living organism is a *theatre* of individuation is not of this order (2013:27). Neither is psychic individuation by way of the transindividual the theatre that shines a light illuminating the truth of the self, as if all you had to do was to disown the self to dissolve, detach and dismember it. Or, as if one could contrive to direct the different members making up the familiar outline of the shadow cast by the self, like a cast of characters or types, it is not a choreography moving them, you, us, out of the way of blocking the light. We do not, once we recognise ourselves, in ourselves, our inner collectivity, armed with this

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knowledge renounce the dark.

No part of the self is undetermined. It is fully determined, but dark, or dead in the manner of Hijikata's audience (see preceding section). Rather than being the system of individuating the *self*, whereby the self *becomes*, Simondon's theatre of individuation is one in which the sarcous is animated by the other, and others, that captures, at the extremity of its differentiation from itself the fractured *I*. Shadows disperse, self dissolves and, before resolving, before its darkening determination, there is revealed what is best described as a *slice* of chaos, a movement of cutting through, but without yet composing or organising, only referring to the chaos (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994:35).

Chaos, belief and community

The transindividual slices the chaos of a life (Deleuze, 2001:28). The contest or trial of the transindividual is experienced on the slice. A plane emerges which gives to be composed, constituted, organised and made use of what it refers to in the chaos of a life. It is revealed all in one movement, of throwing, slicing through, cracking up, flying apart, each time. Its revelation is not of a chaos that exceeds a life. Its revelation is of a life that can be measured only by this cosmic excess. It reveals a life that in the extremity of its differentiation through the ordeal of the transindividual, as in the extremity of its extinction, can be equal to the cosmos. The transindividual brings, then, to a life the touch of the chaosmos (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014:5), both chaos and cosmos combined, where it is neither subject nor object of this touch, but immanent with it, of the same flesh, as Merleau-Ponty writes (1968:144).

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Simondon is not shy about drawing from the ordeal and its revelation its religious implications. He calls the transindividual the source of all religions (2013:273). But just as the transindividual dissolves the subject and object of experience in the flesh, from it is entailed a reciprocal dissolution of the social subject, along with the object of *society*. Hence, Simondon writes that it is wrong to claim religions have their source in the social collectivity (273). On the contrary, it is not first from society at large or from the community that religions flow but from the ordeal of the solitary, of the hermit, at its extreme edge, from out of the desert and down from the cave. (Nietzsche is insistent on this point: Zarathustra *descends* (1969:53). But so is St. Paul: the direction of early Christian aspiration is down (Siedentop, 2015:67).) Therefore the continuity and unity of relations of social concourse such as are grounded in shared belief are rooted in the discontinuity and disunity, in the disagreement and dissensus of the transindividual, whose chance encounter with the other throws her out of phase with herself, and cracks open for him the darkness of the socially determined.

For Lingis, this disruption of common acceptance extends to the community founded on rationalism as such. Throughout his books he sets out scenes of contact with others in which a chance encounter throws into disarray the rational consensus he identifies with the philosophy of Kant (see especially 1994, 1998). Lingis approaches the transindividual from the other side of the fold, from the standpoint of an already coherent world picture and consistent social system, of which, as a tenured university professor, he is representative. But this picture and this system are placed into such doubt, such radical doubt, as to bring about the dehiscence of the former and the breakdown of the latter, along the lines on which it is rationally conceived. This occurs because of the presupposition I have of the imperative working that sustains in me a

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sense of balanced judgement and that, in founding a relation to truth and truthful dealings, is the foundation of my self-worth. It is an inner concord I presume to into which the other irrupts. The imperative of reason orders me to grant that the other works by a similar, if not the same imperative, and is not lacking in reason or, outside reason, lost to it in *unreason*. But if I grant this to her, I grant she is not excluded for not excluding herself: it is to the other's relation to himself that I appeal, to his invisible face, the face he turns to himself, that I turn. In doing so, I expose myself, my own presumptions, my presumptuousness, and my socially inculcated beliefs. In the other what is my own is contested, on trial. The guilt I feel at turning away from the beggar in Queen St. or in Cairo cuts me along the line of my shame. Lingis records again and again the attitude, faced with the other, commanded by the other's imperative, he strikes. He averts his face. He seeks to cover his own nakedness to the other's gaze, which is the nakedness of his eyes (1994:32), and to hide his shame. Lingis says the same thing as Simondon, the other is not presupposed by and does not follow, in her exclusion from, and is not entailed by, in a kind of proleptic liberality of inclusion, the rational community, but comes before (10).

Theatre and transindividual

The precedence of the transindividual contributes to the quite other thing of the relation to self its precedence also in the invisible work, particularly under the pressure of an engagement with the notion of species-death. The private death is somehow *publicisable* under the pressure of extinction. It presses on you in a way it did not before the thought of human extinction in the Anthropocene and an inhuman future (Colebrook, 2014), which, in the encounter, is addressed by the

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transindividual. (It does not press on you for the first time: Lingis wrote in 1989—

The staggering quantity of nuclear weapons this civilization has now stockpiled—the explosion of less than ten percent of them could now reduce the human species to extinction—individuates each speaker of language and each participant in a civic order, through which this arsenal is maintained, in an unprecedented way. (Lingis, 1989:1)

—in an *equally* unprecedented way, we might now say.) This, in any case, was my thinking in putting into second place ensemble work in Minus, or in using the ensemble to explore the ongoing ordeal of life in *a* life, in one of its individuating instances. I was attracted to the idea that theatre, perhaps better than cinema, constrained as it is by mechanical reproduction of lived duration, perhaps better than live music, which even in Cage eschews or absorbs the music of the flesh and moving body, perhaps better even than dance, which in its own way abstracts from flesh the musicality of the moving body, that theatre might be the artform best suited to show what is individual and therefore what begins and ends in the individuating body, what is uniquely other and yet itself. (I am indebted in putting it like this to a long passage from neurologist Oliver Sacks cited by Lingis in a footnote, part of which runs—“for it is only an ever-changing, melodic, and living play of forces which can recall *living* beings into their own living being.” (2007:134n8)) I was attracted by the idea that the *our* of our theatre might be displaced by an *other* for another theatre in a *theatre of an other*. I wanted to stage, before the visible work in front of an audience, the individuating body.

The inner collectivity of the transindividual, coupled with the Other-structure of the Minus group, gives a means not of translating one into

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the other, or of mutual exchange based in equivalence, but of the interpretation of the outward signs, the symptoms, of one into those of others—the others being in this case the group, the one being the individual actor (the others who are one in the case of the ensemble, the one who is others in the case of the transindividual, in keeping with Deleuze and Guattari's magic formula: MONISM = PLURALISM (2014:21)). Interpretation is in no way able to go by one-to-one correspondence. It has to pass through multiplicity, one multiplicity explicating what is implicated in the other multiplicity. This is to say, since a multiplicity is not numerical and irreducible to the multiple (Deleuze, 2004:231), it is not to be a rational operation, assuming, for its elements and components, a good or common measure, one by the other, or even their *adequacy* one to the other. But on each side of the fold it multiplies interpretations that are mutually incommensurable, as if the diagnoses of a team of doctors who can neither agree on how to read the symptoms or on what they might signify as meaningful signs. Such a treatment as might organise signs in accord with the diagnosis of symptoms, regardless of success or failure, is not here the matter in question. Neither is a *theatrical* treatment at issue, organising outward appearances according to a dramatic logic, but one in conflict with logic, contesting organisation, and entirely regardless of success or failure, in any accepted sense of these terms and their evaluations. What is implicit in the inner collectivity is rather a *disorganisation* to be expressed and, if anything, amplified in the *disorder* of the outer collectivity, that is—to resonate with it in the ensemble. While *disorganisation* carries with it the import of the body without organs, valorising Artaud's invocation of it by evoking it at its most literal, *disorder* is to be valued as a property of a life, in a lively disorder, that is always to be chosen and preferred over a deadly order (Zhuang zi, 2013:5), like that order commanded by the Anthropocene or Capitalocene (Moore, 2016).

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Body without organs

A word further needs to be said about Artaud's invention and how it serves as a model in practice. Simply put, a body without organs provides a model for imitation inasmuch as it is valued, but of which the actual practical value is in experimentation. Introduced by Deleuze and Guattari into the experiment in schizoanalysis of *Anti-Oedipus*, the body without organs figures the fullness of a liberatory potential (2008:372). For Lingis, in his experiment of a savage philosophy and a savage semiotic, the same for savages as capitalists, it extends a skin *effervescing* with sexual excitations and intensities, both painful and pleasurable (1983:45). Full and content, the body without organs is, writes Lingis, also closed and sterile (45). It thus recalls the paradox of a transcendental surface of *representation*, described in the earlier section of that name. Although closed, it is the closed interior of an open exterior; although sterile, from it issue moments of subjectivity, that seethe over its surface, in a froth of which it is yet productive, to propagate like waves.

The body without organs originates in the experiment of Artaud's radio broadcast, *To Have Done with the Judgement of God* (1995:281-307), that gives Deleuze and Guattari the name for the plateau in *A Thousand Plateaus* instructing you on how to build one (2014:173-93). (In fact, as much as it vouches for its emulation, this manual warns against it, for reasons to become clear when we consider Artaud's original.) In the final lines of his script, Artaud calls for man, or god, and god, to be gutted of organs. (In the French, man and god share the same masculine article, marking an elision between the two, and producing too an ambiguity in the text as a whole as to whether it is god's or man's judgement, or both, with which we are to have done (Artaud, 2003).) The reason gutting is required is that from *his* (see in parenthesis above) organs can be

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inferred the judgement imposing their organisation, by which man is sick and ill-constructed (1995:307).

The first and authentic judgement ingenerated man with an organising principle making him a puppet to his automatisms, an *animalcule*, god—the ambiguity persists as to who (2003; 1995:307). That this is the *authentic* judgement is made clear by Artaud, since now another, a *final*, autopsy must be performed (307). The second judgement, the one of experimental significance, is given in the voice of Artaud (1947), whose innate *inauthenticity*—wearing, behind his mask of cruelty, another mask—has never been in question. It commands that we must choose to be stripped bare, for the *animalcule* to be scratched out, *god,/ and with god/ his organs* (1995:307). The organs in question seem to include not only those of divine providence, or autopsy, but also those both innate and genital. It is here perhaps that we see Artaud at his most malicious: for excoriating, in the *animalcule*, the germ of life, and, by extension, those who carry it into life—which is why I have kept the gender as masculine: the feminine is potentially excluded from Artaud's judgement. (He affects, elsewhere, a more wilful and self-directed cruelty in lines I cite for their resonance with certain themes raised so far: “The fact is I was being pressed/ right up to my body/ and right up to the body/ and it is then/ that I exploded everything/ because my body/ is never to be touched.” (at Shaw, 2016:183).)

To arrive at last, in the final lines of Artaud's script, at the body without organs is the liberation Deleuze and Guattari talk about (2008:372), in a deliverance from automatisms, as from the *animalcule* of a germinal god, as from the judgement of the organisation of life in general, to *a* life, which is another life. For Artaud, the remaking, the stripping, the gutting, the grating, all of this ordeal and suffering is worth it to learn once more

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how to dance *inside out*, a penultimate inversion, ultimately reversed, since inside out will in the end be true side in, will be in the right position (2003; 1995:307). I am not trying to recuperate to the body without organs its good sense in the end, or to insist on a reclamation of truth and right, and on a return to the order of a common past, but drawing attention to a detachment from that order and a dismemberment from it: a disorganisation. Put negatively, this is in the detachment of affect, in the affectless mask of cruelty, and its malice: but these also work positively to break from such an order. I am looking forward to a detachment of parts that does not work to reaffirm the whole, but dismembers parts, in a body without organs, to forget their *remembering*. I am looking forward to disorganisation as a true side in, being the right position for a compositional method, that does not stop short of the positive in the negative or repeat, absorb or absolve it.

Disorganisation

Minus's experiment with a body without organs began with me turning up at the workshop disorganised, nonplussed. I mean, it had been, up until that time, all very well to run exercises and play games that had, in the past, already been confirmed as adequate to the task of building trust—sensitising participants to the exterior validity of viewpoints other than their own, such as goes to the initial phases of making an ensemble. Now, with the internal feeling of the group entrained, I came to the workshop with nothing planned or organised for us to do. I was out of ideas for *us*, but I had a couple that I expected to prove divisive, because *mine*, directed toward tasks not held in common. As a result of introducing my ideas, I envisaged myself becoming and being judged less trustworthy in the eyes of the group, Will, Yevgeniya, Nell, Clarissa, even to losing their

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trust. Shame too, but also courage, had its role to play, and I expected some small humiliation as a consequence of owning up to and of stating ideas that are, in their character, not altogether positive, happy or nice. (Ruth Kanner, an Israeli theatre practitioner, speaks of her *dream* and her *true desire* as being to come *with nothing* to rehearsals, for which she so far has lacked the courage (2014:89).) I thought I might be suspected of what I had feared doing with the ten theses of a sunrise dialectic—of taking deliberate steps to introduce into the group ideas which are best excluded, that do not belong, despite the name *Minus Theatre*, to its sense of belonging, destructive ideas, like *theatre is bad* (see *Representation* section).

We sat on the floor of the studio. I had not wanted to do any of the usual things—no walking, no warm-up. I confided I had come with nothing, disorganised. Then I took a leap into the deep end. I went straight to perhaps the unhappiest notion, because I spoke about the time we are living in as bounded. I said that anthropogenic climate change opens the prospect—as well as closing it in—of a bounded duration for human life. It is a prospect, however, that cannot be relegated to the realms of generality, to the realms of an abstract horizon of extinction of only a notional and general humanity. It takes in the individual inasmuch as it produces a psychic global climate, and, whether that climate is one of paranoia or not is up to the individual. (Here in the group, which I did not say, it goes to our collective individuation, as well as to the psychic individuation I have dealt with in terms of transindividuality.) What cannot be doubted, even if we deny climate change (are we climate change deniers?), is that this time, called by some the Anthropocene, is contemporary with us.

I am wondering, I said, about how to become, in our work together,

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contemporary with this time. It occurs to me that it may be possible to make work adequate to the horizon of extinction and that this possibility arises from its taking-in of the individual and from the individual's taking-up of and adequation to its individual imperative. It is a matter of this challenge being articulated individually that is properly called *transindividual*. I therefore proposed we should make use of the invisible work we do in the studio workshop to create a good place to be in, mentally and emotionally, to face this imperative, which is no other than the boundedness of individual human life in *a* life—and *a* death. I suggested we each consider our participation in the group and what we give to the space of the work as individual, as unique, as each one's alone, placing ourselves, at the extremity of our differentiation, in the one good place. My own contribution would be, from my own enjoyment of languages, in the work preparatory to public performance, and in performances, to enjoin you to speak in your own, your first language, your language of expressive preference.

I said I had this idea of theatre being capable, in a way no other artform is, of showing, dramatising, and expressing individually the experience of each one of us in his and her lived duration; that the boundedness, that is its own, of theatre work, both in performance and in preparation, could, therefore, be of value; that it might gain, by its temporaryness, a value in contemporaneity, not acceded to in other types of arts of duration or performance where the body is present. The transience of the visible work is a way to show not just the passing of time of individual experience, but also the ephemerality, the passingness, of that experience. To focus, in practice, on what this possibility might entail, because I could see the pragmatic sensibility of Yevgeniya and the moral sensibility of Clarissa gently bucking under all this talk, I wondered aloud about the relevance of Artaud's body without organs. This had, afterall,

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been of contemporary relevance to Hijikata's Ankoku Butoh, and in New Zealand, to the practices of both Michael Parmenter, by way of Min Tanaka, and Douglas Wright, in dance theatre and choreography.

What are then organs? asked Yevgeniya.

Your limbs, members, head, as well, of course, as your heart, eyes and other senses.

She laughed. How could we disorganise the individual?

Might it not be possible to distribute organs, as the physical componentry of each individual actor, around the group, and therefore over the space?

How?

Perhaps, I said, William could walk on your legs? So he would not have his own. You would take them. But you would see through his eyes. He would see as if from the moving platform of your legs.

Yevgeniya got up. At first she walked with a gathered intention. But the impression that this intention was her own started to fray when she looked to Bill to provide it. For a moment, before Bill's intent became clear, before he tried to signal to her what it was, first with his hands, then by shuttling his gaze from the centre of the studio out towards the black curtaining its perimeter, just for a moment it was unclear whether Yevgeniya was in charge.

She had instinctively altered her posture walking, deferring to the different gait of Bill, her head-direction disconnected from the direction

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her lower body took. The separation was slight but remarkable. But the impression fell apart, disappearing with Bill's hand-signals. Then, when I asked him just to use his eyes, it vanished once more when the expedient became available to him of making a sign with his eyes, rather than simply *looking*, from the moving platform of Yevgeniya's legs. It was so obvious, his way of showing her what he wanted, it was funny. We laughed and Yevgeniya rejoined us. Bill sat where he had been from the beginning, on the floor with us.

We conferred and decided we were being too literal. Nell said she thought it was too difficult, if this is what is meant by making a body without organs. It was too difficult to sustain, said Bill. Yevgeniya agreed, because it was too difficult to do so in a way suggestive of and sustained over a lived duration of the individual. If that is what we are trying to achieve, added Nell. But, for that moment, we had all seen something, Clarissa gave a nod at this, and there was the indication, however slight, of a direction for further experiment. From it we drew courage. It was the shortest possible passage of visible work that we had observed. Yevgeniya's bodily integrity had wavered, for a *beat*, and Bill had, for a moment, given his eyes over, uncannily, to her.

Yevgeniya herself remarked the change. She had seen something not through her eyes. But her conscious intention had corrected the anomalous sensibility before she could fully experience the alteration in her perception, just as Bill's desire to perform the experiment by consciously signalling his intention to Yevgeniya had brought it to a close. In the laughter that resounded afterwards might be found further reason for the group's commitment to pursuing the experiment, further and, for some, greater reason than any individually attributable, like, for instance, a will to explore out of curiosity or for the sake of research, since the

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laughter gave the truest indication of belonging.

What was surprising, however, was less that something could be caught onto in this experiment, then that each of the Minuses, singly, if only for being part of the group, was able to see in it what might work for them, that they might then trust, and, trusting, try out for themselves. I have, in the foregoing, for the same reason that Deleuze and Guattari name it one of *philosophy's most powerful motifs* (1994:108), and therefore, as I have taken it to be, one of *theory's* as well, placed great emphasis on *shame*. I have charted my theoretical course here by its constancy. But it is rather *courage* that prevails in practice, and its *shape* is quite different. Whereas shame clings closely together in a tight fold, the space of courage opens out, setting a coordinate that is far from the determined self or subject.

You have sketched before you the barest notion of a possible layout ahead, towards the wavering and possibly illusive goal of which you gather all of your forces, powers, your virtues, unwavering, to jump. You commit yourself, and, in Minus, the body without organs was the first time I had asked for such a commitment to be made. You fail. You succeed. Neither has meaning: the humiliating defeat secreted in the dark of your invisible self is not realised; because there is no humiliation, it does not unfold. You are not just not alone. Your self propels itself to the other, the indeterminate. It suffers briefly and privately through the ordeal of the transindividual. It moves to what is not itself. In moving to what is not itself, it also becomes other in the eyes of others. In surpassing yourself for yourself, you are vulnerable, you also risk yourself in others. But it is possible, through the course of doing this practical work, that you acclimatise yourself to its challenge, and surprise yourself, as the actor you never intended to be and the performer you never intended to become. It is this possibility, as such, at stake in a theatre of

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an other.

Then the following experiment took place: instead of distributing the body, we disorganised its intentional resources. These resources had been what recuperated and appropriated to an order of intent that which had previously and appreciably escaped that order. The recourse Bill had made to the sign gesturing to Yevgeniya the direction he desired her legs to take him in turned on a gesture: the communication of a sign. It connected to the imposture of a conscious, rational order, and to the imposition of a judgement, of a determinative will, organising the exchange. But this organisation, along the lines of narration and narratability, consequently, gave itself to be disorganised. Instead, then, of Yevgeniya taking Bill's legs, the gesture—in the former experiment, the eyes shuttling—could be taken by one from an other.

The next experiment turned on someone taking another's gesture or movement, because of its meaning in the context of a story. The story, I suggested, should be more rather than less meaningful for the removal of its organs to take place. It should have biographical significance. The personal investment of the story-teller should make its expression all the more obvious in its automatisms, like the telegraphing William did with his eyes, overdoing to reclaim and recuperate the less-than-meaningful to communicative exchange. Such meaningful moments are those in which affect and embodied expression cohere, developing the consistency of memory and forming centres of signification, implication, envelopment. These centres are our organs. They are principles organising each one, the outside of which can be copied, taken, because, although principles are invisible, they are still seeable. What the operation should remove is their insides, their functioning in the signifiatory context of the organism.

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Nell told a story about playing with marbles as a child. At some point, her childish self had decided, perhaps due to the appeal of the smooth roundness and glass weight of the marbles, to swallow one. She swallowed another, and a couple more. Then she convulsed, and, tossing her head, she choked. The story ended. Naturally, nobody knew what to do. The rest of us stood around the outside of the studio, but the story had ended.

Nell did it again. This time Yevgeniya joined her, playing with the marbles. There was a counterpoint, a reflection of Nell, who was not her, whose rhythm answered Nell's slower with a more staccato and abrupt movement. Nell, flicking a marble to Yevgeniya, watched its whole transit across the floor, which gave life to the imaginary object or element. Yevgeniya flicked it back. Both lowered their faces to the level of the imaginary game and each one used the same system of thumb flicking from crook of index finger. Yevgeniya matched Nell's movements, but at a different rate, out of kilter. Spaces opened in the counterpoint for other repetitions. When the toss of the head came, Yevgeniya's head toss did not mirror Nell's, but you could see it was Nell's, since Nell lay in Yevgeniya's gaze, and this gaze did not flinch. It laid out a level for the action into which others might be introduced.

Nell played with the marbles. Clarissa and Will joined the game. The action ran its course, from flicking imaginary marbles, to choking on them. But, with the addition of further players, there was not a corresponding increase in the emotional intensity of the scene. At its core, it remained with the counterpointed rhythms of Nell and Yevgeniya. Rather, two more participants did add another dimension, a dimension of repetition over time, since it took four actors longer to perform each gesture organising the story. This suggested carrying over the spatial

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disorganisation of the action, its distribution between bodies separated in space, to a temporal disorganisation, over several bodies separated in time, engaging in the action according to different timings.

When I say the intensity did not alter profoundly with either two or four people working together, I mean something like an affective medium with extensity spatialising a certain quality that goes with a distinct quantity, of *heat*, for instance. Discernment of where is hottest, unless the differential is minimal, does not require measurement. I am suggesting, as set out above, that this medium, although it contracts or expands in the empty zones between bodies, is of the body, of the *sarcous* body, in which distinct quantities come to have an ascertainable quality in the flesh. Such a quality would be one of divinity, for example. Moreover, it is not too preemptive to say that such a quality is also *decomposable*, into its constituent quantities, of the fluids, gases and solids from which the flesh is composed: these are even the murmurings, echoes, traces, and the scents and stains it leaves behind, to subsist, or tail out over time (Lingis, 1994:137). But if this quality may be discerned in the empty zone between bodies, it might be said that it is not, even at the extremity of its individual differentiation as part of the autobiography of one person, an intensity of that person alone, or of one flesh—that it has or opens a perceptible level or space in a theatre of individuation (cf. Simondon, 2013:27), operating between the two poles of ensemble and transindividual. The body without organs, but not as an operation of disorganisation, in its other experimental version might here be adduced, where it is sterile, *implex* (Deleuze, 2004:288), yet productive of surface excitations, which are as so many views from a multiplicity of standpoints and a manifold of aspects.

Following the example of the connective intensity between the two,

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Yevgeniya and Nell, William and Nell began a scene together, in a story taken from the context of Bill's personal history. In it, Bill anxiously anticipates a phone call. The phone rings. He picks it up, listens, and hears terrible news. Distressed, he puts the phone back down. Nell initially took the gesture of his head turning to hear the phone ringing.

As Bill reached the telephone table, he looked back at her, and she turned away, using the same turn, but this time away and not towards the phone. He now, having acknowledged her presence, hesitated over picking it up.

She turned. He hesitated. He picked up. She turned. He listened, then returned to stand beside her. His distress, occasioned by the terrible news from the imaginary telephone, was the same. She responded to it by repetitive and irrational head-turns. Yevgeniya entered the scene. She stood behind Bill and Nell.

In anticipation of the phone-call, which she, as an observer, knew was coming, she took Bill's gesture of anxious anticipation, awaiting the phone-call, rubbing his thighs. When he received the terrible news, she also took the head-turns.

Clarissa entered the scene from beside the telephone table. She also picked up the phone. Bill heard terrible news and Clarissa held out the phone to him. Then he turned to Yevgeniya and Nell, who in unison turned their heads away.

They turned away in confirmation of a personal trauma become impersonal. But the dramatic intensity of this, an impersonal trauma, being shared across the space and time of what I will call the *piece*, since it is no longer a story, and neither simply a scene, nor a play, remained

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Bill's, inalienably, as if his body, and this experience on its surface, could be seen here in the exploded view. Each thing each did exacerbated it but also showed how it goes together—and I use the present tense because the experience so experimented with still goes together like this, still moves, *still stirs*. (The words are Beckett's. By them, I mean to bring to mind, alongside the exploded view, the vibratory image of Beckett's *Stirrings Still*, which suspends judgement, since judgement must be suspended, as to whether stirring continues, ceases or has ceased. Because the effect of memory is to take from the singular event its singularity and alienate the inalienable trauma by its multiple visitations, it substitutes for the singular the plural. *Stirring* is displaced by a multiplicity of subsequent and consequent *stirrings*. These stirrings, just as in the exploded view, show how things go. In Beckett, they are present, and as present, yet to come. They possess the temporal ambiguity of the word, *still*—meaning, exactly, not yet still, but ephectic: undecidably and irresolutely immobile (Olney, 1998:275).) No longer was it Bill's story, neither was it the group's. It became irrecoverable to either narrative subject. But in losing this inner thread or line of force, its intensity was not forfeited.

Those who came into it, were taken up by it, *without* there being an organising principle of narrative or communicative intent. Just the work subsisted in it, with which it was of a piece—just the tasks, the actions, the movements, expressions, and gestures of each. It opened out into these, emptying like a surface, filling like a skin. It fit, as a piece, into the work too. Like a function or feature of it, it gave the work we were doing on the body without organs its first composition. But if it could be so determined, something on which we unanimously and excitedly agreed, it was for bringing forth the ground of invisibility, like Deleuze says the lightning-bolt causes the blackness behind it to leap towards us

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(2004:36).

One and an other

The bringing forth from the darkness of the shadows we all cast of the invisible work by a piece of the visible, a shard, was as Deleuze writes of the lightning-bolt: it is that singularity which causes the background to leap forward, with all of its latent charge. What was general and indefinite is in an instant seen to hold all potentiality already differentiated, of which the lightning-bolt is but one difference actuated—that the lightning does not light itself but takes a slice of the chaosmos.

Between the poles of the transindividual and the ensemble that we had used the body without organs to bring onto the same plane, so neither acted as a principle organising it, there is a charge. It can, like an electrical charge in the air, be felt as an intensity passing between two people, as between Yevgeniya and Nell in the earlier experiment, that produces a field. Awareness of the intensity is not constant, but as of a field of plural forces, fluctuates. It comes in—or rather *on*—waves of duration (Lingis, 1998:29). Where the transindividual wants to fold the intensity in, the ensemble wants to fold it out, the one to enfold in intensity, the other to unfold in extensity. The tension, I am about to say, delivers its charge to the air—becomes visible—in the mutual transports of fields and particles, each presupposing the existence of the other—in their transubstantiation (Lingis, 1994a:120). The particle is singular for its singularising of temporal waves and spatial fields. But it is this singularisation, this individuation, that the background attests to, in the case of the lightning, and that the waves and fields attest to, in the case of the singular intensity. It is the individual at the extremity of its

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differentiation insisted on by *a* life, irreducible to one, still irrefutably one.

The problem of one, one individual, and of the inner experiences of one, being the focus of a form of theatre, entails, at either end, that of others—the inner collectivity of the transindividual and the circumambient collectivity of the Other-structure, or, as I have styled it, the ensemble. But, just as we might say *a* life of that inner experience, there must be *an* other, a singularising of others, amounting if not in one *self*, since the social determinations of the self keep changing in the dark succession of selves off-stage, *still* amounting in one. *An* other has the feature and function of one to come, an ephectic one. While one, having made no provision for passage, remains immanent with *a* life. So one is literally aporetic. (In its literal sense, aporia comes from the Greek ἄ, meaning without, added to πορος (*poros*), meaning a passage or means of performing a journey, so: without means to perform or provisions for a journey (Olney, 1998:275).) This qualitative one goes by the quantities added by an other, of forces, powers, virtues. At its simplest, it is the taking of one's gesture by another and tactic giving back the gesture, which contact disorganises context and segregates meaning.

It composes by fractionating expression, exploding the view, in a dramaturgy of incomplete because uncompletable pieces, sustained, despite one risking oneself in an other, and in an other being most vulnerable, by pure rhythms and the improvisation of counterpoints, subsisting by being empty, one, to full, other, one going always by way of an other. This one, I directed Minus's experiments towards, we named a *theatre of the individual life*, and later, *theatre of an individual life*, without acknowledging an other towards which it could become, by departing from itself. The departure now seems assured in the

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working-out of heuristics and techniques which I will be handling of in the next sections. It seems assured in the degree and extent by which the practice of a theatre of an other developed, without yet enveloping centres or closing its borders.



Resonance

The signal feature of Minus's productions has been the use in performance before an audience of different languages, from *White Flower* (June, 2014), performed to an invited audience, through *Textured Passages* (September, 2014), part of the eponymous gallery exhibition, *Boneseed* (February, 2015), made for the Auckland Fringe Festival, *Marks of Lispector, for Clarice* (November, 2015), based on the Brazilian Portuguese author's writings, Clarice Lispector, to *At the Stock Market Meeting* (November, 2016), a work partly scripted in English, in which actors were also translating from printed sheets on the fly. Hearing, listening to languages, rather than using them to convey information, or parsing from them facts, statements and intentions of the dramatic worlds and the dramaturgical compositions where they are spoken, has also been a signal feature of the public workshops I have engaged in, with actors from the group, for the International Applied Theatre Symposium, Auckland 2015, the Waiheke Island workshop, held at the local theatre, and, alone, at the Ritual and Cultural Performance Hui and Symposium, Dunedin 2016, conducted, in the Wharenui of Araiteuru Marae—in the sacred space of the meeting house, with academics and practitioners working in the field of Performance Studies. The languages actors and performers speak are not held in common by the group, and they are not those held in common with the audience. They are not private languages. But neither are they binding the group together in its commonality and sodality. (I remarked earlier—English is the language of recourse for

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sharing thoughts and information, for reflecting on what we are doing, and for directing.)

Although a feature, differing spoken languages are secondary in the period preparing for performance and in workshops, the concern of which is to give information on the techniques and heuristics belonging to Minus. They are secondary because they do not have anything to say about the invisible work but are rather compositional elements in the visible work. (Clearly, that English is the language in common use to be spoken and heard in the invisible work is a matter of contingency; if we were undertaking this work in Germany, it would be German, and varieties of German, or if full-time on a marae, in a Maori community, it would be Te Reo Maori.) The importance of the group's linguistic diversity is that of a resource of acoustic, musical elements, to be taken up in productions negotiated in English. It has meant that it is a resource to be fostered and nourished, as it, in turn, nourishes the visible work, giving to it a linguistic richness, a depth and breadth, that composes its audible level, providing it with the richness, depth and breadth, of a *music*.

The music of languages, the richness, depth and breadth, of the musical landscape conferred on the work, the work of theatre, by linguistic diversity within the group, came to prominence and became important out of a kind of necessity imposed by the make-up of the group and by its proclivities. It was the line in the ad for Minus about English-as-second-language speakers which gained the most responses, attracting the bulk of the group's membership. But I would not have felt encouraged to repeat that line year after year without the validation of theatre as a *meta-language*, a language inclusive of other languages, both spoken and those *languages* of other art forms—Boal, it will be remembered, called

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theatre the *sum* of all imaginable languages (1985:156). Inclusion is not enough. Neither is theatre as a language. Languages had to have a value and theatre-as-language had to be evaluated. For this reason, the question to the invited audience of *White Flower* was, *Have we invented our own theatrical language?* The answer from the audience was that we had. This not only gave validity to the theatrical language in performance, since it was performed in Mandarin, Korean, Russian and English, the reception of *White Flower*, by affirming the value of their inclusion in performance, further affirmed the value *as such* of languages. Each had value intrinsically, in the difference and diversity of all. In fact, the values were transposable: different languages were valued, and so theatre had value *as a language*. Moreover, it was *our* theatre in which the different languages were valued; the value of *our* theatre was the sum of theirs, that we, in respect of language, others, had invented a theatrical language for: a language of *a* theatre of other languages. Not only was I encouraged to continue to invite speakers of other languages to participate in Minus, the reception of *White Flower* encouraged those already part of it to attribute the value of our invention, of our theatre work, as a language, to its languages, to the languages being spoken in the group. Consequently, not only I but other Minuses have been responsible for bringing in new people, and this on the basis not only that they speak another language but also on the grounds that they come from other cultures.

The specific *culture*, then, in the expanded sense, of Minus is the sum of the cultures contributing to it, which include linguistic cultures as well as technical cultures—as Boal says of languages, so the *cultures* of other artforms. But Minus is not greater than any. It is the sum of its contributing cultures for being *less-than*, a language among others, not *in*

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addition to, but that can be *subtracted*, having, in the same way, a culture, that consists in a means of valuing, from the make-up of the group, before it is a means of doing, in the group, and a *technical* culture of the group.

The question of ownership becomes confused. I said earlier that if each of us in the group would place in the work some value each could own, mine would be the value I attach to linguistic diversity. But this diversity is *others'* before it is mine, *theirs* before it is ours, and cannot be owned. What is *theirs* is indeed what is valued in *ours*. I find I cannot repeat what Deleuze and Guattari say about their own collaboration—"Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd." (2014:1) What they say about their way of working together invokes a crowded inwardness. Although it seeks to multiply without hierarchy or binaries, it still places brackets around the set, the *in* crowd, the *in* set, no matter how transfinite it is. It still works by implication, gets along by bringing into the fold what is then added, by *and* and *and* and *and* ... (114). But then they also say the only way one belongs to the multiple is by the minus and give their way of writing to be doing so at $n - 1$ dimensions: "Subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at $n - 1$ dimensions." (5) No claim can therefore be made as to the uniqueness of Minus but that must be placed under the closure of this sign that opens it onto a multiplicity: as the languages that are ours open onto the languages of others, so each of the languages *White Flower* was performed in opens onto the multiplicity of languages, opening onto the possibility *as such* of that multiplicity. The theatrical language, of a *theatre of an other*, provides such an opening, since it is a language of *anyone whatsoever* and a theatre of *any language whatsoever*.

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To state theatre is a language, ours or not, is not, however, to ask after the place of languages in the work. Their place in our theatrical language is, as I have said, unquestionable, in that they do unquestionably have a place in it. But there are heuristics around how they are spoken and a technical culture developed in and by the group treating vocalisations as material elements. In *White Flower* what became visible, in that it was submitted to the judgement of an audience—that the work did not close down in feelings of private shame in the face of a humiliating spectacle for the performers (this would happen with another work) but on which its members were able and willing to comment—what the performance made visible was what had worked in the invisible work. Clarissa began a story out of the context of her experience. It followed William's story about the telephone call. In it, by taking up a position of isolation and enacting movements of being excluded by others, she tried to articulate a past humiliation. The telephone story, and Nell's marble story, had set a precedent that was accepted by the group, for the purposes of these explorations, and on the basis of the life-stories, of drawing on past events filled with personal significance and therefore intensively organised. So intensively organised, Clarissa's story, however, did not bring to the surface its organising principles.

She positioned herself not in the centre of the studio, and not so as to command the space, or our attention, but off to one side. She looked to the centre. Seeing figures there of rejection, she moved to defend herself, shutting down and making impassive her expression and indifferent to their imagined jibes her physical demeanour. She stepped in a tight spiral and stopped, her arms close in to her body.

The situation was clear. The motives were visible. Although imaginary,

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what was happening was given to the visible, but only as pathos. Clarissa was in her interior just like she was in the space. It would be wrong to say the circuit of her activities closed without offering anything for Yevgeniya, Bill or Nell to take from it. But she was in her *in*: that there was no way in was the point. So I asked her to speak. She began in English. Her English has a slight accent to it, from her upbringing in American Samoa. The sentiment, the pathos, communicating itself in a language we shared in the group did not change or add anything. I asked her to go on in Korean.

Her Korean voice is lower. Hearing it gave to her experience an other, a grounding tone. It was a tone that located her and made singular her experience, that situated her in its resonant space. Clarissa started again, accompanying with a commentary in Korean each stage of her shutting-down. Yevgeniya entered the scene, which is to say she walked out towards Clarissa and took up a position in relation to her. Clarissa now spiralled inward towards Yevgeniya.

I asked for Yevgeniya to speak too, using Russian. *What should I say?* she asked. I said that she should say what is happening: say what is happening, since Clarissa is doing exactly the same with her commentary—*Aren't you?* I asked Clarissa to confirm that this was she was doing. *Yes*, she said.

Clarissa and Yevgeniya started the piece again. Yevgeniya assumed the role of those commanding Clarissa's abjection. But rather than maintaining her central position, she left it, and closed in on Clarissa, who, in turn, left her position, in which Yevgeniya replaced her.

Yevgeniya took up the position of the pathos. She described her feelings

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of being isolated and excluded. Clarissa stood out from her, holding her in a close regard. Then she walked towards her, and, orbiting her, her voice became severe, as if upbraiding Yevgeniya.

Where Clarissa had steeled herself in order to become indifferent to the space she occupied, Yevgeniya's eyes welled with tears. But Clarissa had not assumed the role of the figures causing her humiliation. She had assumed another power.

Clarissa circled in on Yevgeniya. She faced her directly and spoke to her in Korean. Yevgeniya, weeping, raised her eyes to Clarissa and spoke to her in Russian, answering her quietly. Clarissa took her shoulders in her hands and, shaking Yevgeniya, she shouted at her in Korean. Yevgeniya lowered her face, ashamed.

What did you say to her? I asked afterwards.

I told her to snap out of it.

Clarissa explained she realised that when Yevgeniya had replaced her she was an earlier self. *That* Clarissa obeyed the taunting figures. *That* Clarissa Yevgeniya became felt isolated and excluded. Seeing herself caught up in herself in Yevgeniya, Clarissa had moved on—she no longer needed to feel like *that* Clarissa. She could put aside her feelings of the isolation and exclusion of her humiliated self and go and join the others.

Had we noticed, she said, how she had hesitated. She had hesitated because suddenly she had seen herself, and she had hesitated in her decision to go to her former self, herself at an earlier point in her story,

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and in the piece. She had decided from the present time, looking back on herself, to go to her. She hesitated over what to do, because she had really wanted to hug herself. Love made her want to comfort and console her, this former self in whose position Yevgeniya now stood. But for her sake, for the sake of her former self, she had known, like a mother knew, suddenly what was called for, what the other required from her, and what was necessary.

So she shook her, yelled at her. She got angry at herself. Actually, she said, I still feel angry.

At the end of the piece, Nell was crying. What had resonated emotionally for her, she said, was the languages—that each could not understand the other, yet each spoke to the other: it felt intimate. Like overhearing something you are not supposed to, it felt *too* intimate.

This sentiment was repeated by a member of the audience after *Boneseed*, almost a year after *White Flower* and after the invisible work of the piece with Clarissa and Yevgeniya. In that case, he had felt embarrassed. He had not wanted to stay and watch. It felt too close. It was like *something you are not supposed to be seeing*, he said, and *something not supposed to be seen*. An audience member, after *White Flower*, noted that it is rare to see such raw emotion on a New Zealand stage. But this does not entirely explain it. It is as if, as I wrote in the previous section, the self-absorption of the actor that our work calls for is in itself shameful, and this for reasons earlier enunciated: the audience can feel it is not making any difference to the performance. It is, at least, not making any significant or appreciable difference; it is not, the audience, performing the spacing that it should, that it is its role to

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perform, by introducing into the actor's performance a little distance, opening a gap where it is able to slide in, with its own interests. Its interests are naturally those of the community.

The actor seems unperturbed to be engaging in shameful acts in front of it, and it, by its own lights, does not intend to attend to being so unattended to—that it *introjects* the actor's shame; and that it wriggles with physical discomfort, uptight, too close, in its skin. Lingis writes such a thwarting and frustration at being slighted can turn to wrath, aggravating the presence of the other in the relation to self, as *forms* are introjected, by which to disparage and with which to hold the other, but “also to increase the morose intensity.” (2007:49) The other is made to answer, because in us responsible, for our shame.

William said it was great how the power relations between Clarissa and Yevgeniya changed. Yevgeniya entered as the force commanding Clarissa. But this obvious relationship turned all the way around, when Clarissa, unexpectedly, became the dominant one. In this piece, there was not a lot of action. So the speech functioned as action, even though we did not understand what was being said, in Korean or Russian. At the point where the change came it was quite clear. Will agreed with Nell that it had been affecting. Both doubted, however, that the piece would have had the same affect had Clarissa and Yevgeniya been using English. They maintained there was something in the exoticism of the languages, particularly in their being neither mutually understandable by those acting, nor by us, the audience, that made it more moving.

I agreed. But I disagreed that English would not or could not have the same effect. So at once we gave it a try.

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The heuristic brought into play was to double actions with words, as it had been with Clarissa and Yevgeniya's piece: to say what one is doing or describe what is happening. It was also given that stories be taken from contexts where there is emotional investment. The unspoken here is that these stories, forming the bases of pieces, and, on the model of a body without organs, disorganised, are not chosen for their emotional contents but for their internal affective resonance in the one who chooses them.

The directive is towards committing to an intensity in the transindividual of a narrative's narratability, in which resonate certain automatisms and organising principles of narration within an affective range that belongs to the inner collectivity. (The conditions of narratability change with the vicissitudes of what Olney calls *life writing*, which he maps from St. Augustine to Samuel Beckett (1998).) The invisible work of the ensemble is both to explicate in extensity and, distributing subjectivities implicit as intensities, to disorganise the narration, the narrative language of movements and actions, within the affective range belonging to the ensemble. The ensemble disorganises that which in the individual story resonates with it in a way that populates the space and time of the invisible work, that is the studio workshop, with points or nodes in an affective system of resonance or network. This is what gives rise to the working space as such. As seen with Clarissa's *story*, the unfolding of this resonant space presents dimensions that ramify for the transindividual and at the level of the ensemble, but that in the time of the visible work of performance, may cause the audience to close down along lines of its own, and, within its own range, to respond individually as spectators with shame or blame.

William dragged a boat out across the sand. He used few words to

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describe what he was doing, but as an experienced actor, the words did not so much matter as the vocal qualities given them in the effort of dragging the boat, and, having launched the boat into the chop, rhythm of oar-strokes and rising and falling intonations of the waves—the swelling volume necessitated by the wind rising. By contrast, Nell, an experienced dancer, when she took the movements that Bill made, of pulling the rope, and, hopping into the boat at the last minute, of working the oars, did not imitate but isolated in them distinct choreographic impulses. She did not follow his intentions but these impulses: to bend and straighten the arms in a certain manner, to raise one leg and balance before bringing the other up after it, to roll from her hips to her head with the rise and fall of the swell. Their isolation gave to her movements a pace and rhythm entirely alien to the nature of the situation in which Bill's story placed them.

She moved more slowly than he, then syncopated her actions, beginning fast, and slowing against his. She wove her actions around his in a way that made the illusion he worked to achieve more compelling, more watchable, that resonated. So that when he tipped overboard and began to drown she had separated herself from this action and its emotion. She stood waving from the shore, as he, drowning, waved back. Each was detached in their timelines.

For her, from the perspective that could be imputed to her, he was drowning, had drowned, was going to drown, in a choreography of memory. For him, from the perspective that could be imputed to him, she was a distant figure who could not help and who would soon slip from view as he went under; but she was also him, on the farther shore, among the dead, beckoning for him to join her.

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Nell's words, like her movements, were suspended above or against the actions they accompanied. They adorned her actions and rose out of the situations in which they were spoken without weight, without depth, as scintillations upon its surface, jewels. But not wanted, not lusted after, they were simply placed, respectfully, and, accorded sufficient respect, remarked in their places. Or they were like Arvo Pärt's tintinnabulations. Her voice did not ring out loudly or softly. The words had an audibility that was not lost of small bells in a storm. This was Nell's vocal style that would come, in *White Flower*, to be used to such effect in a story from the context of her own life, in which, on another beach, she left the water looking through a curtain of blood, having grazed her face on the rocks, and, nobody noticing, nobody in the least concerned, she lit a cigarette.

The contrast of techniques and therefore of styles between the language of *acting* and the language of *dance*, one language dramatically expressive, the other choreographically expressive, did different things, brought out different qualities, to the contrast between Russian and Korean, in Nell's and William's and Yevgeniya's and Clarissa's respective pieces. It was not the *exoticism* or *foreignness* of the spoken languages each to the other and to those watching, audient, giving to either piece a resonance along the affective scale, as William and Nell had supposed. It was rather, despite their imitative concerns, a metalinguistic difference, a theatrical difference that made either piece *work* for actors and audience. Both, similarly, opened up a theatrically working space, the definition of which it is perhaps now apposite to give with greater accuracy.

In the *Theatre of an other* section I said that the question of what *works* is first of all a question of what works for *me*—it is individual, insofar as it engages in the relation to self and in the techniques, tactics and ethics of

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that relation, in the transindividual, before it is a matter of the practical concerns of the collective, group and ensemble. This is clearly insufficient. As can be seen from the two pieces under consideration, what works goes as much to the space, as a working space, a space made or put to work, as it does to the actor making work, taking it on to work or, putting oneself to work, taking up positions and enacting movements of work, and working together.

What resonates for Nell in Bill's story is given by her style, informed by her experience and technical training in dance, an intensity it did not have in Bill's *performance*, where it simply served the narrative intention and performed as an organic part of the narration. What resonated for Clarissa, similarly, gave her own performance the intensity it needed to break with narrative intention and how she had, up until that moment, organised her inward narration of the events in her story. She hesitated, and something new happened.

For something new to happen, following a model, even of the body without organs, or taking on a suggestion or instruction is not enough. The new is what is at stake in the work we are doing in the studio, in the workshops. Work, then, is not a matter of having inflicted upon one what has already been accorded, through a reward system functioning by recognised means of evaluation and validation, that status, of work, that works to an end, however immanent, or to a routine and a schedule, or that is the work of a discipline, or of cultural and moral good works, in public or private. What work is, as far as we are concerned, is acting. Not performing, it is acting on the space in a way that makes it active. The way that it becomes active, it is my argument here to show, is through resonance. Resonance makes the space. It becomes a working space both

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in its disorganisation and its organisation into new compositions. What works *acts* and may be wholly subsumed under a *becoming-active* (Deleuze, 2006:54). To become active is the act of negation, can be active negation (70), of *disorganisation* with the body without organs as model, as much as it is an act of affirmation, and can be actively affirmed in the intensity which resonates.

Resonance occupies the double polarities of the transindividual and the ensemble, or *Other-structure* (see previous section). Its direction is not from where what occurs in the individual's life story, and there has intensity, is enacted by others in the group, and there has extensity. Neither does resonance go from an audience, whose affective attention is felt by actors on-stage, nor from others involved in the invisible or visible work, to where it makes a difference for the individual actor and performer, for whom it may call forth a sudden realisation, causing something new to happen. Resonance occurs in the transindividual inner collectivity and in the assembly of the ensemble's and audience's outer collectivity. It works, it acts as the connective tissue between them.

If the rowing piece and the bullying piece did work, it is because each set up enough points of connection for them to resonate. These points were not delimited by the number of actors. It was not between Nell and Bill that they resonated but between individual movements, how he rowed, his rhythm, against hers, her slow wave of farewell against his rapid wave for help. The resonance was momentary because it was at moments and insofar as they bore the significance of what was happening that they resonated. They resonated one with the other. It was not, however, the contrast between blocs of style or of personalities, as this might imply, or the contrast between blocs of language or technical cultures, that

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resonated. But single utterances resounded for being against other utterances: the unanimous resonated in the anonymous. Clarissa's Korean utterances did not, as if having the structure of an entire language as its sounding board, ring out against a background of Korean. Neither did any single one of her utterances resonate with all the Korean she spoke in the piece, nor in sonic relief against every utterance she might have made. Each, but not every, utterance resonated in relation to other singular utterances, in Russian or Korean, and in connection with not every but selected actions—actions and utterances alike selected by resonance. Nell's style of vocal delivery did not, of itself, create the charge that made it bell-like. Its bell-like quality came from moments elected by resonance and selected by placement.

The resonance arising from the selection and connection of points is not a general temporal or spatial quality. Before Yevgeniya entered Clarissa's piece, and despite the fact that Clarissa's story possessed personal biographical resonance for her, points resonated. But their connection was thin and resonated poorly, stretched over lines linking an action, a certain step or hand gesture, from one part of the piece, to another, her arms defensively straightened against her sides, separated in time from it. It was so much less than the bolt of electricity that issued when she grabbed Yevgeniya by the shoulders—and this action did not of itself, as a violent action, discharge and release into the air. Neither was there a build up towards it, of any consistency, nor did it occur against a general background of crackling electricity. It was rather a particle, one particular, on a wave of duration and in a single instant, detaching itself from a particle field.

The particular instants and moments that resonate comprise a system or

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network. Where there are too few, there may be tension across them, but not enough intensity to make the whole network resonate in extensity. Where there are too many, the tension, that might cause it to resonate and from which it arises, dissolves back into the field. It becomes noise, mess, void or desert, or what Deleuze calls a *diagramme* in his book on the artist, that Francis Bacon calls a *graph* (2003:82). (The graph or diagramme properly belongs to the work preparatory to painting, which Deleuze also terms *invisible* (81).) It consists in the old resonance that precedes the painting to be done, its remains having a sort of half-life for the observer, twinging on the surface or in the depths of the working space. For us, it is as much the memory the space has of what has resonated within it as it is the work which does not achieve a field or structure that resonates over its points.

The two performances that accompanied the gallery exhibition *Textured Passages* did not escape their diagramme in this way. For the exhibition I had constructed musical instruments that activated certain physical sonorous qualities of the gallery. A wooden ram beat against an upright girder like a gong. Mallets hung from a stainless rail with which to strike it. I had added handles to a sealed box of broken glass for it to be shaken and dropped. I made a rain-maker that pivoted on a tressle. Books were attached by their spines to a rotating axle. When spun it made the sound of galloping horses.

The space was *live*, meaning it was reverberant and noisy: its volume, contained in hard surfaces, needed little sonic input to resonate. So I commissioned Gabriel, a musician, to sample the sounds of the gallery, the water in the pipes from the apartments upstairs, the lights' hum, the traffic's intermittent roar, including the room's resonating frequency,

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which he assembled on two CDs to be played simultaneously on random over the weeklong exhibition. Gabriel played these sounds, altered, and others, on analog and digital synthesisers with Minus's performances. The first coincided with the exhibition's opening, the second with its close.

Gabriel participated in the preparations for the production as an actor. We did the familiar walking exercise with the addition of a segment we came to call “braided river”. To sensitise actors to the sounds of each other's voices and to desensitise them to any information-carrying function of the different languages spoken in the group—at that time Russian, English, Korean and Mandarin—I asked that when I completed giving this instruction somebody else take over speaking, saying anything, and that when they should stop or allow space in what they were saying another should take over, and so on, so as to *weave* the various voices in a braid, each voice also gaining rhythmic energy from the one it followed, so as to *flow* in a river of sound, having dynamics consistent with rivulets and tributaries joining the flow, and with waterfalls, pools, eddies and undercurrents, sometimes gaining in amplitude and volume, sometimes tailing off into whispers; sometimes breaking over rocks into whitewater and sometimes smooth, mellifluous.

The work in preparation, the invisible work, entailed the use in workshops of musical and noise-emitting instruments: Tibetan gongs, a repeater pedal, amplifier and mic set-up, a thunder board, zither, guitar with one string, snare drum, shakers and rattles, including a two-metre long wooden pole with metal bottle-caps attached down its length on every side, terminating in a rubber door-stopper, that made a racket when you bounced it. We thus extended the heuristic that had been

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established to work in *White Flower* with only vocalisations and whatever scrapings, tappings and thuds the group could summon from the relatively dead sonic space of the studio (designed for sound recording as much as live performance) to a maximally expansive range of auditory experience and sound phenomena. Where languages were structured like music, for their sonorous qualities and vibratory intensities, and, like musical elements, used in composition, the value of theatre as a language, a meta-language, was to be structured like music. We took *our* language of theatre from *White Flower* as far in the direction of a music, a music of disorder, noise and chaos, as we could in the performances for *Textured Passages*. What we got was not outright cacophany or wall of sound but exactly texture.

Actors made resonance literal. They took on a particularity that resonated, a gesture, a tone, a feel and atmosphere, of the one leading the piece with a story, and acted through sound, disorganising the resonant subject of the body without organs in objects that rattled, clanged, droned, scraped and rumbled across its surface—a surface stretched tight like a drumskin or tympanum. Their bodies, and I should say my body, since I also performed, moved with sound and in sound. Emotions were exacerbated and enlarged, encouraged by their gestural, tonal and atmospheric extrapolations in rhythm, melody and timbre. It was excessive. It was also celebratory—of a *lively disorder*, always to be chosen and preferred over a deathly order (Zhuang zi, 2013:5).

What got lost was the kind of particularity that could be picked up over time. You remember, earlier, when I was speaking about Yevgeniya and Clarissa's piece, how Clarissa suddenly perceived Yevgeniya to be her. She hesitated. She needed time for the perception, the hesitation, and the

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decision—to take Yevgeniya by her shoulders, shake her. These things, this process, happened in time as well. You also remember how, by simply standing on the shore and waving, Nell detached herself from the whole timeline in which William dragged the boat out, rowed into a rising sea, the wind blew up, he was taken overboard by the storm and drowned. She had followed Bill, turning into refrains the clasping of an oar in each hand, pulling them into the chest, rocking back, releasing the blades from the resistance of the water, rolling forward. The waving arm too she had isolated and abstracted, removing it from its organic place in the story. The timeline of these pieces differed. One was disorganised around a midpoint, as if Clarissa had made a loop which she then punctured in the middle. One was disorganised while left whole, as if Nell had walked through the wall of its world the full rotundity of which was left ripe and intact, and present while receding into the time of memory. In both—two times: this is what the diagramme captures, and did not let go of in *Textured Passages*, even as the resonance was in production pushed to the extreme. It was as if resonance at maximum was caught by its undertow.

The two earlier pieces, Nell and Bill's boating outing made the cut as one of the pieces contributing to *White Flower*, had the minimum of points or nodes necessary for a resonant system, or network. Enough happened in them that resonated with and between the actors for a diagramme to emerge effectively linking points and particularities in a resonant whole for their duration. In the performances for *Textured Passages* so much was happening, and so much resonating, nothing in particular could be said to happen that was not just linkage in proximity, without particularity. The diagramme filled the space and the whole space of the gallery resonated, but without the sense of points or nodes that could be

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braided back into a whole, even if of the pieces comprising the whole.

The performances were organised into pieces by the narrations of individual texts chosen by the actors, and displayed on the walls of the gallery. The actors with whom the texts resonated led these stories, which the group disorganised over the timeframes of the pieces. To work, the pieces had to resonate over their whole duration. But this is where the spatial diagramme took over and we lost its sense of temporal occasion. It is therefore telling that the second performance, closing the exhibition, ran 45 minutes longer than the first, which opened it. The space ran into the work, with the diagramme, and the wholeness of each piece over time was broken. It was able to stretch, or leak time into the audible space.

Bacon's word, *graph*, is useful in asking after this other time that is not in timing, or in counting, measuring time or in a denumerable time (Deleuze, 2006a:292-9). Graphs represent, with nodes, vertices, and edges linking them, the points and relations of networks. These are usually imagined to be spatial schema, used to depict and effect distributions in space—hence the diagramming of networks in graphs. (That networks not only describe but also serve individuation, in bringing about spatial distributions with internal resonance, concurs with the procedure Simondon calls *information* (2013:31).) But the network scientist, Barabási, in *Bursts*, a work of popular science, focuses on their temporal attributes (2010). Barabási shows networks to function in a temporality, distinct from historic and calculable time, of nodal time or *event time* (2014:12). The *bursts* of Barabási's title are, as events, sudden escalations in patterns of activity that operate as hubs in the temporal graph (n.d.).

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A *hub* is a node or vertex with multiple links to other nodes and vertices. It is therefore a hub of activity in the network, like a busy airport. For our purposes, a hub is a moment of action that resonates in others, that one makes that activates others and leads others to take it on, to repeat and to return to it. A good example from the Minus film, *The Other Side* (2015), is the accusatory finger-pointing which recurs in intense, and impersonal, rhythmic bursts. The time of the burst, then, is an all-at-once each time it recurs, and, although event time is additive, the temporal like the spatial network enlarging in steps each time a node is added (Barabási, 2014:12), one thing, one event, does not follow another in linear succession.

Olney invokes this other sense of time of a network in his reading of Beckett's post-WWII writing as an autobiographical project (1998:366), a project of biographical narration, or what Olney terms *life writing* (xv). He identifies particularities of images that act like hubs which Beckett returns to repeatedly in different works, that so act, Olney suggests, because of the intense resonance, of bursts, they have in the life Beckett is writing (376). Because they recur, they come to resonate with Beckett's reader, who connects them from one context to another, along a timeline, like Klee's, that loops back on itself, or encircles the world it elaborates only to puncture it and stand at a distance, waving or still.



Life Stories 2

You come to this space with your own areas of achievement, zones of commitment and fields of enquiry that are occupational and dispositional. You gain from the places and things that engage you affirmation of your strengths and abilities. You gain from them a sense of yourself, composed from the uses you commit yourself to, which is reinforced in your areas of achievement, and is extended into the exploration and experimentation of your chosen fields of enquiry.

You have from the strengths and abilities of your occupation and your disposition a powerbase on which to act. You are a good debater and negotiator in the language you hold in common with your peers, your colleagues; you are invested in the material sciences: the senses of your body and your inward sense enjoy the instruments with which they collaborate—you have only to enter a lab to feel the pleasing sensation brought to you by muscular memory of your fingers advancing the focus of a microscope by turning the knob or to have brought to you by your auditory memory the pleasing sound of rattling glass pipettes in a rack. You are a graphic artist and notice the finest calibrations, in their mutual attraction and repulsion, of compositional elements on a 2-D plane. You feel it in your body.

From your love of cricket there is a point in your wrist of pleasurable rotation as the ball is held between thumb and fingers ready to twist in

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the pitch that you are disposed to experience watching a game on television. From your involvement in film, because you recognise with awe the time and care that has gone into it, the hairs rise at the back of your neck at the beauty manifest inside a single frame. From your appreciation of music, you hear and can tell a risky performance from a safe one. Your body is your measure. Tears well in your eyes at the combination of musical and physical phrasing in the dance. My heartbeat quickens when I sense I am about to say the word that will make a difference in the studio to what you do next, that you will understand, and say of *That works for me*.

You bring into this space an internal diagramme by which your body—and no other—orientates itself and positions its limbs and sensory surfaces (Lingis, 2007:47). These are the points on a volitional body that Boal (in the section *Life Stories 1*), opting to see them as points of oppression, made the initial object of a pedagogy (1985:128). They result from the habits of labour, the peasant labouring in the field, as much as the cardinal strolling in the garden, or the geek engaged in immaterial labour. They are the points of mental habitude as much as physical usage, articulating a psychogeography and a psychobiology: habituated to the seated position, the bus driver you have been holds her frame erect from the pivot of her pelvis as she has trained herself to do for fear of developing lower back pain in later life; the kid you were was subjected to too many courses of antibiotics, prescribed on the slightest pretexts at the whim of the family doctor, for conditions commonplace as teenage acne, now people think it is the smoking stains that make him want to hide his smile; you have always been self-conscious about your walk since the discovery, when buying shoes, that one foot was one whole size bigger than the other; the boss you were, in another life, of whom they said *He*

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is worth 20 men!, when the demons came, fought them like 20 men, and lost, now bears the scars of his humility like trophies; your foot, a dancer's; your eye, an artist's; your arm, a javelin-thrower's; your voluptuary nature seeking pleasure at every opportunity; your ascetic side, resisting; your head, spacious and curved; your heart, an overgrown garden with a fountain, where you have found the elixir of eternal youth, at its centre; your centres, points of a practiced rotation, so that none can ever pin you down to any one position; your edges, neither sharp nor blunt, but alive to every possibility a new situation presents.

You come to this space, which is the studio, with just such an internal diagramme as chance has inflicted and will endorsed, in the volitional body, of points plotted from mythic, scientific, historic and personal narrative fragments. How you choose to weave these into a performance narrating your life story is not the only choice you have. Neither does the material you have dictate its form. You have also the use of a theatrical language that is yours alone. I would ask you to ask yourself, because of experiences noone else has, or has had, and associations noone else can make, how your body speaks and to tell your own life story in a way that only you could, using a language of movement, gesture, space and, aboveall, time. I am therefore asking you to use the powers of expression that both negative and positive experiences have provided you with and to value the limp you wish you did not have, the wound you regret receiving, the tic you would rather suppress, the weakness you would rather disavow, as much as what comes to you from your occupational and dispositional powerbases of achievement, commitment and engaged enquiry. Tell the story of your life using a theatrical language that is unique to you—in 4 minutes.

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As much as there is an internal diagramme, innate in you, populating you bodily with points reticulated along lines of service and usage, and orientating and disposing your limbs, and the positions of your sensory surfaces, moment by moment, in ways unique to you, towards the task of telling your life story, there is also an external diagramme of the studio. A working space for theatre is characterised by the kind of support it offers the action. The *floor* in the phrase, *on the floor*, is continuous or interrupted by other features, either tectonic or naturally occurring—the handrail and ramps dividing the gallery of *Textured Passages*, or the trees surrounding a natural amphitheatre. Working on the floor begins for Minus with walking the floor, noticing its qualities and the extent of its support, which ends at the walls, but may continue into the trees, and which is withdrawn under conditions of its surface like slipperiness or softness and lack of solidity.

In a situation where the action is composed of light or sound effects, or flight and flying, or is an ambience, a theatrical experience of architecture, of the empty volume of air and the vacuum of space, the support, the *floor*, for the work is potentially of limitless extent. Every working space, even if imperceptibly and even if it is unacknowledged, includes the limitless. (Miró's assassination of painting by painting is a deliberate invocation of the limitlessness of the support: he discovers pebbles, executed with scumbling effects of the pigment, which, at an infinite distance from the surface, are approaching—and opens out in this way the back of the painting to the expanse which consumes it, but which, paradoxically, was always its condition (Aparicio, 2014:47-8) (see also the section *Representation*).) It might be said that what resonates in a working space is the small piece of the limitless it contains and that the limitless is therefore the condition for the resonance defining the working

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space of theatre. It is what *works* about theatre and theatrical representation. At least, resonance is never wholly a question of architecture.

It is not just that the black curtains in which the studio is cloaked or the shiny dots of screw holes pocking its floor are part of the external diagramme of the space. Neither is its age or materials or economic and political programming—where the money ran out, or ran in, in what one might call the ideological affordances of the institutional performance space—primarily at issue. These would be signs and give signification for what precedes signification. The external diagramme consists in the relations of intensity and force between the action and spatial elements.

That the relations of intensity and force between action and space concerns present action as well as past action indicates a temporal element. But the external diagramme is not tied organically either to time or to space. It does not organise time, or space. It is not the organisation of either time or space. The internal diagramme, similarly, is not tied organically to time, a time that would be biological and psychological and cover the duration of a life, in the case of the actor, or to space, a space, whether enveloped corporeally, delimited somatically or, in the exploded view of the sarcous, a space which would, in short, be that of the body. The diagramme is not the organism and its history and is not the space and its temporality but their linkage in a resonating system like a network.

There is action in the architecture, conveyed in its resonating nodes. In fact, the action of the particular tectonic and natural features that give it the qualities of a space and time, time of day when working outside, of wind in trees, or the vertical rhythm of beams and posts framing the

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studio, of blacks taking their time to track around, is a necessary consideration of working. You find out what is in the gallery, the studio, the natural amphitheatre, or the old community hall (where both *Marks of Lispector* and *At the Stock Market Meeting* were performed) and form a relation with it. You find out how your voice sounds and you see how others relate their own forces and comport themselves there, in there, to features that may be plain as a contained volume or subtle as a texture of wool, a whorl in wood, a scratch, a breath, or what is not there.

What is only imagined as well as what is shown, as well as what it suggests, as well as what it recalls, that you remember, all serve to connect you to the action, in its own relations of force and intensity, unfolding in the time and space where you are acting when you act. But these features, by which qualities are given, do not connect just your internal diagramme with the external diagramme that you find out; their action is of more or less force, intensity and circumstance to each one who acts and to each one who watches and listens: everywhere they resonate differently and on each node pivot and dance a thousand angels, the swarming possibilities of all the diagrammes, of all that was up until now diagrammatic. Because you do not find out the externality of what is the space's own and of its time to vindicate it or to put it to work to resonate, you and your internality, from force of experiences and habitude, with its actions, and their various and discontinuous intensities, but to assassinate it in the access of the limitless.

The singular time and space of the studio, of theatre, must be displaced without replacement, amplified without performance, for a theatre of an other. *Too much*, you say to me: *Enough*. Yes, it is difficult: the uncountable—personal features, individual touches—and nondenumerable—

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spatial and temporal actions—in pursuit of the limitless. But I am not asking you to count the uncountable or catalogue the powerpoints around the walls, the loose threads, the motes of dust, all of which make themselves available to the amplification of your *performance* of a life. (The stress on performance here looks to distinguish theatricality as a medium—of amplification, exaggeration and, in Weber's view, spatio-temporal displacement, from performance, which is its purely visible representation, a medium accommodating, in its *irreducible opacity*, as Weber writes, the practice of performing (2004:7).) These are minutiae and distraction. You have no need to perform them but to make a selection, to choose what has value among them. You have no need to respond to them—and be responsible both for what makes you up inside and for what makes up the outside. What has value will strike you directly. It will strike you directly with what is discordant rather than in accord with an interior or anterior plan, a layout and diagramme. What has value is like a target to aim for and a platform to act on and a point of view gathering you together and setting you in motion. It is the limitless.

Time is essential to finding it. The diagramme may exceed its power to resonate; although it remains that which resonates: resonance being the connection of points or nodes of one or more diagrammes. A resonating network or system—that you come to the space with, and that you discover in the studio space, as no other, in its surface orientations and positions of features—takes time to produce. If I stop you before you begin, it will be to ask you to pause, to make pause, to take your time. This is what I understand by the term *extemporisation* that is sometimes employed as a synonym for *improvisation*, because it retains in its construction the meaning *improvisation* hints at, which is a relation to time.

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Derrida draws out this meaning of improvisation, in view of what is *ex tempore* or out of time. It is worthwhile quoting him in full because of the way he perceives what I have been calling *diagrammes*, which are his “schemas and languages” and the prescribed and pre-programmed “names” that inhibit improvisation as a matter of saying (or doing) whatever one wants (1982). Derrida sees the diagramme, *insofar* as it belongs to what precedes improvisation, as obliging one to “reproduce the stereotypical discourse.” (1982) Yet, despite its capture by the diagramme being inevitable, despite its impossibility, he believes and fights for improvisation.

It's not easy to improvise, it's the most difficult thing to do. Even when one improvises in front of a camera or microphone, one ventriloquizes or leaves another to speak in one's place the schemas and languages that are already there.

There are already a great number of prescriptions that are prescribed in our memory and in our culture. All the names are already preprogrammed. It's already the names that inhibit our ability to ever really improvise. One can't say what ever one wants, one is obliged more or less to reproduce the stereotypical discourse.

And so I believe in improvisation and I fight for improvisation. But always with the belief that it's impossible.

And there, where there is improvisation, I am not able to see myself. I am blind to myself. And it's what I will see, no, I won't see it. It's for others to see. The one who is improvised here, no I won't ever see him. (Derrida, 1982).

Derrida's belief in the impossibility of improvisation and his fight for

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improvisation appear, in his envoy, to come from the determination, in every part, of the self imposing on him a blindness which the improvised *other*, who is not him, escapes. (I handle of this theme of the relation of the dark to visibility, where self is blind to itself, for standing in the way of light, extensively in *Theatre of an Other: Relation to Self*.) He is engaged in the act of improvising, in an interview, yet says that the one who is improvised—after a hesitation (“it’s what I will see, no, I won’t see it.” (1982))—will not ever be seen by him to be him. It is not quite the same thing as saying, I am not, because improvising, extemporising, and therefore *out of time*, speaking to you now: I do not see myself, will not ever see myself, as so doing. But this is exactly (writing) what I am doing, and what I am asking you to do (acting). Derrida, however, gathers the diagramme around him like a greatcoat, like that in Beckett’s *Stirrings Still*, where it descends like night, and occludes vision, the vision of Venus rising and in fact the night itself (at Olney, 1998:375). For Beckett, the greatcoat has the talismanic force of a memory so often revisited as to resonate in, according to Olney, the *network* of his life writing. Conventional narration had become for Beckett unworkable, and impossible. Beckett’s answer to the problem of how to write his life is a diagramme, says Olney, improvised and extemporised of such fragments as a greatcoat (Olney, 1998:278-378).

The fight for improvisation can be regarded, in light of Beckett’s answer, and against the impasse it poses to Derrida—it is impossible—and to *vision*, as a fraction disingenuous—tongue-in-cheek. He maintains he is blind, lost in darkness, in the thicket of the pre-written, pre-designated, and remembered, of that which presupposes improvisation, supposing himself to be, although in the midst of life, in a *selva oscura* (Dante, *Inferno*:I-ii). His only recourse are the stereotypes of pre-given

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actualities. But the blindness he invokes is no other than that of looking in one's shadow for one's reflection, and finding, in the familiar outline, no likeness but the self obscured by it.

I wrote that I would ask you to ask yourself how you, and no other, because of experiences and memories that are yours alone, and associations only you can make, might tell your life story. From these you have a language in which to tell it that belongs to no one else. It connects the diagramme of points, of which your volitional body is made up, to the diagramme, which is in the acting space, in a system—and therefore language (since language is such a system)—of resonance and of *reference*. What you do, the slightest thing, acts on the space to make it resonate. Its resonance necessarily entails what exceeds the actual space in the direction both of the diagramme of all its many, too-many, features, implicit and explicit, and of the diagramme of bodily points articulated in a language of movement belonging to you alone. But its resonance not only entails what exceeds space and action in the direction of both interior and exterior diagrammes. These belong to the past and the given. They are Derrida's "schemas and languages that are already there" (1982). The resonance of a language, and of such schemas that are the system's information, refers to the future, which it signals virtually, in turning to what approaches.

The diagramme carries on beyond resonance, while remaining what resonates, and resonance retains the sense of what *works* in the space by definition. But for the space to resonate, articulated, distributed and represented in diagrammes and schemas of information, for it to become *a* space and for the action to become *an* action—a gesture, movement, of a theatrical language that resonates—it must be taken hold of by what is

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coming. If a little piece of the limitless is necessary, it is for its orientation as a point of reference towards what disorients: it is for its disorientation, which is exactly that of extemporisation, since it is from *out of time*, across the immeasurable expanse and limitless distance, that it comes to which we turn. The limitless refers to the condition by which passages of the visible become visible, even in the invisible work. It is the direction and angle of approach, the *point in depth*, from which what is coming is coming. The limitless may be more closely approximated as belonging to the temporal image, which it disturbs, for making space a virtual time and time a virtual space.

Even more than being a condition or naming a transcendental condition of a working space like the studio, and you in it working, the limitless is a virtual condition. Its virtuality, of that which is not yet, or no longer, or not merely actual, is threefold: not yet, no longer, not quite. Its approach, in the creative disjunctive connection of your respective diagrammes with their respective excesses and beyonds, the outsides of their insides, possesses the assurance of an assassin, of space by time and time by space, by virtue of its (their) virtualisation. This is because resonance, when and where there is resonance, whether in the studio working space or in the dark determinations of the self, installs a fantasy, a fantastic assailant, taking hold of the connection you create in the studio and displacing it onto the virtual. It is a displacement without replacement, that does not make allowances for a future place, has no past place, and is not quite in place. The self you are is ejected in the real virtual projection of a *fantasy space* (Lingis, 2007:108). (Lingis adopts from Žižek the phrase, understanding it as a diagrammatic or schematic space connecting *fantasy*—the internally resonating system, the transindividual, or individual language—with *mythology*—the discourses held in common

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by the collectivity—(2007:97-103), which psychoanalysis, by exposing one's word to its interpretative and discursive power, essentially *betrays*, or deposes, as Lingis cites Žižek as saying, in a view he later recanted or corrected, by the “cruel method of humiliation, of removing the very ground beneath the subject's feet, of forcing him to experience the utter nullity of those “divine details” around which all his enjoyment is crystallized” (at Lingis, 2007:100).) The fantasy space virtualises essences as intensities (Agamben, 2016). This is its real power: by absorbing, into the threefold virtual of no longer, not yet and not quite, assassinating, and by liquefying, liquidating. It is also the real power of a theatre.

The imaginary objects and scenery you compose do not withdraw and are not withdrawals, or absorptions, into a private fantasy. Neither are the things, events and people who people your telling of a life in your own language merely the actual superimposed or the already there of stereotype, pre-given in the public and general fantasy of a mythology by the discursive powers which uphold it. But fantasy takes hold of action in an elemental way. Things, scenes, do not recede into the temporal dimension, or, telescoping out, bounce back, like light and radio-waves, from the spatial dimension. The action that has fantasy as its element moves in time more than space. It is for this reason I said the theatrical language which is yours alone, of movement, gesture, expression, consists in action aboveall *in time*. We are now considering the nature of this time.

Action *is* time (Bergson, 1965:145), and time action, but virtually, as a virtuality, as the present that is no longer, not yet, and not quite: but if time is not entirely present and never wholly present, it is clearly not itself—and yet it is not to be replaced, but temporally and materially

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displaced in and by what takes place. It is not an *other* time, and it is not time either as possibility, of which one could posit alternate worlds, universes, or time as absolute. What is coming is not coming to complete it. But its virtuality has the quality of an intensification and an amplification: it is a time that can be exaggerated.

Time, in its virtuality, can therefore be materialised, in the virtuality of space (which is the assassination of both, since it entails their de-essentialisation). It can be materialised, in the mountain, ancient and impending over the planes (Lingis, 2011:13), or in the limitless approach, from across the expanse, of a star or pebble, like the approach of a point of depth, when the theatre is empty. Having the quality of an intensity is for time to take place in the real projection of the fantasy space. I do not love the phrase *fantasy space* because it seems to need the support of the term *real* to save it from psychologism. But, having introduced it in the account Žižek gives, and later rejects, Lingis avows in it what psychoanalysis betrays (2007:100). He asks whether it is not the case that its importance is exactly what psychoanalysis identifies and deposes in it, nullifying the divine details, and, we might say here the resonant details, around which it crystallises (at Lingis, 2007:100). (These are the diagrammatic points or nodes which resonance selects around which, with diagrammes as its faces, the working space invisibly crystallises (see section *Resonance*.) Lingis cites Žižek as saying these details are those around which the subject's *enjoyment* crystallises and not those on which the individual subject's peace of mind is founded: the fantasy space, for Lingis, is enjoyed, is joyful for being a zone of active engagement with and effective action in the world at large. The resonant crystal around which the subject's enjoyment forms is not a zone of passive enjoyment, of pleasures. Neither is it one of interaction, connectivity or of the

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performative, of the deepest and most insidious kind of introjected role-playing. Nor is the fantasy space a comfort zone, of the fantasy of the subject's well-being and satisfaction. Rather Lingis gives the example of the shaman who improvises, sometimes against and in the face of a dominant culture, treatments and cures, who exaggeratedly extracts from the living body foreign organs with bloody fingers, and whose treatments and cures *sometimes* work. This *sometimes* is enough for him to claim the fantasy space as a zone of individual efficacy in which one acts on the world. The fantasy can therefore now be described as what virtualises space—in the fantasy space. While the virtuality of time is what makes it available to be acted on and to be affected. Its zones of action are no less exaggerated than those of the shaman.

To say the power of the fantasy space is that of a theatre is to draw attention to its theatricality, which is that of Weber's locative and temporal elision (2004) as well as that, existing in the common understanding, of exaggeration. But it is equally attentive to the reality of affectation, of the affected. If, in a dominant discourse of a body its health or sickness are imputed to organic causes by the medical etiology of epistemo-scientific rationality, the affectation of the shaman is given to amplifying this organicism and its rationale by producing organs. So, where a dominant discourse of a body, in its healthy ecumenical and communicative concourse with the world at large, imputes to the periodicity of its actions and inaction (that it makes no sense to say *inactions* is case in point) an understanding—rational for being based in the rationality of the community and held in common—of the organisation of time, and let us not forget its management, the affectation of the actor is given to amplifying this periodicity and its rationale by disorganising it, through the hypertrophy of organs of time: through distended pauses,

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actions enlarged by repetition and through the addition of organs, displayed, like the shaman's, as treatments and cures. To pause ... is an affectation. It produces from time an extra and extraneous organ, a foreign organ that is yet is time's own, exaggerated.

The shaman's affectation, moreover, extends to improvising, extemporising, in a context that is for medical science, as for jurisprudence, reliant on historic precedent and the culmination, in cultures of medicine and law, of millennia of technical advances. The shaman does what you cannot just do and with the simplest means. The medical professional and the legal professional, and, in fact, all kinds of roles, from professional to social and familial, have their mannerisms. But the shaman's, like the actor's, is a mannerism of mannerisms. It is so at best. Obviously, at worst, the trained actor reverts to technique and the magical worker in the fantasy space resorts to tricks of the trade. The trick (and the technique) is to pre-arrange the spontaneity of mannerisms developing a *concatenation of postures* (Deleuze, 2006b:78). (Deleuze's work on the Baroque requires him to attribute the postures of Mannerism to automata, whereas I would prefer to invoke the technical object of Simondon (1980) and Guattari's machinic unconscious (2011).) It is a *technique* for being able to be improved, not so as to appear improvised and trick those present, and not so as to increase the chances of postures developing in their concatenation, in the encounter of one expressive gesture with another, for example. Improvement in technique comes rather with forgetting as an active power of letting go the past and remembering the future. The technique of forgetting technique as much as the technique of remembering the future can, paradoxically, be learnt: it may indeed be the sole presence of learning in the arts and its only knowledge.

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Forgetting as an active faculty is covered by Deleuze in his work on Nietzsche (2006:111-4); while, *it is a poor sort of memory that only works backwards*, is what the White Queen says that is repeated by Juan Gabriel Vázquez's character Mallarino, a satirical cartoonist, the conscience of his nation, who finds he can *with total clarity* remember his own future, that, each time he drew a caricature, this is what he did:

He imagined a scene, imagined a character, assigned him features, and wrote in his head the epigram ... none of that had existed when he sat down at his drafting table, and nevertheless Mallarino was able to remember it, had to remember it to put it down on paper. (2016:185)

To remember the future is, of course, a precise definition of *extemporisation*. As for forgetting, it need hardly be said it is an exaggeration, an amplification of *acting on* the world (the exaggeration, or affectation *par excellence*) made available to act on by the virtual presence of time, the condition of which, as we have seen, is a little piece of the limitless, caught sight of, in virtual space, on its approach. When comparing theatrical performance to shamanic practice, or sacred and religious practices in general (from Brook (1996) and Grotowski (2002), from Goffman (1956), Turner (1982, 1988) and Schechner (2004) to Butler (2002, 2011), Lehmann (2006) and Eric Bogosian (who says "Theater is ritual. ... Theater is holy." (at Auslander, 2008:4)), too much emphasis is placed on the ritual, the ritual and ceremonial elements, and not enough on the joking and familiar exaggeration of the latter as of the former. Even the dourest Methodist minister is engaged in self-caricature. The witch's laughter is notorious and caricature is her way of being, from her forcibly unappealing visage to her determinedly undomesticated broomstick. A shaman is equal parts unreliable trickster and Virgil-like

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companion, indispensable guide to the underworld: he (or she) has the daemonic familiarity of a *familiar*, whose jokes share in their quota of the demonic, belonging to the Perilous Realm, of Faery. (It is no accident erotic minorities, with the imperilment of sexuality from the 19th century on, among other denizens of the underworld, evoke the imagery of this realm and are drawn towards the heightened theatricality of spiritualism and religion—although they are likely, given the climate of paedophilic paranoia, not to speak of the rising temperature of xenophobia, to find safer haven, if only historically, in theatre.) As for the theatre of everyday life, as much as for the ritual of everyday life, the selfie could not be more loaded with a sense of its arrest in an exaggerated moment of self-regard. Whereas the *mannequin challenge* reverses the static image's amplification of a moment of the selfie in a moving image of exaggerated duration, and so gives the lie to the idea that what was at stake in the selfie and that what it promoted, staged and raised to attention, is actually the self, or, in the mannequin challenge, the group pose. A theatrical typology is possible that only looks at what is exaggerated. It would of course include time, or certain values of time, certain intensities.

What is joking and familiar is accepted to be exaggerated as much as what is deceitful and strange: it resonates with an audience on the order of its crystalline enjoyment, changing facets according to motivations and intentions to put one at ease, spectating, or, with agenda hidden and with will unspoken, unsignposted, unsettling and confronting. The established religious ceremony is as predictable as the established theatrical one, which is not to say unsettling and confronting cannot be predictable. It too has its moments of arrest in exaggerated self-regard and its exaggerated movements of duration, whether fixed or not with applause or prayer-like silence at the end. Absorbed in an internal struggle with

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metaphysical forces, the shaman pauses in his efforts, the faithhealer pauses in hers, then she concentrates her powers, and he his. From a slit in your lower abdomen comes a pig's liver. Into an unseen aperture the spirit now named departs whose poison had afflicted you. You stop, before you go on, and, as you are in view, and as we are, the small group of us who are in the studio, expectant, so pausing does something it would not normally do. Whatever is worked into the invisible that follows, it is visible, and it makes visible. It concentrates and intensifies. It does not, except in the case that you strike a posture of readiness in which can be discerned an intention and a motivation, fill with anticipation the circumvening space. In any case, your postural attitude is not geared to advance an action, to progress, but in advance withheld, withholding progress, and in relief from that which is to come, in inaction.

You are in pausing composing with time as an element that can dilate around you and you are composing with time as an element that can contract around you. The pause makes a visible contour as a peak from which are suspended sheets of time. (Deleuze relates these sheets to aspects of the past that are in co-suspension and these peaks to accents of the present in simultaneity (2012:95-121).) Contracting around you, a sheet has the aspect of movement, of a continuity in its aspect, or facet, from contour to contour; it unfurls in time with and in the time of what unfolds. A sheet is therefore like a memory recollecting and marking time between turning points, accents, peaks. As marked time it, and not the pausation of inaction, produces anticipation, with which, filled from end to end, it is consubstantial. Here we can say, with Bergson, action is time. But inaction is simultaneous to action's spontaneousness. The difference consists in two ways of using time, two ways of paying it out. Neither action nor inaction is complete and the completion of either of them is not

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going to come and is not coming over time. The peak and the sheet of time participate in virtuality: not quite, not yet, no longer. (Which is not the same as saying complete action and complete inaction are impossible, since this is gainsaid in the notion of the limitless, of the inaccessible and impossible instance that is ever approaching.) The sheet, ephectic, is suspended. The peak, aporetic, is somehow destitute, in an unbounded destitution, which I will explore more fully in the section *Decomposition*.

The two ways of paying it out refers to a rhythm of peaks and sheets, the former in the simultaneity of the forgotten past, the latter in the spontaneity of a future memory, which gives to resonance its rhythm. Or it might be possible to say that peaks rhyme, like melodic accents, while sheets of movement possess rhythm as a basic and nonmetrical pulse—a pure rhythm and musical periodicity that we encountered in the section *Theatre of an other: Invisible and visible*. So the rhythm of different movements and expressive moments arises and is detached from the basic pulse of each and each sheet is differentiated by the action of inaction, by hesitation and pausation—and in conventional theatre by the interval and curtain (whether or not there is an actual curtain, indicating onset of dramatic movement and punctuating with its rise and fall the opening and closing of the fantasy space for collective show), where *inactions* are often viewed as a mistake, a relaxation of the rigour in which the ceremonial order is imposed, that do not belong to and do not impart any value on the visible work.

The theme of Laurie Anderson's film *Heart of a Dog* could be that we know of no other fantasy than consciousness (2015). It is also how she tells her life story, a narration of textured sheets of images, visual and musical, abutting against recollections in Super 8 digital transfer and

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tape recordings, beckoning to the future, with the accompaniment of her voice, which is a distinct voice. It engages a language provided with lapses, ellipses and points of break-off, as well as vocalic prolongations and consonantal runs, short rhythmic bursts. It makes sense of *paying out* time in two ways, or two directions, which are not just past and future dimensions of the present presentation. As I write these last two words I hear her voice: the *present presentation*. They contain a hesitation, a missing comma, or a self-correction. What was it really she wanted to say?



Marks of Lispector

for Clarice

with

Mohinder Anand

Chen Chen

Chenby Dien

Michael Ferriss

Jeffrey Gane

Felipe Oliveira

director

Simon Taylor

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I wrote in the last section that conventional theatre does not judge inaction, *inactions*, to be of positive value in the visible work that is set before an audience. But what is conventional theatre? Convention may be understood to be the habits and norms of a society. So that conventional theatre can be understood as theatre that carries and possibly preserves what is habitually and normally assigned to it in the way of its conventions. These conventions are what social and historic norms and habits of thought would have as belonging to theatre or as associated with theatre. (Stengers calls these artifices. They include, for her, the heuristic efficacies of the aleatory and techniques of chance (2015:149).) Theatre is a certain architecture that one does not have to be an architectural historian to know—and this also by general habit of thought and common association—has developed conventionally from the classical European model, of which conventional theatre retains certain features and elements. In some cases, the stage is architecturally demarcated from the auditorium, by, for example, being elevated. In some cases, features and elements are dispensed with, like, for example, the curtain and the fly-tower, or the wings and tabs, the royal boxes and classical perspectivism in scenographic illustration, to be flown in and out on flats and gauzes.

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Theatre's architectural legacy has led to usages which have become conventional, and conventionally associated, by common understanding, as belonging to plays, shows and performances. Although they rested on discourses that were aesthetic, technical, scientific, economic and political, these are features and elements that were nondiscursive and tectonic, which have migrated to the discursive—to the conventional discourse of theatre. They are markers of change of scene. The curtain, once a feature and functional element within the proscenium arch is dispensed with and now lights up conveys commencement of action and lights down conventionally communicates completion of dramatic movement. The conventional discourse of theatre includes features like the interval, or intermission, so loved by Badiou, in his “Rhapsody for Theatre”, that he made a plea for its convention to be maintained (2008:209-10).

By convention, the interval is the part of the show where the audience understands it may leave the playhouse, arena or performance space. Its own visibility takes over from that of the work in the interval. It does so according to the symmetry understanding inaction on the part of the actors (human or nonhuman) to equal action on its—in promenade, discussion, or the avoidance of discussion, of the work. The exception breaking the convention is where *interaction* interrupts the audience's conventionally seated inaction and calls for participation of the audience; or where the performance intervenes in the interval, rendering the audience suddenly inactive inasmuch as it attends to the visible work, and insofar as its individual members not attend to themselves, their drinks or their discussions, giving Badiou good reason to make a plea for its maintenance (2008:209-10).

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The features and elements understood by the conventional discourse to belong to theatre inform the cultural and social expectations of the theatre audience. At the same time, the overall componentry of theatre's belongings is also irreducible to and exceeds the audience's cultural and social expectations. The audience itself is a convention. While new conventions are added or discovered to have migrated to theatrical discourse, it is one that remains nonetheless conventional. If theatre has in some instances succeeded in breaking with a convention like that of the audience, it has not been in order to dispense with it but to draw attention to its essential conventionality.

The film *Theatre without Audience* centres on the theatre theorist and practitioner Andrzej Wirth (Streuber, Kocambasi & Mader, 2015). He is rarely out of shot and it is his voice we hear narrating, sometimes against the visual index of a lecture or drama workshop. It is to the latter that the title refers. Wirth is running a workshop for a group of American students in the 1960s. He says in the workshop that a theatre without audience is an idea Brecht had in the 1920s. But it was an idea that was not understood at the time. In Wirth's understanding, a theatre without audience consists in exercises and activities undertaken for those doing them. The audience is not simply not present. It cannot be marked in its presence or absence. Neither is it the case that the exercises and activities are set before and undertaken for noone, nor should we go looking for something or someone to replace the audience. The convention allows for its displacement, which is the film's theme: Wirth says, "Displacement is good for you, if you manage to survive it." (Streuber, Kocambasi & Mader, 2015) Wirth's own displacement, to America from Poland in 1966, was, he says, *accidental*.

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Displacement is also a compositional motif in *Theatre without Audience* (Streuber, Kocambasi & Mader, 2015). The workshop scene, Wirth's statement, scenes from a Brecht *Lehrstück* (literally *teach piece*) directed by Wirth which Brecht disowned, a scene with an old Ukrainian man and one with a Japanese dancer are tropes of the film, which resonate supported by their diagrammatic repetitions. In this way, the film resembles a Minus piece. Each scene is taken up out of its temporal and spatial order, out of its rational order, and disorganised. In Minus this is done by the actors, who take up out of their rational narrative order movements, gestures, expressive details of another's story. Here the space and time of Minus are displaced onto the materiality of film. Rather than made whole, the film is virtualised through cuts and repetitions and their adjacencies—the fantastic assault of montage is a *démontage*.

Repetitions, in their adjacency, of sheets of action, make rhyme the scenes where Wirth is on a hospital gurney, awaiting and undergoing treatment, and in recovery, with the scenes and repeated details from his American drama workshop, giving them melodic or musical accent and emphasis. What is repeated is held adjacent for turning its aspect, each sequence of shots or sounds, to the other, in a concatenation of postures, across the cut, which does not so much act to separate them, in an action, as configure them, in inaction, like the part of the machine, film, that does not move. The rhyme is suspended, held up by, the film's rhythm, its pulse. The sense it anticipates is that a theatre without audience is also an operating theatre, where some therapeutic or medical treatment was, is, or will be, delivered and received. Whether it benefits the patient, will do or has done, who can say? Sometimes would be enough, which conventional medicine can hardly afford. Virtually would be enough, which is among the affordances of theatre, if not quite conventional

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theatre.

Is conventional theatre then a museum for the preservation of discursive and conservation of nondiscursive elements? Does convention dictate that the interval be preserved or the proscenium conserved? These schema are informational inasmuch as they reserve a right, which may be protested for (and against), and conventional inasmuch as that right be upheld (or put down). Do conventions therefore mete out a sort of justice, that is distributed in general, throughout the culture, with cultural institutions, like theatres, as its courts, dispensing a law, ignorance of which is no defence? Is conventional theatre rather *not* what is conventionally done in or by theatres? In them there is bound to be some contamination, whether artistic, commercial or technological, by innovation and progress. There are bound to be politically corrupt officials acting at the local level. Is conventional theatre not what is conventionally done in or by theatres but what theatres do *not* do, which is the same, the done thing and the thing done sufficiently long with sufficiently broad recognition that it is known to be theatre? Who keeps this knowledge? Who fights for it or weeps over its loss?

The keepers of customary knowledge and conventional wisdom are silent on convention. Convention does not receive from them outward and outright avowal but they do not deny it. They do not make positive statements that lay down its law, statements taking the positive form *Thou shalt*. This is presumably because any avowal would be contested, as would the status of one making it. Reaction would be swift, and the one declaring for convention would be made an exception of, according to convention. Cultural custodians do not fight for convention. They do not even believe in its justice. So knowledge work is the invisible work of a

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culture, the custodians of which, submitting its conventions to the negative disavowal of *Thou shalt not go against the customs of the land*, hold it in custody, without looking at who they have taken prisoner. Knowledge is its own denier, placed visibly in a *cordon sanitaire* of silence—until it is asked to answer for itself and the authorities are called in.

Who says *conventional theatre*? The obvious answer is those who are not doing it or do not want to be seen as doing it. But it is already not so much a matter of general convention as of particular conventions, because it is harder to fence convention off as a job lot than it is the itemised particularities that must each be named correctly, cited properly, indexed in codices and subcodices, with exceptions clearly stated, for any categorical claim to stick, either for or against. How can Minus Theatre be conventional if its works are performed in multiple languages? How can Minus Theatre be unconventional if it retain conventional demarcation of the actor's and director's roles? Is it not the case that the demarcation implies hierarchy? Does the nomination of director not in itself qualify the role as authoritarian? But is not the conventional view of theatre directors in general as being authoritarian mistaken? What may be taken for authoritarianism on the part of directors by this reactive view, is it not the urge and urgency to punish the breaking of conventions belonging to those who take them seriously?

How is a punishment formulated? The punishment is formulated in the statement of the convention against which the infraction has occurred. It is made by the authoritarian director as a statement of fact. The position taken by the authoritarian director is that of one who knows the law and believes in its justice. The strongest type of statement is to exclude the one who, having failed to see, or who, having seen and not recognised it,

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has broken the law; to exclude him or her from the invisible work as punishment. But, in giving away its identity, this acts to acknowledge the displacement of the fact by the convention. It is to acknowledge the law in its essential conventionality: to mark it and be marked by it (as in Kafka's story *In the Penal Colony* (2000:189-229), which resounds throughout the discussion of despotism, as the form assumed by *infinite debt*, in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (2008:231-2)).

The one excluded, the exile, is not worthy of the debt owed to convention. *Get out of my rehearsal room! Get out of my studio!* is exemplary. The weakest type of statement is nonexemplary. Rather the director her- or himself sets the example, and through mounting hysteria, psychotic outbursts, allows his or her paranoia to come to light: she has no control, he has no control, of the conventions of his or her own theatre, in its very *invisibility*. Screaming one's tits off, or *venting*, can have the salutary effect of raising the director in the estimation of others as one who really cares. There are other ways, of course, in which the authoritarian director may exercise her judgement, or his. Grotowski's exercises were famously punishing (2002). Robert Wilson's continue to be excruciating to those who do not accept the conventions of his theatre (including mechanical and the slow motion of what Wilson calls the *natural time* that "helps a sun to set, a cloud to change, a day to dawn" which is the *gesture* brought, by duration, to its *extreme* (at Quadri, 1997:12-3)). But the point to be made is the necessary condition of contingency of the conventions as of the director's authority (and putative authoritarianism). The judgements of either are petty. They are small and human, and they are not made to be broken, so much as *made*.

The task of directing theatre is not to follow convention. Neither is it to

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break with convention. It is to make convention. Where custodial knowledge regards theatrical discourse as a body of achieved facts and statements, a director sees convention (although she or he may be blinded to the fact of convention; although she or he may in exemplary fashion present convention as fact). The custody of rights to conventional claims, however, insists on the nonexceptionality of claims. To take the custody of conventional knowledge of a cultural custodian rests on the rule of *one for all*. According to this rule, claiming one exception underwrites the body of all, and, thereby, grants legitimacy to the keepers of knowledge, and grants to the prison guards and peace keepers the legitimacy of authority. Not *How can Minus Theatre be thought conventional?* But *How can Minus Theatre think itself the exception unless it break with all convention?*

Directors who care about convention understand the making of convention as the displacement of facts and statements comprising theatrical discourse. Directors who take the conventions they work within seriously are not in service to them. Directors whose authoritarianism consists in the urge and urgency to punish those who break with convention rather than make convention are not doing so in service to or attendance on the essential conventionality of the artform which they practice. They are serving and attending to the *marking* of this essential conventionality. Their care is in respect of a visible acknowledgement of the invisible, in the work, which convention serves and on which it attends.

Punishment is due those who are merely acquiescent, who do not have the courage to claim with conviction the exception they thereby make of themselves. Those who perform actions, who do not act but make their

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way by reacting, by making their reaction stand out, those who want to do the right thing, who are better than what they in fact do, who pay lipservice, committing verbally, and those who are ignorant of conventions are tested under the conventions of the invisible work. This is its rigour: to test the resolve of those who say they want to act as well as those who say they cannot perform.

The test is not one of the disciplinary knowledge of an essential truth, like that of authenticity or even performativity. It is a test of conventions and of what may be claimed for conventions and declared for in their name. It is of the rights of conventions that the practical discipline is comprised and to which the conventional discourse of theatre is owing. The debt is carried by an unconventional discourse just as much. But the test of acting is to expose reaction, where it is made from the body of knowledge, of aspects of technique and statements of fact, or where the good will of the actor is, with cynicism or with irony, invoked. Here it is as if the debt might be called off before it is incurred (in the case of unconventional discourse) or as if the machine set in motion to mark it (in the case of contravention) might be stopped by flattery before it starts.

After *White Flower* and *Textured Passsages* I made a commitment for Minus to perform in Auckland's Fringe Festival in February 2015. Conducting workshops in preparation for what became *Boneseed* was however impossible with a rotating cast of new people and without a sufficient number of those who had been in the group at least for the gallery shows. The impossibility was neither due to the reason of having to teach our techniques nor of having actors who might explain and help teach newcomers. The problem was rather in the nature of the knowledge of bodies, of the embodied knowledge of actors and of not having present

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to act in workshops the acting bodies. The enlistment of actors who had been with Minus for some time and who had this embodied knowledge made *Boneseed* possible. (Yevgeniya, William and Nell stayed from *White Flower*; Gabriel came in as a musician for *Textured Passages* and stayed as an actor; to these were added, for *Boneseed*, Xiaolian (a friend of Xiaohui, who later returned—whose influence was therefore felt), Clemente (who saw both previous shows) and Matilda (like Nell, a dancer).) It was not a question of training or having been trained but, it might be said, of being *entrained* in the conventions we had made. As knowledge, it was not a matter of having learnt but of being marked by it for having undergone something, for having had to undergo something like a ritual or rite of passage, which cannot be agreed to but must be undergone and which cannot but be agreed to but must be undergone. It was a visible difference, like a tattoo or scarification, that made the invisible difference. (These notions, of markings and rituals, led me to make use in *Boneseed* of Holi dyes from the Indian festival of the same name. Each actor trod barefoot in a bowl of powdered dye before entering the working space of the stage, the path of each one marked a different colour, so that it was a bright mess, like a Jackson Pollock, by the end. They marked each other's faces and limbs, as if with paint or blood; and I lit the work to register the brilliantly multicoloured clouds of powder that rose above the action in billows as the dye was thrown in handfuls.)

Of course the debt to convention is abstract—and conventional. Theatres are one of the few places you walk around among conventions without their disguises. This is the reason they accept others who bring in new conventions for which allowance can always be made. What is a language but another convention? We can ignore Xhosa and commit to English, or

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to Mandarin, or Russian, or we can hear it and hear in it a range of possibilities, tonal, musical. But without another who speaks it, apart from René, it is noncommunicative, and breaks with the convention by which the sounds of languages communicate through signification. It is an unconventional use of language, unless we adopt the convention of the foreigner who hears Xhosa but does not understand it. For every language, even one constituted of conventions of movement, like ballet, like dance, it is entirely conventional and conventionally accepted that there will be those by whom it is not understood. Or until we have made a new convention it is unconventional, because to hear a language as a foreigner is to limit the range of the possibilities, musical, theatrical and linguistic, it introduces.

We hear the consonantal clicks of Xhosa as unconventional for a language if our own languages do not have these sounds, or we hear the tonal schema of Mandarin as unconventional for our own languages' not possessing such schema, except arbitrarily, as individual traits or manners of speaking, and not as informational or signficatory. The convention we make accepts as broad a range of languages and of meanings of and purposes for language as possible. René, issuing a simple command in Xhosa, will be understood; while, describing the details of the scene he sees around him and his actions in it, he will not be. The convention we have adopted, made and maintain in Minus is to ask newcomers to speak in the language that by being the most familiar to them gives them the greatest range of expressive possibility. (René in fact was as comfortable in Ugandan, French and English as he was in Xhosa; so he swapped among and between them, and between the betweens, where he spoke a polyglot, making a new convention for himself.) Customarily, I would ask you, if you were unacquainted with this

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convention, to double your actions with speech and say what you are doing, until you are habituated to it. Once you are, because it is a matter of listening to others as much as or more than speaking yourself, the range of what you can do increases. For example, at the outset, you will tend to answer a direct question, rather than to listen to the speaker, and, without answering, speak back: the convention is nonsignification, not, in the conventional sense, to answer sense with sense.

The English speakers, like Bill or Matilda, or Gabriel, who adopted the linguistic convention of Minus with alacrity, perhaps because of a vocation for music, I customarily ask to avoid the construction using the present tense plus verb in the participle form for direct action and to prefer subject plus verb constructions: *I walk*, over—*I am walking*. The reason for this is the duration the *to be* present verbal participle introduces into the *action*: it injects into it *verbally* a continuous present, which tends to slow down, viscously, transition to subsequent action, as if walking in mud.

Bill effectively thematised this linguistic trope in a story he acted out, taking the lead for others to follow and disorganise his actions' narrative principles, about, exactly, *mud*. He bent down, felt it between thumb and forefinger, brought it to his tongue. He spread some on his face. He waded out into it, slowing down as the mud deepened and grasped his legs. He plunged into it and submerged himself bodily, until his breath gave out. He emerged gasping. He cleared the mud from his eyes, turned and waded back to shore, where, with arms spread and eyes shut, face raised to the sun, he let the mud dry. The question that arose from *Mud* was what are the principles of narrative organising the action if not properly *existential*? Other actors who entered then occupied this present

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tense—a duration fixed, like dried mud, without sequence or passage of past-present-future, without sequel or consequence, as *now*, *now* and *now*.

A wonderland of tolerance and freedom where each one is accepted in Minus whatever conventions she has brought from home, or whatever the habits, customs and norms with which fate has encumbered him or entrusted to him, it is not. The conventions are free, and, freely observed, are seen to be conventions. But some struggle to accept them without their masks of force and order; and some do not recognise them without masks at all. The former normally conclude Minus is not right for them—the inner or the outer imperative is missing: no one is telling them what to do and the order is not clear. Many slip away, some to return, like May, whose life story I will touch on in the next section. But the latter's fight, of those who do not see the conventions they walk among, is not of nonacceptance; the fight they have is for the nonacceptance of the necessary contingency of freely given conventions: Jaypal always listened to me when I said listen. I wore the mask of the boss, the authoritarian director, which boss he had been in a former life, *worth twenty men*. But he did not listen to others. He spoke beautiful melodic Hindi in a fine strong voice, which he modulated into a rumbling rhythmic chant when I asked him to tone it down. When it came to the visible work before an audience, in *Marks of Lisspector, for Clarice*, he took his turn to preen and boom and show off, always with small looks at me for approval, as if this is what all our conventions of individual possibility had been about. He declared for the boss, not for the conventionality of his own exorbitant display, which was invisible to him, and which was indebted to him, rather than being that to which he owed his visibility. After *Marks of Lisspector, for Clarice*, I failed to call him when I reconvened Minus.

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The theatre is not alone as a place where the true identity of convention is known. But there is an historic convention whereby its flaunting of conventionality has been regarded as a paradigmatic flouting and endangering of such social norms and habits as make up public morality. This is the adventure Deleuze takes philosophy on at the beginning of *Difference and Repetition* (2004): philosophy goes to the theatre, as it will later, in *Cinema 1* and *2* go to the cinema (1997; 2012), where it walks among the unmasked bodies of convention, finding both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche there already and presently occupied, one dancing, the other, the former, in the audience, squirming in his seat (2004:6-12). The unmasked bodies agree to perform and act in a masque called The Image of Philosophy, which is hardly unlike the Public Morality, in that it does not declare for the conventions, dogma, the morals to which, silently, it acquiesces (2004:167). (Like the relationship to Political Correctness of the Left, it is a practice with striking similarity to that familiarly called *suspension of disbelief* (Žižek at Lain, 2017).) Groups of artists, artistic movements, studios, with students, and educational establishments have shown the same love for convention nude, in various states of undress, as well as—emphatically—formally attired. The theatricality of its dressed-up nature, of its, as Warhol said of himself, profound superficiality, or as Wilde, its natural artifice, may be fixed with nothing more assertive or subtle than a simple pin, as Eliot suggests (1963:14). CalArts, by the report of Herbert Blau, at inception was such a place (2014:214-8). So was Black Mountain earlier, for Cage, de Kooning, Olson, Einstein, members of the Bauhaus, even earlier such a place, and for its students, Rauschenberg, Cunningham, Noland, Rockburne, Creeley (Byrne, 2017). The Futurists in Italy, the Dadaists in Switzerland, and Modernism in general, provided places where convention was seen, heard, felt, smelt,

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tasted, embraced, occupied and fetishised—in the return to the fetish of Picasso, Derain, Breton (Lingis, 2011:73)—as nothing less than convention. Artists are, in the main, as taste-makers, more accepting than educators, who have the role chiefly of cultural custodians, of the rule of convention, which can never be taken seriously enough as when it is not serious. “An ethical sympathy in/ an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style”, Wilde writes, and—“Even/ things that are true can be proved.” (1952:17)

Is not this the rule of the minority, the convention dividing minority from majority? The minority declares for convention as the mark of an identity and as the mark of adherence. It owes its adherence to conventions the majority upholds to secure its peace, to maintain its dominance, the justice of which is asserted in the conventional rule of self-rule of its constituency. In the majority's acquiescence to and palliation of the masking and disguising of force and order by convention, by convention of the normal, customary and habitual, it cedes to minorities the right to discovery of the conventional, to claim the convention for themselves, of the majority's assertion of dominance, to mark its conventional identifications and declare for them. These are the conventions of divisions by race, ethnicity, religious markings, markings of dress, as well as skin colour, gender and sexuality. Is not this the meaning Deleuze and Guattari give to the minoritarian and the reason they attach to it political significance (2014:546-7)?

Mark Fisher describes the shift from neoconservative to neoliberal attitudes in terms of a deepening of the acquiescence of the majority in its passive reaction to convention (2012). He appreciates, in the introduction of neoliberalism during the New Labour era of Tony Blair's

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government in the UK, the arrival of a particular convention, of a specific cultural logic, under which neoliberalism let itself be known, was commonly upheld and continues to be commonly upheld, attributing necessity to convention. It provided to convention the necessity of progress and modernisation—*You can't escape the future*. Fisher relates in an interview the shift in the official line of managers and departmental heads in the education sector, where he was working at the time. He speaks of an increase, unprecedented over his tenure, in the bureaucratic demands and requirements placed on his position, of filling out forms and filing reports about teaching, to the point that his teaching duties looked to be overtaken.

When approached, his managers generally agreed that these new demands and requirements of the bureaucracy had no real bearing on teaching. When consulted, they were in sympathy and agreed that there was neither pedagogical basis, nor practical reason, for the added workload. When questioned, sector managers, departmental heads, and their mouthpieces, accepted what was demanded and required by the bureaucracy went beyond the regular reporting and filling in of forms needed to meet newly imposed standards for the measurement of educational outcomes. When confronted, they even allowed that having to report on performance was a type of self-regulation, spying on oneself, in auto- or sousveillance. *I know. I don't like it either*, they would say—*It's just what we've got to do these days*. (Fisher, 2012)

Neoliberalism, as a general adjustment in social policy and political economy, does not sweep neoconservatism aside—it follows it to the letter, while putting on it a friendly face. Similarly, neither does postmodernism, as a general cultural adjustment, sweep modernism

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aside. It operates otherwise. Postmodernism resubmits to convention all of culture and, recalling the nonexceptionalism of *one for all*, cultural and artistic history, including—which is key—*itself* as a cultural moment. It redraws everything past, from the proscenium to the Happening, including its own operation, into a resonant field of reference points. But what returns does not return because it is worth it. The past it returns is not returned because it is worthy of returning. It is returned in its essential conventionality.

The proscenium resubmitted to convention by postmodernism is a “proscenium.” It is reproduced as the product of, the reproduction of, no other discourse, under no other cultural logic, than those of postmodernity. The Happening has the happening of a postmodern “Happening.” The authenticity, the potential of the past to be quoted, and the performativity, the potential of the past to be performed, are not at issue here. But in redrawing everything past into a resonant field of reference points that includes its own operation, what is at stake in postmodernism is a resubstantialisation of conventions as concrete reference points. These apparently unwieldy and abstract terms, like neoliberalism, like neoconservatism, like postmodernism, are therefore the best available tools, since they are wholly responsible to convention. Their application is precisely to concretise, to make substantial and fix firmly that which is fluid, abstract and unwieldy, which they barely cover up—there is not under them another mask.

Resubstantialised, reproduced, given the possibility *as such*, the past that returns, that is retraced to the letter, that is given a friendly name, like the diminutive of postmodernism *Pomo*, the past that is made a concrete reference point in an operation itself concrete for taking place—

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convening—in the present, the present that brings the past and present together under convention, exactly *this* past is inescapable. It is the future, the future postmodernism, like postcapitalism, is ever after. Its resubmission of all cultural history and cultural histories to convention is axiomatic—the term Deleuze and Guattari apply to capitalism (2008:267ff), as it sustains its notion in an operation that goes like clockwork of prevailing in contingency through necessity, breaking down, having to be wound up tight, in which—“capital itself figures as a directly economic instance”, and, we might say with justice, no more no less, *the* economic convention (271).

You can't escape the future if there is nothing more to it than the past, if it is not what it used to be. But you can look at its value. This is not precluded: you can look at the mechanism which gives value—repetition. We are constantly looking in Minus workshops for new conventions, for what is worth repeating. Earlier I said my job as director is to monitor the invisible work and to evaluate movements, tendencies and possibilities (*Theatre of an other: The Other-structure and ensemble*). This is not quite true. (It is virtually true: not quite, not yet, no longer.) It is true insofar as I have often been in a privileged position, a position privileged by convention, to see; and it is true insofar as I see my task as looking out: for what is worth repeating. But others in the group see as well in the invisible work and repeat in workshops what they see as worth repeating.

Xiaohui introduced the idea that what was spoken might bear the relation to the action of a running commentary. She stood apart from the action and from a neutral bodily stance and in a neutral tone gave a narration in Mandarin. Such a narration entered the visible work in the production of *Marks of Lisspector, for Clarice* (November, 2015). Mancio's commentary

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was in the voice of Clarice Lispector, with whose works in Brazilian Portuguese he is very familiar. In *At the Stock Market Meeting* (November, 2016), Mancio gave the convention a new twist by standing apart from the action and translating on the fly—English to Portuguese—from a script I had prepared and set in the Old Folks Association Hall where the performance took place *as if* offering a commentary on the action, adopting the neutral tones of a commentator.

The definition of work may therefore be extended to include the repetition of convention. Where the workshop is to make new conventions, to make them from what is valued in the invisible work as worth repeating, the rehearsal may be said to repeat them, to consist in the repetition of convention. For Minus, workshops run into rehearsals and rehearsals run into workshops. But always at the outset of a bracket of workshops leading up to a production workshops test conventions we have developed, of the style of what we called *theatre of individual life*, which I have presented here as *theatre of an other*, and test the techniques, the methodology, for instance, of attending closely to the acted story of one workshop participant to *case the joint*, the assessing beforehand by others of what they might *steal*, and taking it from the story, distribute across the space, and disorganise over the piece's duration. (Members of Minuis and I presented this method at an Applied Theatre conference in Auckland, November 2015, as *thief (theatre of imitation, expression & f__ery)*.) I say *methodology of thief* because of the degree of its elaboration in the invisible work, where it is called by name, in English, and invoked as a method, and so belongs to the conventional discourse of Minus Theatre.

If the work, the labour in *elaborating*, is the repetition of convention, the

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workshop is to make new conventions and rehearsal, literally, to rehear them, replay them, *work* them, what is valued in convention is what animates. It is not what animates convention but what convention animates. Xiaohui's commentary freed up the use of languages. It added whole new aspects to the work, of parody, self-parody and irony, which were able to be communicated, and made possible their communication, outside of any one language: their *theatrical* communication. It set up an antinarrative to the story, the story told *in one's own words*, as the formula goes, and made a further exception—always worth repeating—to what is conventionally understood to be communicable in what is conventionally understood to be a language. Its value itself is not exceptional; it is conventional. A theatrical theory of value might therefore take the following formula: What is valued in value is its convention. (It is in this sense that I have referred to a *justice of convention*. It judges a convention not worth repeating to be without value, *minus* theatre for Minus Theatre.)

To declare for a new convention, to repeat it before an audience, having workshopped to find it and worked it in rehearsal, is this to do conventional theatre, or theatre at all if the convention is not recognised by the audience to belong to theatre? Aboveall, what is theatre? Is it not the mask valued by convention? Or is it the unmasking of all values in their essential conventionality? These would include among them the value conventionally attributed to *art*. But it is in its repeatability as art that I think theatre finds value. It is as an artform that it is able to be repeated for being worth repeating. This has been the object of Minus's pursuit, and its escape route. The audience, and her perspective, the audience, and his point of view—the literal *I spectate* of the Greek word θεάτρον (*theatron*)—is it not perhaps exactly as an artform that theatre

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can do without it?

Time is the fantastic assassin of conventions (as of values). When we first looked at what others were taking from the one telling a story and themselves adopting in the way of a gesture, detail of expression, node in the narrative network, or plotpoint in the storyline, I said in a workshop they were *arrows* to be *snatched from the air*. Movements are themselves in movement, as are the movements of which the latter is comprised. Action, as has been noted, is time. Time is an arrow, with all the paradoxes the image of an arrow in flight, or fallen to ground, or shot at a target, conventionally carries with it, in its flight, on its fall, with only estimates to go on for departures and arrivals. One acting a story, moreover, sends out arrows, some intentional signs, some involuntary symptoms, of what is really at stake, or of what is not really at stake, except for the ones watching, listening, with whom, in whom, for whom, whatever it is will always resonate differently: no matter, the arrow has a target. At whom is it shot? At each one for different reasons. You are a musician, it strikes you at your centre of rhythm; a keen observer, it goes to your fingers, which oscillate in a peculiar way; an empath—straight to the heart. What strikes you is an arrow you snatch from the air. Then I came across this story.

James Olney, the scholar of biography, tells the story of Alberto Giacometti, the sculptor of life (1998:276-339). I made use of the story, insofar as I remembered it, at a Performance Hui and Symposium, April 2016, held at Araiteuru Marae and St. Margaret's College in Dunedin. I mention the venues, because I had the privilege of conducting a workshop, this time without other members of Minus, to *illustrate* or *represent* our techniques (represented in the programme for the event as *T.O.I.L.*—

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Theatre of Individual Life), in the *wharenuī*, the main meeting-house of the marae (which is, architecturally, a compound of dwellings, which survives from the precolonial era, when it had a military function as a defensible redoubt, the *pa*, and which continues to have social, cultural, temporal and sacral functions. The latter are centred on the *wharenuī*, which is intensively occupied by *tāonga*—ancestral belongings *living* and *present* in a time collapsing 3000 years). The *wharenuī*, it turned out, was the perfect place to present techniques of extemporisation, and I connected Minus's approaches to temporality to the metaphysical understandings of time of Māori. With this heuristic in place, a gift of the place, I made recourse to Giacometti's story, as related by Olney, to explain what participants—and all of the conferees participated in the workshop—were to attend to in following the one I asked to lead the group. (Here also I adapted slightly the convention of the leader enacting an emotionally resonant story. I asked that he, Richard Huber, who has entered this writing in relation to Butoh, start to move, and let the movement lead, one movement to the next, to *outline* rather than to *figure* something like an emplotment of points. I asked Richard to act through the series of movements like he was laying out the points and phases of a ritual, to do so in such a way as to share, with those present, an alien ritual, for them to engage with it, outlining it as he would do were he inviting others to join in a ritual which is new to them.)

After I told the story, I said: I want you to subtract from what Richard is doing, from how he is moving, from his movement, to get to the essence, to what it is which makes him essentially him and no other. It is an impossible task, I know, but try. Take from him what strikes you as essential. For everyone it will be different. Subtract from what you have taken, refine it. Try again.

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If you find that it is not *him* but *you*, stop. Start again.

It is worth doing and worth failing at, try. It is worth trying and, like Beckett says, *failing better*, failing better each time.

Copying a movement is a good place to start. It is good to repeat it. But subtract it from time. If you find, in taking a movement, a gesture or expression, you are copying in real time, this is not finding an essence.

To follow what Richard is doing in real time, to imitate his movements in real time, is not to get to what is essential. What it is that makes him him, as what is essential that makes you you, is not found in real time. What is essential in him, the essential in anyone—what is essential in you—*can* not, essentially, take place in real time. Essences do not belong to real time, but must be subtracted.

Giacometti was a famously self-deprecating portraitist. Stravinsky sat for him and records how Giacometti turned away from his work in exasperation and said, *It's no good, I can't go on*. He did not do this on just one occasion but did it repeatedly, throughout a sitting, and every time Stravinsky sat for him, would break from the work, and protest in a way which seemed exaggerated, *It's no good, I can't go on*. He laboured over his sculptural subjects as over his portraits. It made the job of being his model one of surpassing difficulty. Only his brother, Diego, had the patience for it. What Giacometti set out to capture was the essence of the individual before him, which made the job of being an artist one of surpassing difficulty as well and one to which Giacometti did not believe himself equal.

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The story goes that one day Giacometti noticed a friend at some distance on the street. (Olney will have departed from me by now. His main account is found at 1998:280, 288.) What struck him was that he recognised immediately who it was: the distance gave his vision not a single detail to go on and generalised the silhouette in a way that ought to have made the whole figure impossible to know. Yet, despite the broad, almost limitless expanse still separating the sculptor from the approaching figure, he realised that an essence—perhaps no more than the tiniest particle of what made the one he saw that one and no other—had been transmitted to him with distinct clarity.

So he worked for ten years (in actuality three (Olney, 1998:288)). For ten years, Giacometti conducted explorations, attempting to reproduce in his studio what he had with such clarity seen while out one day on a Parisian street. At every attempt, as he pulled wads of clay from it, subtracting from it to find its essence, with mounting terror, he found the sculpture shrinking under his fingers. Each time he tried, it wound up no bigger than a toothpick or a matchstick.

All he had to show after a decade of work could be contained in a single matchbox (in actuality six (Olney, 1998:288)): an entire exhibition, in a matchbox. Called upon to exhibit in Switzerland, he travelled with the only one of his attempts he did not consider a failure. It was not a complete failure inasmuch as, having to the smallest extent captured an individual essence, it was *life-like*, if not *life-size*. Arriving he was shown the pedestal, monumental, on which he was to mount his work. Whereupon, withdrawing from within his jacket a matchbox and, proceeding to open it, Giacometti produced the sculpture. It was a tiny human figure, between two and three centimetres tall, seen as if

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approaching over an immense distance.

Giacometti discovered that the only way he could get his figures to grow to anything approaching life-size (and then exceeding it) was to make them very thin.



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Without the slightest irony in his voice, Clemente asked Alastair what it meant when he... Clemente made the gesture of self strangulation ...and... Clemente made the gesture of tearing out his hair. Alastair simply answered, *Suicidal depression*.

Clemente joined the group for *Boneseed*. He had been a member of the invited audience for *White Flower* who had stayed afterwards, who had enthused that we had found a theatrical language that was our own. (He compared it to film; he was trained as a film actor in São Paulo: *White Flower* was for him the type of film that he loved and that he wanted to make.) Clemente brought into the group Mancio, also from Brazil, Yuliana, from Brazil as well, whose life story I invited the others in the group to enter into, breaking with our usual practice of leaving it for the one whose story it is to perform alone.

An image occurred in Yuliana's story. She sat on a chair, tapping her feet, playing with her hair, bored at school. Matilda, like Nell a dancer, took the image. But rather than repeating in the image Yuliana's gestures, she repeated its sense. Matilda sat on a chair in the studio, pulled to the centre by Yuliana earlier. She neither toyed with her hair nor tapped her feet. She just gradually melted.

She slowly slid off the chair, forward, then to the side, so that the seat of

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the chair supported the small of her back, from which depended, on one side, her upper body, and, on the other, her lower body. Completely melted, her arms, neck, head and hair spilled out one way, while her hips, legs and feet spilled out, splayed, the other.

Yuliana's life story ended in a wedding scene. The group feverishly gathered and repositioned chairs, for the nonexistent congregation, forming an aisle, which, as Yuliana attempted to process down it, continued to lengthen and change shape, until it entirely obstructed the procession, which came to a halt, as the chairs kept moving.

Before going a second time, I suggested that the one acting out the story and leading the others might take back and adopt, from one of the others, a movement, gesture or detail of expression, if she or he felt it an improvement, an image that better conveyed the sense he or she wanted to give it. The images might then mutate, evolve and develop through their selection and repetition, being borrowed, and taken up again, by the one in whose story they originated. Matilda's melting was an example.

Clemente also brought René into the group, who, although he did not carry on with the workshops preparatory to *Boneseed*, and did not perform in it, created one of its signal images. He killed Gabriel. The first time he did it was one of the first times Gabe had acted with the group. He was not used to working in his body.

It happened in a story Clemente told about living in a favela: this was supposed to be his preparation for a role in a film. He was there several months, long enough for the experience to have consequences on both his health—he developed heart problems—and on the path his life took. He

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could not stay in Brazil, but left for New Zealand, where he works as a casting agent, specialising in actors who are nonnationals. (Those he has invited into Minus he met on the job.)

In his story, he is a newcomer to the favela who has to harden up to survive. He transforms from one who cries to one who accepts, who is hard, who does not cry at the suffering of others. He looked at René. He pointed at Gabriel, singling him out, accusing him. He nodded to René who had understood, who now closed on Gabe. Gabriel, sensing what was to come, backed away, denying whatever it was he was being accused of —*No, it's not me!*

René, maintaining his resolve, kept coming. Bill, Xiaolian, Matilda, Nell, the others divided, some pointed at Gabriel, vocally egging on René, some confronted Clemente, whose work he was doing, whose soldier he was. René grabbed Gabriel by the throat and took him down. There was screaming and shouting while René calmly tightened his grip, throttling Gabriel, whose hands were up defensively, waving peculiarly in the air. He lay not looking at his killer but at the figures standing gathered around his head looking down at him. His death by strangulation was as strangely calm as René's violence. His hands waved still in the silence that came after he was killed.

Commenting on what had happened, Bill said it was great how the smell of blood brought the group together. Gabe said it had brought back to him a motorcycle accident in which he had nearly died. He remembered lying there in the ditch looking up and wondering what all the figures gathered around him were doing looking down at him. I thanked him for being the sacrifice. He said, *It's OK. I've done it before.* Despite René's

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absence, every subsequent time we did this story the same thing happened and it was always Gabe who died. (We filmed the story and made it available on Vimeo (Taylor & Taylor, 2015).)

Minus Theatre's Waiheke Island workshop, held February 2016, included Jaypal, Xiaolian, Xiaohui, Dorian (a second generation Chinese New Zealander, brought into the group by Xiaolian, who was at first reluctant to act with us because he worked as an accountant and considered himself therefore uncreative and not at all artistic), Gabe, Gabe's wife, Abby, Bill and both Mancio and Clemente. There was much excitement—most of us had not seen Clemente since *Boneseed* the year before. I hired the local theatre, Artworks, for the workshop, hoping to attract to it members of the vibrant theatre scene and perhaps some established artists who had made the island their home. Alastair turned up in the company of his landlady, who enjoys drama, an actress friend of Clemente, resident on the island, and a student, who apologised she could only stay for the first half. They were greatly outnumbered by the group from Auckland, a 35 minute ferry ride away, the incentive for whom to come to the island, where my family and I live, apart from enjoying working together, and Clemente's presence, unexpected, was a picnic in the early evening, before the return trip.

We began walking, walking for oneself. Alastair's landlady, Jude, confided that she had had a car accident the night before. She did not know if she was going to be able to participate much in anything physical. Her brakes had failed. She did not know why or how, and the car had left the road. But she could walk, she said, and, limping badly, she did.

Along with attending to what made the walk of each participant her and

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his own, I asked that each one attend to the quality of movement in detail, and to actions in the joints and limbs of each, that may have been limited, by stiffness, for example, at the hips or knees, or in the ankles, or lower back, or neck and shoulders, where tension can compound, brought about by habit or happenstance, but which was nonetheless a part of what made the walk of each one her own and his own. Over the course of walking, Jude's limp left her.

I asked that participants attend to how they felt and for each one to imagine the feeling as a landscape to be traversed, whether a precipice, or as slippery rocks along a riverbed, to imagine it in detail, and to project it out onto the working space. I asked for each one to place herself in the landscape she had imagined and for each one, making his way across it, to attend to the changes made, on its imperative, to how she walked, how slowly, quickly, how he crept, or had to crawl, balanced, waded, stepping gingerly, as if on eggshells or on broken glass. How does the landscape then change? I asked.

We had been working on the carpeted area of the auditorium, from which the chairs had been cleared. Next, I asked that we explore the whole auditorium: the stage, on rostra higher than the theatre floor, the set, behind the proscenium, between productions, with tabs out into the wings, and the upstage cyclorama, in front of the building's breezeblock rear wall, and features and elements, both working and redundant, of a theatre many times refurbished and rearranged to meet the demands of the productions it had housed. Voices were used, sounding out the space, which resounded with bellows and shouts. A whisper is just as good, I said.

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The walking exercise ended with the usual round of introductions. I spoke about the work of Minus and the techniques we had developed, according to the heuristic of an ethical commitment with three elements: *sensitivity*—the tact our bodies have of staying within their own limits is not the same for sound, which can suffuse a space: sensitivity is then for *listening, hearing* and *feeling* the actions of the bodies of others; *generosity* applies to the space and time of others: having the generosity to allow space for each and to allow time for an other's actions, including silence and inaction; *clarity* concerns the understanding one extends to an other as an ethical imperative one places on oneself. It takes in the imaginary scenarios, objects, landscapes and elements that we commonly work with in Minus: a bottle that is clearly made, out of the time and care that goes into it, becomes an element of the action another can pick up and use. But because it is an imaginary object, it can also transform in the action into something else entirely, a telephone, a cloud of smoke or insects—another element.

Clarity is not about fixing and stabilising the identity of a scenery, a thing there or its use. It is about committing oneself to the action in which one is engaged, to the new convention one is making when one makes something, so that others may make use of it, committing themselves, in the exchange, to its value, and to its potential for transformation. Clarity is about creating from nothing, from imagination, air, something that has been enabled to become elemental for an action, like earth, air, heat and light. (It is from this basis of an ethical heuristic, of both, therefore, a conventional commitment and a technical undertaking, that a *theatre of elements* will be conceived and realised in the production of *At the Stock Market Meeting* (November, 2016).)

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We resumed working on the auditorium floor. I asked Xiaohui to begin in the style of *theatre of an other's* invisible work. She made a rock, half her height, and set it in a sacred space, like a Buddhist shrine. The piece that evolved as others entered the action had the meditative and trance-like quality this image suggests.

After a break, when the student had to leave, I introduced, as something of a Minus tradition for people who are new to it, the telling of life stories. The stage, I said, is the perfect place. The actress of Clemente's acquaintance went first. She took the stage and we, her audience, drew forward chairs, sat, watched and applauded her when she had finished. I asked if there were comments or questions. A few were asked. A few explanations were given.

Jude went next. Dancing had been her first experience of performing. She pliéd and pirouetted, without reserve. She had recently taken to stand-up. She ended with a silent routine. We laughed, applauded, questioned, commented. She answered and explained.

Alastair went up. He rubbed his forehead and chewed pensively the fingernails of thumb and forefinger. He disappeared and stood formulating his approach some time in the wings before rushing onto the stage, throwing himself on the floor and tearing at his hair. He sat up and thought a moment before grabbing himself by the throat. He strangled himself, rolling to and fro on the floor. He paused once more, and began pulling out his own hair—which was different from what he was doing before. A small distance had opened up, over which he observed himself, and which his exasperation, in the literal act of pulling his own hair out, bridged. He too had been doing a bit of stand-up. The theatre hosts

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regular nights. He stood, uncomfortably, and mimed delivering a couple of jokes. We applauded.

Clemente asked what he was doing when he was strangling himself and tearing at his hair. Suicidal depression, he said. He had got some help. He was a lot better now. Jude, protectively, concurred. He was trying new things, like this workshop. He had even tried stand-up.

Bill said something about his use of space. He had used space, but not time. He could have taken more time. I asked if he would do it again, giving himself space, and time.

Alastair took a chair onstage and, planting it centrally, did not retreat to the wings but sat. Again, he could not keep still. He struck the pose of Rodin's *Thinker*, the next moment his arms and legs shot out independently. There were similar motifs of autostrangulation and hairpulling. He did no stand-up. He signalled to show he was finished by raising his empty palms to us.

I wanted him to do it again. He asked me if I would do it for him. I could not. Was there someone who could?

Alastair reluctantly returned to the stage. I suggested that he should be helped. Perhaps we could use the techniques of *theatre of an other* here we had been looking at in the first part of the workshop? Two volunteers went forward, Clemente and Jude.

Alastair sat on the chair centre-stage. Clemente entered the wings upstage left and waited out of sight, as if for his entrance. Jude followed

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his example. Alastair rubbed his thighs with his palms. He got up and moved towards the tabs behind which Clemente and Jude were hiding. He turned and sat back down. He struck the *Thinker* pose and a wave of movement took him. His hands went to his hair, to his throat.

Jude tripped lightly in, as she had in her life story—the dancer. She positioned herself behind Alastair. Keeping from touching him, she drew her hands up and down on the outside of Alastair's body, in a calming gesture. Then she plucked at the air, pulling at whatever it was that had beset Alastair, grasping in handfuls, and casting out the bad energy towards the backdrop, with exaggerated hand gestures and grimaces, releasing, uncoiling her fingers from its ill.

Alastair rose. Jude tried to pat him back down, but he escaped. Clemente entered. He chased him into the stage curtain, downstage right, in which Alastair wrapped himself. Occluding Alastair from view, the curtain made a cone of black.

Jude danced after, mouthing *It'll be all right! It's going to be all right!* She waved her arms like wands, around the black cone. Clemente hesitated then took aggressive hold of the curtain. He jerked open the cone, revealing Alastair, who fought back, gripping it with equal determination, while Jude skipped from side to side, saying *It's all right! It's going to be all right!* and conducting her hands into the appearance of magical and hopeful curlicues of supplication.

Considering the action at its denouement, I called it to a halt. *Sorry, I've got to stop you there.* I went on stage and thanked Jude and Clemente and Alastair, extricating him from the black, repositioning it, pushing it to

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the side, before saying, from the front of the stage: *But this is not what we do. We don't do, I hesitated, psychological drama.*

Psychodrama is fine. It's good, and it can be useful to act out pain and trauma in this way. But it's just not what we do, in Minus—and it's not what we have been doing today.

What we have been doing is taking from one person what they are doing, taking it from the order they give it, to make something else happen, some other thing than what they were doing with it, filling it with some other intention than the one they gave it, one that is decided, in the moment, by the group.

Because it's important, I want to look at this again.

I asked Bill and Mancio to go up onstage and do it again. *The same story?* asked Mancio. Yes, I answered, but in the way we do it in Minus.

Alastair was with us, watching from the audience. Mancio sat in the chair. Bill, upstage of Mancio, turned and regarded him, before coming to stand behind the chair. Mancio distractedly picked at his trouserlegs, crossing and uncrossing them. Bill leaned over the back of the chair, gripping it with his fingers. Mancio twisted around, acknowledging Bill with a nod, as if he were playing a game. Bill removed his hands from the back of the chair and ran his fingers through Mancio's hair, like a hairdresser assessing its length to see how much he should cut, playfully but slowing into a threat as he reached its end and released it, when he took firm hold of the back of the chair.

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Mancio quickly stood. The chair, relieved of his weight, sprang back, its feet scraping on the stage floor. Mancio went around the outside of it and pushed at Bill and yelled at him in Portuguese. Bill defended himself. Mancio pushed him. Bill pushed back. The chair was left empty in the tit-for-tat. Alastair walked up on stage and sat on it.

Without hesitation, Bill resumed his threatening attitude behind Alastair. Mancio stepped a short distance away and, chin in hand, surveyed him.

Bill teased his fingers through Alastair's hair. It was much longer than Mancio's, which prolonged, when he repeated the gesture, the alternation between threat and play. Alastair was soon irritated. But just as he turned to fend Bill off, Mancio took his hands, flapping in the air, and held them.

Alastair, surprised, let himself be manipulated, like a mannequin, or an artist's model, by Mancio, who arranged him into the pose of Rodin's *Thinker*.

Bill kept up his teasing hairpulling. Every time Alastair went to move, Mancio returned him to the *Thinker* pose. The rhythm of the two, each working on Alastair became increasingly frenetic, until Alastair jumped up shouting. Bill came around from behind the chair and, placing one arm around his waist, pulled him close, taking his hand, with the other, in his.

Mancio took up an imaginary violin and began to play a sad song, a fado, in time to which William led Alastair, whose spasms of struggle became less and less, in a slow tango.

It was spitting outside. We could not, as planned, take the picnic J., my

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partner, had prepared, down to the beach. We ate and drank wine, several bottles of which Jaypal had generously provided, under the theatre awning. (The wine is not customary in Minus, but the food—I always try to cater workshops, which is greeted, when it is, in the break revealed, with the refrain, followed by laughter, of *Did I make this? Or J.?*) Jaypal announced he would be leaving for India the day after tomorrow. He proposed a toast, after which I briefly engaged Alastair in conversation. He said it had been good, but he was still slightly confused about the workshop.

I reconvened Minus two months later for workshops in preparation for our next production. It would be named *At the Stock Market Meeting*, and would take place November that year.

Xiaolian had been active, for the purpose of drumming up interest in Minus, at a website for meeting people. At a previous workshop, in the first quarter of 2016, we had already had experience with several newcomers she had encountered through the site whose curiosity had been greater than their desire to participate. One guy was using it as a dating site. He turned up reeking of alcohol. He told us about his IT work. He could neither believe nor understand people spending their time doing this kind of thing. His eyes widened in amazement. It almost frightened him—*You really do this?! Really?!*

To this workshop Xiaolian brought three new ones: a New Zealand woman who worked as a biologist, a French tourist and May, a biochemist, originally from Shanghai, who had driven over an hour to attend. Bill and Gabe completed the group. We began the workshop, as on Waiheke, with explanations and demonstrations; and, in the second half,

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after the break, and food (mine today), would go on to life stories.

I spoke about what we do. I mentioned the elements of an ethical undertaking, of *sensitivity, generosity, clarity*, and covered their meanings, the technical and conventional senses which they convey. The technique of *thief*, belonging to *theatre of an other*, I said encourages sensitivity, in the ones who are *taking* from the one whose story it is, to his or her *essential* qualities. Each individual participant will, depending on their own makeup and skillset, see different things to take. A scientist, a biochemist, will find qualities a musician might not. Although there can be no wrong decisions—as to what each takes, for example—it is possible to get *better* at making decisions. We have found that it is a technique in this sense. The same goes for the other conventions of generosity, the space and time one gives others, and clarity, the commitment to what one is doing, as goes for sensitivity.

Xiaolian began a story. There was a funeral. Flowers grew and, harvested from the grave, were set on display for the living. Tears were shed. We stopped for questions and comments. May asked why we do such sad things.

It is not only sad things, but sadness and darker emotions have intensity, I answered. They generate intensity, in others, with whom they resonate. But it is as intensities in themselves that they are able to be taken on. As they take hold of the gestures, actions and expressions, which express them, they lose something of their heaviness. They gain a new power, possibly of lightness, or fluidity, and this enables us to work with them, on them.

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In touch with them, with the intensities themselves, through the gestures, expressions and movements, the details, with which they compose themselves, we are enabled to compose with them. We can make something else, something different with them, arranging them in ways that are different from how they were, stuck, as if in stone, in the roles that out of habit we gave to them.

In the *making* there is joy. This is true for the individual, who commits herself or himself to their expression—who leads in a story, like Xiaolian's, as it is true for the others in the group opening themselves, in the actions they take, to the intensities they express. But they are not always the heavy, dark and sad emotions. Neither is it that a sad story must always have a happy outcome. Enjoyment is found on the way.

After the break, we followed the tradition of asking each one of the newcomers in turn to perform, in four minutes, a life story for the rest of us, using the language of theatre—and using the whole space of the studio and taking time, the time that clarity requires. May went last.

She acknowledged the presence of her family, her mother and her father, at a point halfway down the studio. We, as the audience, were positioned at one, shorter, end, of its rectangular shape. She packed her things and took her leave. She shut the door. She was then overtaken by sobbing. But she continued as well as she could.

The door shut behind her; a suitcase in her hand, she made an arc across the space: away from the door, back towards the door. It was the arc of the flight of an aeroplane. She swooped in towards the door, and then could not go on. Tears ran from her eyes and her nose ran. Again, she

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stuttered into movement, again stalled and stopped.

She took one or two small steps. She did not cover her face or wipe her tears. She wept openly, making small sounds, as if involuntarily, with the surge of the sobs which shook her body. Her forward motion became inseparable from the movements shaking her, making her shiver. She lowered her head. Then she raised it, as if setting her face to the task. But she stopped and was bowed down. Xiaolian went to her to comfort her.

Reaching the side, where we sat, May said, through sobs, that it was the face of her brother that she saw. She had not expected it, but his memory had suddenly come to her.

Her brother is back in Shanghai and she cannot look after him, she said. Her mother and father, because they work and are away all day, cannot look after him, and she cannot—from here. She cannot fly back easily and help him like she wants to, and as she must. There is nobody else there to look after him, who can. This was her realisation: he has nobody else—and she only has him.

In life stories and in the stories that become pieces, passages of the visible work before an audience, stories which are, in either case, for the actor who is telling them, personal and intensely felt, we have added others the one leading and telling the story can decide to take for the figure or figures the story requires. Any one entering can be taken for the absent one, the brother, the loved one, the grandmother, father or friend, on whose absence, departure, death or action, for example, of bullying or challenging, the story turns. The other or others have not entered with

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this purpose.

Others have not been directed to and have not entered to perform the role or character, in catharsis or cathexis, of partner in dialogue, partners in dramatic action or psychological or dramatic foil. They have entered from another part of the diagramme, having taken from it the essential quality, no more than a detail, by which they have been struck, that has resonated for them, to make resonate the working space occupied by the ensemble. Each actor decides for herself which part each other plays in her own diagramme, either in accord with it or in discord with it. Each actor decides for himself who and what the others are so as to make resonate every part of the diagramme of the ensemble. The decision may be made at the peak of inaction but on the decision depends an action in anticipation of further decisions, suspending, holding up sheets fabricated of time and of action, like the flanks of a hillside, compounded by the actions of forces of different timescales, geological and material.

It has therefore been so as to precipitate actions that others have entered, each one introducing into the work, each one working to decide for, what will suspend anticipation in the sheets of time of actions. The play of diagrammes, in the concord and discord of their points and positions, is thereby given a rhythm and a means of harmonic invention by the lines, meeting where they break, of sheets of actions. It is a timeline composed of the peaks of inaction that articulate it—a little machine facing itself in the cut of the decision, which is the part of it that does not move.

May's life story had a door, a suitcase, an aeroplane's swooping arc, a father and a mother, leave-taking, and a hole at its centre. But it did not

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turn or move past, or it moved by stopping turning at, the realisation of May's that it was her brother, her brother outlined, and that this had been dark to her. In other words, I introduced other actors into Alastair's story — returning to it four times—not for what was inside it, in which there is the resemblance of the sad and dark emotions to May's story, but for its outside actions, because they were not *outside* themselves enough. It was not that what was inside Alastair's was any less intense than what was expressed in May's story, but that it was too significant. Its outsides, all the modalities of expression—from the *Thinker* to the two of which Clemente asked, *What does this or this mean?*—of its inside action could not at first escape the significance given by what was inside.

The *thought* could not escape the *Thinker* and the *meaning* could not escape their unity. The view kept imploding. Not until hair pulling was taken by Bill for teasing could another meaning escape. Not until, for Clemente, the thinking pose became simply the one demanded by a sculptor of a model outside him, was the view exploded.

May did not return for many weeks. She had realised, Xiaolian told us, how much she missed her brother. She had things she needed to sort out in her life before she could do any more Minus.



Decomposition

I.

What else to call composing through inaction but decomposition?

Peter Eisenman qualifies his use of the term in architectural analysis as an “heuristic approximation” (1984:81n12). He neither intends decomposition in the sense of “something actually decomposing”, nor as a negation of composition, but as composition's *contrapositive* (81n12). It is latent or immanent in composition—another force, or set of forces, composition contains, by which it can be taken hold of—and *not* composition (81n12). In decomposition, structural or *pure* relations, of differences and voids, displace those of the objects and substances posited by classical analysis (79). Eisenman proposes decomposition as an heuristic of analysis because of the presupposition in classical architectural analysis of classical (and modernist) composition. Classical and modernist composition, seen as composition itself, is the *construction* decomposed (80). Decomposition, for Eisenman, historicises architectural heuristics of analysis—and techniques of composition—as belonging to a time the *temporal* certainties of which can only be recalled to the present by memory, by being *remembered*. Decomposition is called for (and called in) by the present horizon of the “potential extinction of the entire civilization”, that *shatters* the classical (and modernist) condition of having a past, a present and a future (65-6). The present, from which

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Eisenman is writing in 1984, contains “two unrelated poles: a *memory* of this previous and progressive time and an *immanence*, the presence of end—the end of the future—a new kind of time.” (66) Eisenman chooses immanence over memory. His response to the shattered anatomy of time, of time out of joint—dismembered and detached from a past that can only be remembered and an amputated and disjointed future—is the prosthesis of decomposition: the prosthetic *autonomy* of the process of decomposition (80).

The prognosis of this new kind of time is not hopeful (Eisenman's article is entitled “The Futility of Objects”), unlike that presented in a series of case studies in Applied Theatre, where decomposition is part of a methodological armature, including *artistry* and *improvisation*, bearing the collective title “The Usefulness of Mess” (Hughes, Kidd & McNamara, 2011). (Under the rubric of *Applied* theatre is constituted as a discipline within the social sciences, where its practice ranges from the psychotherapeutic applications of drama therapy to the politically emancipatory applications of Boal. Minus staged a well-received workshop at the International Applied Theatre Symposium: Performance of Hope in Auckland, November 2015.) The use of decomposition here is to naturalise moments of breakdown for their potential regeneration of research processes (188). That these processes break down is due to the spontaneity of improvised responses to unpredictable events in the design of the practical research (belonging to Applied Theatre). Despite decomposition—“in confrontation with experiences that confound expectations of an orderly, rule-bound, habitable universe” (188)—having the potential to carry research in new and unexpected directions, the writers note that this is no compensation for the loss of meaning experienced at these moments. Decomposition is a principle recognising

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the importance of difficulty, the “deterioration of meaning” and *not knowing* for research methodologies (188).

The first contribution to *Decomposition: Post-Disciplinary Performance* (Case, Brett & Foster, 2000) introduces decomposition as both amputatory procedure “cutting legs and arms to fit” and “summary term” for the methods of analysis used in the volume (Foster, 2000:9). For Elizabeth Wood, writing in the final contribution, decomposition, as well as bearing the aspect of pathology, recurs as liberatory possibility, which is its *unnatural* role (Wood, 2000). It is the sense of the unnatural that is naturalised from first to last in *Decomposition*.

The liberation made possible by decomposition is sonic. It is here a question of the voice of valediction, lamentation and of words of remembrance for, following her death, Wood's mother. The mother to lesbian daughter relationship as it is composed under patriarchy bears, for Wood, the pathological aspect of decomposition, as the pathology it potentially undoes (2000:202). Decomposition “breaks up and disintegrates” this composite, disputes its coherence, and denatures the meaning given it under patriarchy (202). It does not do so for its healthy nature to be revealed or restored but, valorising unnaturalness, it does so for the meaning given it to be liberated, symbolically, from the biological ground of the mother's body: it does so to liberate the relationship, which is of one body to another body, from its composition and pathology under patriarchy. It does so to “renarrativize” it, as Wood says (202)—crossing “the Acheron as Mum's motorcycle guide, wearing black, to lesbian Thanatica in order, at last, to be heard and understood.” (209) The literal and natural decomposition of the mother has its unnatural return in decomposition and denaturing narrative. Wood writes of “composing an

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unnatural act of somatic and sonic decomposition” that liberates her mother's memory, with which she emerges “from the subordinating myth of maternal omnipotence” (209). This place is the “last refuge of patriarchal order and compulsory heterosexuality”—a “crypt-aesthetics littered with corpses, the corpus of women's lamentation” (209). The symbolic act of decomposition recuperates lost meaning to resonance, composes it, and makes it resonate.

The principle of convention comes out of decomposition because it is not an unnatural act. Writing of composing *in order* finally to be understood, Wood respects and declares for convention. Decomposition is chosen as the way to arrive at understanding and her reader, whether in contestation or agreement, meets with her on the ground she has chosen. The principle of convention then is one on which we may not agree, but one on which we *convene* and come together. It is not simply convenient. In fact, it can be a source of gross inconvenience, since coming together assumes coexistence, says Lingis, following Husserl, “not in the mutual equivalence of opinions but ... in mutual criticism.” (1989:18) However, the natural action of decomposition is not the preparation of ground for convention, in the sense of convening, and not the enlivening of grounds for criticism, the contestation and debate of the justice of convention, as I earlier framed it, but the destruction of any principle, justice of or framework for convention.

The inconvenience of convention lies in its *multidimensional diffraction of significations* (Barthélémy, 2015:68). (The phrase is Barthélémy's, where he contests Simondon's notion of signification preceding individuation (as ontogenesis) in light of Heidegger's conceptions of the convenience of what is *zuhanden* and of the convention of *Vorhandenheit* in the *Gestell*

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(61-70).) Diffracting the significations by which one makes meaning and forges understanding is not the collective which finds for the norms and usages of convention but the individual encounter with an other in whose radical alterity is contested the justice of the conventions for which one declares. One is bound by convention just as one unbinds from and breaks with convention—for the sake of the other. In the face of the other's different understandings, belonging to different cultures, languages, in their human dimension, one's own are multidimensionally diffracted. I hope to show that this multidimensional diffraction of significations can take us all the way to decomposition and to the destruction of the justice of convention; in making use of this phrase of Barthélémy's I refer to the chaosmosis of Deleuze and Guattari, which reference, in the operation slicing it, diffracts a cosmos of cosmetic meanings, or masks, in the multidimensionality of their chaotic significations (1994:35).

What is wrong with the accounts of decomposition so far advanced is that they leave convention untouched, or rather that they end up supporting new conventions on the ground of decomposition. It is all light and no earth or soil—a prismatic diffraction. Even when the intent is ungrounding—from classical architectural analysis to the myth of maternal omnipotence—decomposition is retained as ground; the sun may not always come out (may be occluded) but we remain above ground—even under patriarchy. Decomposition clearly plays here a didactic role, an aggressively contestatory role. The aggressor finally puts on the robe of justice of the peace. The assault, whether contrapositive, armed with a scalpel or determined to inflict unnatural acts, and not the assailant is the fantasy.

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Eisenman's account has the virtue of immanence; but he gives it the convention of value: for this reason decomposition is worth repeating, and writing about. Jenny Hughes, Jenny Kidd and Catherine McNamara's account has the virtue of loss without return. But to this they give the convention of use. Breakdowns are worth purchasing at the price of loss because they are useful. Susan Foster's account complements those of Eisenman and Wood. Where decomposition acts as prosthesis for Eisenman, Foster offers the unnatural separation of body parts. Foster's account has the virtue of waste. Lingis describes it as *filth* before which the body "rigidifies and stands apart"—"toenails, scabs, pieces of skin, hairs shed, blood spilt, severed foreskins and clitorises, aborted fetuses, ears and penises hacked off by torturers. A corpse, a whole organism thrown out of the realm of life"... (2011:101). While Wood's account has the virtue of *something actually decomposing*, to the filth and waste, to the corpse, she gives the convention of meaning. That meaning can be detached from its separation, from its expulsion and excremental medium, for this reason is decomposition worth repeating. But decomposition, whether analytic, formal or methodological, is indifferent to its value, its use and its meaning, in the way a machine is indifferent to the filth and destruction it wreaks, to the production in which it is employed, to the goals it serves, the goods it makes and to what it actually does.

II.

Wood adds something different to decomposition; she gives it a sense in which it is feminine—"the corpus of women's lamentation" (2000:209). To the degree the unnatural is naturalised throughout the volume,

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Decomposition (Case, Brett & Foster, 2000), to that degree a feminised counternature is turned against a nature, or supernature, which it decomposes. This nature or supernature is one of patriarchal composition, a *construction* that the sense of decomposition decomposes.

If decomposition and a feminised counternature are not identified in positive terms—as act of nature and nature itself—it is because to the unidimensional signification of these under patriarchy they bring a multidimensional diffraction of significations: a multitude of voices. The subject herself is unnatural, not simply a corpus and not simply one of women's lamentation, but a chorus (and it could be said, a *sarx*—σάρξ) and one of rebellion (speaking, it could be said, its *language*, which is that of decomposition). The unnatural sarcous subject of the chorus is plural; she is the subject of whom decomposition is spoken. But she is also the subject of decomposition, decomposing her elements in its elements; she is the subject of decomposition not as an act of nature but as an act *counter* nature and in dramatic conflict with authority—a language of rebellion. What confirms her in the role of the chorus (χορός) of classical Greek drama, both tragedy and comedy, more than the plurality of that role and more than the conflict with authority, in which the *female* chorus oftener than in lamentation vocally engaged (deForest, 1997), is her or its *inaction*. (The female chorus did not and could not represent the views of the author or audience. For fifth century B.C.E. Athenians the female view was “automatically warped”, writes DeForest, against common and good sense (1997). Its dramatic role is therefore to educate through shame, blame and embarrassment, the embarrassment of fifteen people witnessing scenes of terrible violence who do nothing, who stay in the orchestra, between seats and stage, and who, because female, nobody expects to do anything, but dance and sing (its etymology

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giving ὀρχήστρα—orchestra as *place to dance*) (DeForest, 1997).) This *feminine* inaction Derrida finds in the term *chora* (χώρα), which is at the centre of an unrealised architectural project undertaken with Eisenman (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997).

Like the Greek chorus, *chora* lies *between*, not between stage and auditorium, but between city (or polis, πόλις, since its provenance, like the chorus, is in Greek antiquity) and wider environs. Like the chorus, it occupies a boundary, opening up a distance, not a gap, but as a level of reception, or *horizon*, bearing the city and the audience, on which the city is contrastive in the case of *chora*, and with which the audience, having different views, is instructively contrastive in the case of the female chorus. (Lingis gives a positive sense to the horizon in the example of a level as a “matrix of divergent sound qualities” the internally contrastive features of which can be separated in audition from environmental noise (1989:29).) Derrida considers *chora*'s femininity in light of the associations, of imprint-bearer, mother and nurse, made by Plato in the *Timaeus*, of *chora*, as figures of receptivity (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997:30). He says these figures should suffice to give the interpreter pause before acceding uncritically to their metaphoricity, and, against the historic tradition reading them as such, to hesitate before interpreting them as metaphors (16).

In the *Timaeus* *chora* has the role of cosmic horizon of possibility; it is the matrix from which all matter and material issues: but there is no finality here, neither endpoint, nor absolute origin (Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997:9-10). There is only this interval of inaction—then: everything. The problem is not only the threat posed by *chora* to that which, in giving coherence to Plato's philosophy, Derrida says, it is

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irreducible (10). The problem of chora extends to being itself, to that which, in giving coherence to being itself, it is irreducible. Chora is, says Derrida, *before creation* (29, 34). It is, says Derrida, not the void, not nonbeing and not zero, but X (10, 19).

Derrida makes much of Plato's designation of chora as *triton genos* (τρίτων γένος)—a third type, with its suggestions of *genre*, *genus*, *genital* and, in French, of *peoples* or *gens* (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leiser, 1997:16). Although, as Irina Aristarkhova points out in her discussion of chora, “Greeks and Romans did not have zero” (2002:41). Unlike Derrida, who thinks of chora in positive relation to zero, in positive relation to nothing, as X, as any form, any letter, Aristarkhova proposes to think of chora not as X, not in relation, not as some thing, not as some space or place, but as zero (41). From zero Plato's first and second types, if he had had zero, might then be supposed to flow, except that, thought of as zero, reduced to it, there is nothing between, nothing within, and, inbetween, nothing.

Against Aristarkhova's reading, chora is inscribed with a logic by Derrida, a logic of circularity. The pause, the hesitant interval, preceding concession to the dominant interpretation of the figures as being figures of speech, with which Plato associates chora—of imprint-bearer, receptacle, mother, nurse—is inscribed within chora (Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis & Leiser, 1997:16, 30). Chora is made legible, under this logic, by the inscription in or on *her*, as Derrida allows, of what he says comes before his reading (18). (The definite article of his reading may be elided for the same reason: chora, not *the* chora (17).) That the interpreter, that the reader hesitate, and ought to, before reading Plato's attributions as metaphors, informs the reading. But, more than this, it informs or

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performs chora. The space and time of the interval, as supplied by this logic, become, as it were, her working parts. With them chora performs the functions of providing space for the city to be built and for cosmic creation. Spacing and timing derive from the inaction of chora because they are inscribed through the action of the interpretative reading: from action of logic, engendering feminine inaction, so the circle turns.

The same movement may be observed in what Derrida cites as being Heidegger's *interest* in chora (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leiser, 1997:17). "Even Heidegger," he writes, "who is nonetheless one of the only ones never to speak of "metaphor," seems to us to yield to this teleological retrospection" (16). At stake in this *teleological retrospection* is a reading wearing circumspection, around increasingly sexual imagery, as a logical prophylactic. That is to say the sex of chora breaks with a coherent philosophy having a consistent logic, with which break it must—after an interval—be identified. (And the interval, like the labyrinth, then has the circular form of the logic: thus the final line of Derrida's chora text rehearses Plato's in the *Timaeus*—"And let us try to give as an end (*teleuten*) to our story (*toi mythoi*) a head (*kephalen*) which agrees with the beginning in order to crown with it that which comes before" (30).) Chora repays the interest Heidegger shows not with the placeholder *X* or with the void of the interval but with its reflection, of interest—*inter-esse* (which, invoking etymology, as Kirkkopelto points out is *between-being* (2012:127)). Neither the *gaping open* of the chaos (chaos—χάος that Heidegger parses from χαίνω—to gape open or yawn—from which also *chasm* (Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis & Leiser, 1997:31n4)) in the cosmos, neither the *what is there* nor the *is not there* (18), chora is between the two, the between itself (20-1). She would in fact have to be inbetween herself if philosophy had not itself put there and enclosed—turning away,

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from what it turns back to, turning clockwise—to find disclosed—what Derrida clearly says is *composition*: “the art of Plato the writer!” (22). (But this is the ambit Derrida cleaves closely to, of a *deconstruction* always already turning over the ground—the “ground-crown,” the poet Jorie Graham puts it (2002:40).)

Inscribed within a circular logic, circumscribed, chora returns to the cosmos, like unto Caesar, what is the cosmos's, to the city what is the city's, to a reading, like Derrida's, what is read in, and to composition what belongs to it, in the way of being consistent and coherent. Unless she does not, unless she is counter the nature of things and against all creation—which, as Lingis usefully describes it, “would be a genuine world, a cosmos and not a chaos, a world of genuine objects, recognizable unities and not inconsistent phantasms.” (40) However, as Derrida reads Plato writing in the *Timaeus*, chora belongs to the phantasmatic register, not simply to say that of *fantasy*: “this is how one can glimpse *chora* - in a difficult, aporetic way and as in a dream” (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leaser, 1997:19).

The dream, the interval in which she is glimpsed, the difficulty of, and her incomplete (aporetic) provision for, the way taken, is that of her attendance in inaction and her servitude inside, so circumscribed, as the wheel turns: her *keepsafe*, her *placeholder*, her obedience and standing by, her as resource and convenience (*Gestell*) for the regeneration and not the decreation she is a force of (that Anne Carson takes for the title of a poetic volume which *break forms* (2005)), these constitute the conventional fantasy of return and give it its mythic, mythological function. Circumscribed within the cosmic cycle of life, convention functions to return its values.

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Nietzsche's sense of it is quite different, not the conventional return of value but the destruction of all *given* values, not through a change in values, but through a "change in the element from which the value of values derives" (Deleuze, 2006:171, 186-9): it is not enough to say one day the city, one day the cosmos, one day you and I, and all our values, will be brought down; it is not enough to unmask the conventions creating values or to find new ones. In this, chora would play as the simple affirmation of the inaction inaugurated collectively in the female chorus. In this, she would simply be affirming the shame, blame and embarrassment attendant on the chorus's inaction before violent acts in which it ought to intercede, where she would affirm feminine passivity and receptivity as qualities in common. But these are in chora absent, like the chorus's, her nature is against nature, while, unlike the chorus's, her role is unconditioned by historic or dramatic convention.

As an unconditioned force of decreation it is for chora to second the affirmation of the chorus in its conflict with authority that sets no value on the roles of women, seeing in their inaction an abdication of moral and civic duty, hearing in their singing only wasted breath, holding their dancing to be a pointless and purposeless expenditure of energy, regarding the place of the chorus, in the orchestra, as waste space. It is rather for chora to break the cosmic cycle of life vested (dressed) in the civic, moral and cultural codes and conventions of a dominating authority than to *recycle the break* of a circular logic confining elements to the propriety of composition. It is for chora to liberate elements, not at the level of historic, general, or even cosmic conditions, but at the level of individual instances.

Chora is not simply the unconditioned, she has no condition, is without

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precedent and, at variance, individual (Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997:18). Unlike the collective inaction of the chorus, hers is the singular instance of an inaction that is different each time. Where the chorus might speak the language of decomposition, chora is resonance itself, the being of resonance. (This is the sense Kristeva gives of chora being pure rhythm, vocal rhythm, which, although for Kristeva kinetic as well, not active in inaction as here, “precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality.” (1984:26)) She hears *a* word which becomes language. The chorus is the becoming of a language that is affirmed in the resonance of chora, the being of resonance.

In this way, chora prepares the feminine counternature of decomposition, inaugurated in the chorus, as its individual matrix (understood as both diagramme or network and wetwork, larynx or womb). What is entailed by the decomposition prepared by chora as its resonant matrix is the liberation of elements that were not there before, different elements. But what is prepared, and affirmed in preparation, is not waste as destitution. It is not *laying waste* as laying in of elements already selected for their essential goodness. Neither is it for their use for what comes, nor for their value, nor their meaning for what comes. (Decomposition strips signs of meaning in preparation of the multidimensional diffraction of significations of the chorus, which chora surpasses.) Neither is chora's *preoriginary* (as Derrida puts it (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997:29) affirmation like that of the composition of compost, which although of waste, banality or cliché, acts according to conventions assuring sustainable consistency, the coherence of recycling and its teleological retroactivity. Waste here is affirmed in chora as the destruction of the same, the same elements, *for its own sake*, to return different elements, at the individual limit of their differentiation, each

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time: destroying, at each instance, systems of recognition of the just and genuine, fantasies of reconstitution and renewal, cosmologies of regeneration and life cycle, and mythologies of the origin of and end of value.

Chora's role is then like Nietzsche's Ariadne in relation to Dionysus (Deleuze, 2006:186-9)—the lover, not the spouse:

The god: repetition without variant:
its spouse: inevitable necessary variant: its lover: unnecessary
variant: interruption, wall, disease, rot.
(Graham, 2002:43)

While the chorus have the role of maenads (μαινάδες) or Bacchae, whose ritual repetition of the act of dismembering of the god, Dionysus, torn to pieces by the Titans, is at the birth of theatre and religion; chora has the necessity of chance of being the womb “where-the-earth-opens” (Graham, 2002:47) for the one dismembered, larynx for the word (λόγος) obliterated.

III.

Giving to decomposition a sense in which it is feminine is clearly problematic. But what if what is being expressed is a preference? It would be a preference that goes all the way to putrefaction, the putrefaction of a mother, and, crossing even the borders of a life (perhaps on the back of Elizabeth Wood's bike (2000:209)), criss-cross the boundaries of the gendered and embodied subject. (“*Chora*”, writes Derrida, “is not a subject.” (with Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997:17))

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The preference would not show itself to be for a subject constituted by nature—with genital and bodily organs. Neither should it police its corporeal borders nor delimit its exploded and deshiscent sense somatically. But such a preference should let the corpus become multiple in the chorus; it should let it possess the sarcous disintegrity of a choric matrix. Is not decomposition the force of dehiscence that would free *her*—as she is singularised in chora (Derrida, Eisenman, Kipnis & Leeser, 1997:18)—, at each instant, *in each of her instances*, from necessary predicates? No longer having to be submissive, no longer, against submission, having to be empowered, she would no longer have to act, or be. As Deleuze says of the eternal return: “whatever you will, will it in such a manner that you also will its eternal return.” (2004:8)) So the choice should run.

But first the ground of evaluation has to shift away from that of a dominating authority. To take the lower position cannot be seen to empower it. From a majoritarian conventionalism, a shift must be made to a minoritarian conventionalism. In choosing to characterise as against nature both decomposition and femininity Wood is not bestowing on counternature a higher value (2000). Neither is she engaged in a reversal of values, to set the lower above the higher, nor is she engaged in subversion, to undermine from the point of view of decomposition what is above ground. Something more perverse is happening, which stalls and is recuperated in the move back to meaning and composition (209): carried all the way through it would look like preferring the feminine and the decomposition at work in the ground to share senses, for there to be something of the feminine in decomposition and something of decomposition in the feminine. This is the perversion that prefers the lower position, that prefers inaction, that prefers waste and disorder.

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The Chinese tradition of the Dao (道 — also *Tao*) clarifies how this preference may be expressed. The tradition has already entered this writing in the figure of Zhuang-zi. I would like here to do little more than list correspondences before continuing to the nature of decomposition and practical correspondences in Minus. For a start, the first line of the first book of the Dao, the *Dao De Jing* (道德經), a collection of texts ascribed to Laozi (also Lao Tzu, 老子 — with various meanings, including *old man*, *father* and *child*), *puts the reader off the path* (dao—道) *of the path it tells of*. This is a more literal translation than that of Lau, “The way that can be spoken of / Is not the constant way” (Tzu, 2009:3), or that of Feng and English, who retain and repeat the word Dao (Tzu, 1989:ch1), since the Chinese character (道) used by Laozi for *tell* is also used by him for *path* (dao—also *way*): 道可道，非常道。 (Laozi, 475-221BCE (Chinese is quoted from this source.))

That the Dao, the way or path, is told of, able to be spoken in any language, that it is not *nameless* (无名—*wu ming* (Tzu, 2009:3)), is due to the invisible presence of *xuan pin* (玄牝): “the mysterious female” (8); or “the woman, primal mother” (Tzu, 1989:ch6). Like chora, she is source of names, mother, matrix, nurse, hidden creatrix, between heaven and earth, of “ten thousand things” (ch25). “The nameless [wu ming] is the beginning ... The named is the mother...” (ch1). The Dao is able to be related in language through *xuan pin*. Through *xuan pin* the Dao possesses qualities she provides but does not herself possess. These include both *wu* (无—no(thing)) and *yu* (有—being), which she bears but does not possess. *Bearing not possessing* is regarded by Laozi the *De* (virtue—德) in the work's title (*Dao De Jing*), “Giving birth and nourishing” (ch10). Laozi therefore identifies the Dao with the mother: the Dao is source of nourishment for the Daoist sage (ch20); and, “mother

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of the ten thousand things” (ch25), it is an “empty vessel” that, inexhaustible, “is used but never filled” (ch4). To have use of it oneself is to take the part of the female as well as to achieve inaction. “Can you play the role of woman?” Laozi asks (ch10). “Are you able to do nothing?” He then challenges (ch10).

The *Dao De Jing* (literally *Path Virtue Book*) connects its preference for femininity through a number of capacities that, despite being introduced with the *wu* character (无), which at its simplest means *no*, are not negative. Neither are these capacities privative, despite *wu* before another character being like the privative English prefix *in-*, *a-* or *an-*, or suffix *-less*: they do not remove or take away but in being affirmed they are given as practical precepts, or, rather, what is removed or taken away is affirmed in them as a capacity—a positive minus. What is removed or taken away in *wu ming* (无名—nameless) is affirmed in a capacity which, without name, is the inexhaustible source of all there is: “The nameless [wu ming] is the beginning of heaven and earth” (Tzu, 1989:ch1). In fact *wu* (无) has more the positional quality which the English *without* has as one of its meanings than either a privative or negative sense. Neither determined in opposition, nor there for the sake of opposition—although, as has been seen in *counternature*, it may be hostile to that which it is the counter—*wu* understood to be *without* offers the *gift of exteriority*. (The phrase is Deleuze's for the time needed for an event to make sense, for the formation of forces that it did not contain in itself, from which it receives an essence “determined as the magnificent gift of exteriority” (2006:157)—of relevance to decomposition as the liberation of other elements than those involved in composition, and the time required for it.) *Wu* is a positional minus having the sense of without. (Both the machinic view, of composing *with* a without, and the exploded view, of the

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sarcous, express this gaining of a capacity of exteriority that is “used but never filled” (Tzu, 1989:ch4).)

To act without action describes the inaction of *wu wei* (无为). So to act implies knowing without knowledge, and desiring without desire: “lack knowledge [无知—*wu zhi*] and desire [无欲—*wu yu*], then / clever people will not try to interfere. If nothing is done [无为—*wu wei*], then all will be well.” (Tzu, 1989:ch3) *All being well* for the Daoist tradition means promoting, protecting and prolonging life, adopting inaction for the sake of a life *not* with *no action* but, having liberated from action forces it did not contain, with *lively* action, actions which are unforced and naturally spontaneous. These features of vivacity take the term 自然—*ziran* (ch17), giving 自然无为—*ziran wu wei*—as *natural* and spontaneous *inaction* (Shang, 2006:50).

Life, understood in its natural spontaneity, through inaction directs itself towards an outside, a *without* by which it is borne to expression. *Ziran* (自然), the gratuitous vivacity of life, adds to this exteriority, of positions without that are always multiple—of situations, standpoints, attitudes and bearings—another sense in which the gift of exteriority may be said to be received. If it is said once of the multiplicity of natures of the exterior towards which inaction directs itself, it is said a second time and repeated with regard to time which is naturally spontaneous, *ex tempore*, and is affirmed at each instant and in each of its instances of a life. That is exteriority is said once chorally and repeated chorically of a life each time there is life—this second saying with regard to time in which the first returns may be called extemporisation. So it is that, “mother of ten thousand things. / ... / It flows far away. / Having gone far, it returns.” (Tzu, 1989:ch25) The *disorder* (无秩序—*wu zhixu*) that Zhuang-zi prefers

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is similarly *without* the order of purposive actions and, extemporised, belongs to the spontaneous multidimensional diffraction of significations of gratuitously given life (2013:5). It is the diffraction in which Lingis finds decomposition announced—

The material things do not lie bare and naked before us; they are there by engendering perspectival deformations, halos, mirages, scattering their colors in the light and their images on surrounding things. Human bodies too move in the world engendering profiles and telescoping images of themselves, casting shadows, sending off murmurings, echoes, rustlings, leaving traces and stains. Their freedom is a material freedom by which they decompose whatever nature they were given and whatever form culture put on them, leaving in the streets and the fields the lines of their fingers or feet dance, leaving their warmth in the hands of others and in the winds, their fluids on tools and chairs, their visions in the night. Bodies do not occupy their spot in space and time, filling it to capacity, such that their beauty would be statuesque. We do not see bodies whose form and colors are held by concepts we recognize or reconstitute. We do not see bodies in their own integrity or inner coherence. We are struck by the cool eyes of the prince of inner-city streets, moved by the hand of the old woman covering the sleep of a child. We are fascinated by the hands of the Balinese priest drawing invisible arabesques over flowers and red pigment and water. Our morning is brightened by a slum-dweller whistling while hauling out garbage. We hear the laughter of the Guatemalan campesinos gathered about a juggler, like water cascading in the murmur of the forest. When we are beguiled by the style with which the body leaves its tones, glances, shadows, halos, mirages in the world, we see the human body's own beauty. In the decomposition in our memory, in so many bodies greeted only with passionate kisses of parting, we have divined being disseminated a knowing how to live trajectories of time

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as moments of grace. (Lingis, 1994a:137-8)

The Daoist tradition of Laozi and Zhuang-zi changes the ground of evaluation by taking up a position below it. Of course the only place decomposition can occur is in the ground, unless it also occurs in the sky burial of Zhang Huan (2005). From a perspective below the ground water has the highest value—it comes closest to the Dao, in always flowing to the lowest point (Tzu, 2009:10). Water shows the way in which the soft and the weak overcome the strong and the hard (Tzu, 1989:ch43). So too, Laozi writes, the female overcomes the male, by “Lying low”, in Feng and English's translation (ch61), by taking the “lower position” in Lau's (Tzu, 2009:66). The male must be known, with the positive capacity of *wu zhi* (无知 — nonknowledge), from the perspective of the female role, from without it, even unto disgrace: “Know honour”, writes Laozi, “But keep to the role of the disgraced” (30). The reason is clear—

A man is born gentle and weak.
At his death he is hard and stiff.

...the stiff and unbending is the disciple of death.
The gentle and yielding is the disciple of life.

...The hard and strong will fall.
The soft and weak will overcome.
(1989:ch76)

Below every position there is a lower one by which it may in time be overcome—this is one of the senses of time. But it seems again to suggest return as a cycle, through the rotations of *yin* (阴) and *yang* (阳), a cycle turning in accord with human interests. The Dao, however, is to be

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grasped at the hub (Tzu, 1989:ch11). Just as below ground there is water, below water there is what is without substance (无有 — wu yu) (Tzu, 2009:48). Just as flowing waters converge at the lowest point, the spokes of a wheel converge at the hub; but it is the hole at its centre that makes the wheel useful (Tzu, 1989:ch11): what is without substance therefore bears what is—at each instant and in each of its instances.

This is an other sense of time in which time is said each time of the time that is becoming. In being said it bears the first sense of time to expression, not only breaking its cycle, but, in freeing it from the anthropological shadow of human interests, also liberating the break: what breaks, cracks, dissolves, evaporates in a luminous haze and decomposes; and what forgets overcomes what remembers, from which memory is involuntary and spontaneously born.

IV.

In the ground, decomposition suggests a matrix distributing organic materials. It implies a naturally generative cycle of life, of which the riches are disaccumulated in humic compounds. But the regard in which the cycle is held and upheld is neither due the compost, nor the leaf litter, but what springs from it, from the seed, the tree. In awarding attention and importance to the workers—from ants, worms and slaters down to the microbacteria of the biome—the principle and moral order of waste is conceived to be for the sake of life. The conventional understanding of decomposition is of a loss to be reconciled, recuperated and repaid in the generation and regeneration which it serves.

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This applies to informational structures as well. Mycelial networks, communicating through plant-fungus partnerships known as mycorrhizae, are evaluated from the side of beneficiaries in the communication. Not only is the role of such networks in providing information and *feedback* to the plant life above valued over that of the fungal life below, the information-carrying role in plant communication of mycorrhizae is valued over their role in decomposition (Gorzelak, Asay, Pickles, & Simard, 2015). (Competition between the two roles of mycorrhizal fungi, information and decomposition, drives carbon storage in soil, which is once more to tell a moral story conceived in terms of human interests (Averill, C., Turner, B. & Finzi, A., 2014).) The invisible work of mycelial networks, in laying low the giants of the forest, in decomposing the inner space once intensively occupied by the life of a sequoia (Lingis, 2011:59), is downplayed. A sense of waste defers to one of gain.

That such networks comprise the generative matrices of germinal life and that such networks provide informational support and backup determines their essential role. The lively expenditure through which information is shed defers to the productive utility of information-processing. The product, however, is waste. Both the production of data and the reproduction of life result from lives and natures outside their calculation. They are not a byproduct of energies expended on growth but its excess and waste-product. So too are the significations that arise like a mist over human affairs and interests.

The scatter, crackle and static of languages, like the haze and halos attendant on the visible, are the conditions of signification, as are the visible effusions its conditions. They subtend, with fluid indeterminacy, the determinations which are parsed from them. Language, in visible

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representation or in the audibility of its phonics, congeals and hardens, and rigidifies with conventional usage, in the atmospheres it girds and diagrammes with meaning, in which its gestures, whispers and murmurings resonate. There is no one general climate, but its elements and understandings, sublime and insubstantial yearnings. Lingis writes in completion of the citation above—

Human warmth in the winds, tears and sweat left in our hands, carnal colors that glow briefly before the day fades, dreams in the night, patterns decomposing in memory, sending our way momentary illuminations: bodies of others that touch us by dismembering. The unconceptualizable forces that break up the pleasing forms of human beauty and break into the pain and exultation of the sublime are also delirium and decomposition. Not sublimity in the midst of abjection: sublime disintegration, sickness, madness. The exultation before the sublime is also contamination. Porous bodies exhaling microbes, spasmodically spreading deliriums, viruses, pollutions, toxins. (Lingis, 1994a:139)

V.

The object is not to upcycle decomposition, but to free energy from its cycle, to free the energy otherwise expended, the expenditure of which, in the cycle of accumulation and disaccumulation, eating and shitting, is locked in and bound, by force of convention, to a natural, organic order, a social, economic and moral order, and to the order of the necessary—the future. The subterranean network of terms—of bodies without organs, asignifying resonances, conventions nude and unmasked, the poly-rhythmic transindividual entanglement of diagrammes, extemporising

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peaks and sheets of action, the whole ensemble—works for the escape of meaning, which is essentially decomposed, its essential ingredients—elements, languages, cultures—distributed in an energetic matrix, and its riches spent on scenic compounds, without hope or want of compensation or return, in Minus.

VI.

The question of decomposition as I originally put it (in the walking section) was one of ethical, political commitment—and philosophical interest. It remains such a choice in the preference to regard it rather for its own sake than for that of composition. Decomposition has more recently in this writing been enlisted in the destruction of the justice of convention—because it breaks down to liberate forces, energies, elements irrecoverable to conventional judgements and evaluation—and in the change of ground of judgement and evaluation, not through opposing values, meanings, essences, but by the formation of meanings, essences and values the ground did not contain—by preferring to take a lower position: below ground, water; below water, what is without substance; and, below what upholds, giving an order of conventional reality solid ground, what flows; below what flows, a positive minus, a capacity freed from the necessity of the future.

On this fluid ground decomposition is hazarded as value at each instance of its occasion, on each instantaneous occasion. Only on this fluid ground can it be freed itself for its own sake. It occupies a temporality, therefore, other than the time of the “general modern project that we can call our historical consciousness.” (Lingis, 2011:135) The time belonging to it, the

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time it takes, is of the singular event of decomposition and not succession, or subsequence, or of the general consequence for the generalities of consciousness, history, humanity. It does not serve the cycles of sustainability or of regeneration (even as I write these words on Easter Sunday) or renewal of moral and organic or geologically conceived natural codes—like the Anthropocene. The latter's precept of extinction falls away—it was anyway misanthropic—to be displaced by a preference for what is spontaneously instinctive, the zoography of instinct, rather than the biography of human distinction required by the tutelary narrative of extinction.

The political value assumes the level of a minoritarian conventionalism—looking for new conventions—of Minus. The essence of this minoritarian conventionalism is to convert the shameful formula of public waste for private gain, to private waste for public good; that the powers and forces of individual expression bound by social, economic, political meanings be freed from these meanings, in the unbounded and gratuitous display of their splendid possibility. A revised theatrical theory of value underwritten by the minoritarian conventionalism of Minus would run: “A people are transfigured in glorious adornments and movements; their experience as they perform is transfigured; exalted emotions surge in them; their assembling becomes dramatic, epic, cosmic.” (Lingis, 2011:137) The more theatrical resources, the more wastefully beauty is exaggerated and colourfully it is diffracted, the greater the political transfiguration.

The value of the audience to Minus's shows, Minus's attitude to a people and a public, is summed up in the answer Sean Curham gave when asked about it as one of a panel of performance artists: “The audience is not

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why we do it but part of *how* we do what we do.” (2014)

VII.

Decomposition corresponds to two moments in the actual practice of Minus Theatre. The first is along the polarity of the transindividual, the second along the polarity of the ensemble. It is here that the schema introduced by Kirkkopelto attains its full importance (2012:125):

attuning > in-between > state of being

Attuning, in Minus, corresponds to the walking exercise, presented in the section of that name. *State of being* corresponds to resonance, presented in the section so named. *In-between*—which Kirkkopelto also terms *välinen* (having the sense of the prefix *inter-*) in Finnish and *inter-esse* (Latin—*between being*; whence—*interest*) (2012:126, 127)—corresponds to inaction.

The paper in which Kirkkopelto presents this schema (I earlier called it a diagramme, which I now revoke so as to distinguish it from a diagramme of resonance) sets out to answer the question of how performance thinks. It finds for the scenographic and dramaturgical decision of the individual performer as locus of thought: what she decides to do, however slight the gesture, or small the compositional element he adds or she decides to make, *thinks*, is thinking in performance. Composition is thinking in performance; and action how performance thinks.

But for Minus decisions originate spontaneously in inaction, inaction that

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in the dancer's stance of *neutral body* is physicalised. (This term came to be used in Minus at the suggestion of Matilda and Nell, both trained in contemporary dance.) For Minus action is decomposed in inaction, as are the informational schema informing it; thinking is not in the performance of action but in the decomposition of performance. Elements that were not thoughts given in performance are liberated, of which, as is said of Kirkkoppelto's schema, those an actor thinks with are never smaller than a world (2012); except that, for Minus, the decomposition of performance takes in the schema informing it, breaking the world cycle, that is the cycle of addition, whereby the performer adds a compositional element on each turn, and whereby she directs herself and himself thinks (127).

The equalisation of attuning leads to the addition of an element; the addition leads to a world; the world leads to an equalisation in attunement, which leads to an addition, to a worlding, thinking, adding, equaling, of an harmonious composition. With the cycle broken by decomposition, there is subtraction, *without*, the minus and the disharmony already in disorganisation. The decompositional schema looks very different: the machine works by breaking down, and, each time, breaking through the circle, coming around, only to puncture it in the middle—in the interest of thought, but of the thought of an other, that is to say of interest to philosophy, “which I have always considered a stranger” (Kakogianni, 2015:156). The schema, for Minus, therefore exists in exteriority and exits into exteriority by a nonsuccessive temporality belonging to extinction of the ephemeral, anticipated in actions, affirmed in inactions.

Minus's schema of dramaturgical and scenographic decomposition, in breaking down itself, breaks, or breaks through, in the middle, at the hub

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or hole. Its importance, as it draws on the informational schema of dramaturgical and scenographic composition, is in bringing to prominence the inaction of the actor. This is the summit or peak, reached by a descent. It subtends the action of the actor and ensemble, not in their decision to act, not in the sense of responsibility and the necessity of what happens next, but in the sense of irresponsibility and the chance presiding over what happens next, as what is willed to happen next each time, in its singularity and spontaneously, because in inaction nothing (wu — 无) need happen next. While theatrical action anticipates its own ephemerality, the actor's and ensemble's inaction declares for the ephemerality of theatrical action as such, giving it the affective intensification in which it unfolds—in the working space.

As a thought, as a thought of an other, a stranger, matched to a theatre of an other, the choice of chance, more than an affirmation of becoming in being, but this as well, exalts in the chance singularity of being in the chaos of time; and fulminates in the profligate expenditure of the ephemeral, the transitory; and is transfigured in the exteriority of its exaggerated theatrical image. Which is to say it is not extinction that promotes the liveliness and intensity of a theatre of an individual but the openness of the individual to itself as a singular chance event at each instant and in every instance.

VIII.

Along the polarity of the transindividual, the inactions, with which Minus composes, correspond to the transindividual moment of the encounter in the actor of a collective. Decomposition comes in—as what composing

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through inaction may be called—insofar as there are actual materials and energetic compounds to be decomposed in which new elements, energies and matters, formerly bound as mere potentials, powers, virtualities, may be unbound and, extracted, released, come to expression. But inaction is not their outlet. It is not their mapping or conning. Neither is it their weaponisation, nor is it simply the laying down of a weapon, pending a stealthy slow approach, or rearguard action: It is rather their care and receptivity, their sensitivity, their generosity, their clarity at issue; it is in exploding the view that inaction insists—which like the disassembly of a weapon, semiautomatic say, takes practice, takes time; and it is in hearing the voices that time and practice are expended—not for the shame, blame or embarrassment of fifteen individuals witnessing scenes of terrible violence who do nothing—but for the level and horizon bearing the sound, underlying it, that is its singularly contrastive condition.

The proper ordeal of the transindividual is in the decision to do nothing, to take the lower position and to wait long enough, to wait long enough for the formation of a force that the intensive contents did not in themselves contain, from which they receive an essence “determined as the magnificent gift of exteriority” (Deleuze, 2006:157). I am saying that this *essential* element is freed by decomposition in inaction. The ordeal of the transindividual is not an experience of suffering, except of a tolerable level which for each one is different. It is also not an ordeal decomposing the autonomous existential condition of the actor but expresses the unregulated flow and fluid ground which is its condition—its confusion. This, Kirkkopelto acknowledges, is where the actor is most exposed and vulnerable (2012:127).

I ask you to wait, to actively insert a pause before you begin. I encourage

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you to hesitate before diagramming the space with an affective and intensive contents, and in this hesitation may be recalled Clarissa's, or Bill's, Xiaohui's or Xiaolian's—Xiaohui's before, with a tremulous voice and trembling hands, she began to sing the Chinese folksong, “White Flower.” In it may be recalled the odd moments of blankness and neutrality marking the individual performances in *Boneseed*. Xiaolian climbed onto a high stool. She stopped, relaxed, as if falling out of character, then raised her arms again, as if suddenly remembering, as if suddenly remembered.

Boneseed was structured around these blank beginnings, each one commencing a scene fractionated over a pattern of temporal segments. The patterning drew inspiration from African textiles, into which are woven diagrammes, rhythms of repetitions in coloration and texture, suggesting, regarded as musical compositions, they might be sung or played (Byrne, 2013:195). The impulse behind patterning the work was for the audience to gain a sense of recognition and anticipate in the scenes the breaks as peaks of inaction, from which they were suspended like sheets of certain colours and textures, and rhythmic densities, for it maybe to feel the weave, the broken scenes as units of rhythm and transition. In other words, the show was structured for the audience to be present, for its presence at points of scenographic and dramaturgical decomposition.

Marks of Lispector, for Clarice was a deliberate play on Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*, where he introduces the notion of *hauntology* (a pun in French, since a homophone for *ontology* (*ontologie*) and, it could be said, *honte-ologie*—the discourse of shame) (2006:10). Not a work of mourning or an incomplete part of one—for the Brazilian author Clarice Lispector,

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for instance—*Marks* staged a counter hauntology by liberating from texts elements not contained in them and excessive in an extemporisation that did not give them—or to Clarice—a future but a present exteriority in which they were decomposed. So Lispector's work, her last, as it happens, *A Breath of Life* was decomposed (Lispector, 2014).

Fragments of text printed on tracing paper littered the floor. From *A Breath*, they read, for example, “don't keep your consciousness too brightly lit. / the great ghost.” or “Each loose word is a thought stuck to it like flesh to a nail.” In the prelude, Xiaohui and Mancio, wearing safety goggles and earmuffs, used leafblowers to scatter the pieces of Lispector. During the preparation for the show, the actors had been told these were parts of Clarice, to which they should tend the same care as they would her, picking them up off the floor, not with nostalgia, but as if her, torn apart and dismembered, like the god, or the word, obliterated.

No order was set. One actor, attuned to the others and attuned to the space, picked up a strip of tracing paper from the randomness imposed by the scattering and blowing of leaves over the floor, which was unevenly littered with texts. She read it. She dropped it, letting it flutter down, if Xiaohui, or he placed it, with a care absurd in the disorder, back upon the ground, if William. She then relaxed, or he read relaxed, not performing relaxed, but without expression, maybe even a little bored, letting the paper tab slip from her fingers, like Xiaolian, with something like disdain.

The other actors waited, but differently, attentively, while the one at the centre of their attention, the one acting, did nothing. She was not gathering herself up and her powers of expression but he was letting

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himself go, receptive to the text, not in the sense of being open to its message or meaning, more like letting it break down, like Tibetan priests stripping of flesh and emptying of organs one dead in a sky burial, feeding the eagles.

The action proceeded from this high point, insofar as it had prominence. Each of the others followed, taking from the one leading, what impulses they felt resonate, expressions, details, forces, felt to be running through the sheet of action like threads, picking it up and unpicking. Each read the one leading, again not for meaning or intent, but for sensation, for affective intensity, which each tried on, fitting it onto his exteriority, into her individual powers of expression, dropping it when its intensity waned or was exhausted in the diagramme. The details included sonorous threads and acoustic impressions which were fitted into diagrammes resonating in the transindividual and in the ensemble entrained. Important here is that the picking up and dropping occurred at different rates and tempi.

Actors experience a rhythm of peaks of inaction and sheets of action belonging to the diagramme of the ensemble, which is that of the whole composition of a piece, from inception in the transindividual moment of inaction, reading the slip of paper, to the diagramme as a whole losing intensity, lights blinking off one by one, that marks its term and completed duration. Over what may be called its life, although one without lifeline, the piece consisting in being torn part, its intensive diagramme is composed—and decomposed—by diverging, by the divergence of the individual rhythms, with their periodicity of anticipations and releases in inaction. It is so for the actions selected, as well—each actor asking herself *Does this work for me?*—not *Does this*

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look good on me?—but risking himself in the selection of gesture, expression, detail. Each actor has a sense of the whole as a moving sum of parts, a little machine in which the movement of each, picking up and dropping, action and inaction, increases and decreases, strengthens and weakens the diagramme, intensifies and enlivens, in decelerations as well as in rapid stabs, by adding and subtracting a rhythm that is the actor's own. That is each actor works by contrast.

Along the polarity of the ensemble decomposition corresponds to the practice of contrasting one's own rhythm of inactions to the periodicity of the ensemble's. It is an inaction in the group and in the space of the group, at each instance and in each of its instances receptive to transindividual, ensemble, space, with a receptivity, a sensitivity, generosity and clarity for which the process of attuning is the invisible work in preparing. Embedded in the intensive contents of this resonant space, entangled in it, one lets go. What precipitates letting go is not the encounter with the collective internal to the actor seen along the polarity of the transindividual, even as it was in *Marks of Lispector* also an encounter with a piece of Clarice, but, along the polarity of the ensemble, the encounter with another actor. The encounter with another actor, who is differently entrained in the rhythms of the ensemble, who is an individually contrastive aspect of the ensemble, who is intensively occupied by another of its compositional elements, precipitates a pause of inaction, an hesitation. One faces the other defenselessly in inaction, without recourse to an exchange of actions, action-reaction or counter-action, that would constitute either verbal or physical communication and interaction. But each faces the other as element to element, material and energetic compound to material and energetic compound, confusion to confusion. Each faces the other as element,

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compound, confusion of matter and energy, in their nonequivalence, mutual irreducibility, irreconcilability and incompatibility: one cannot be exchanged for another. Along this polarity of the ensemble what is decomposed is the ground. That is there is no meeting on common ground but that each takes a lower position and loses ground for the contrastive level, the horizon of their difference—and one might say dissonance—to be heard, felt, this takes time. But the understanding is in fact spontaneous, a fact of spontaneity.

The element freed from the ground, and below it noncommunicative, inequivalent and inexchangeable, is announced in it spontaneously, in the engendering of “halos, mirages, scattering their colors in the light”, bearing forth the *multidimensional diffraction of significations* announcing decomposition—the “bodies of others that touch us by dismembering”—and declaring the “unconceptualizable forces that break up the pleasing forms of human beauty and break into the pain and exultation of the sublime are also delirium and decomposition” (Lingis, 1994:137-9). The element freed by decomposition is its own essential element, which, like that of the ground itself, in the element of earth, is *used but never filled* (Tzu, 1989:ch4).

It is not an element shared in the encounter or held to be in common. As a level of reception, or horizon, for the encounter of one with an other, not only is time needed for its formation from forces not contained in the encounter, it is needed to get down, to descend to its prominence, which has the role and singular accent of a present understanding. This understanding—what may be called this *elemental* understanding—is each time different; and, although spontaneous, each encounter must be extemporised and at every instance understanding, whether of the

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contrastive viewpoints of the audience and by its thousand lights, or of one and another, ensemble and transindividual, is a collapse of meaning, value and essence. The actor is confused, lost, does not know what to do—and this is the unmoving part of the machine, its most destitute, but where the cut occurs.

When lost, confused, when you do not know what to do and cannot go on, stop. When you find yourself staring into an abyss of possibilities there is no relief to be got or justice in the forms of convention. When you are overwhelmed go to neutral body. This is the listening body, the feeling body, that surveys also itself with a receptivity to the tensions and contradictions existing within it, coexisting in the sarcous. Meaning, value, essence break down, but because of the receptivity of inaction in the prominence which it gains in Minus, the buildup is in the breakdown.

Tensions and dissonances—which, at each instant, every instance of resonance has the potential to be—between individual and collective, psychic and social, singularity and convention, accumulate in a matrix of intensive points. They diagramme the surface of a body without organs reaching underground and crossing into the exterior. Their multiple accumulations concern the formation of a force neither the sum and culmination of differences, of tensions, resonances pushed to the extremity of their differentiation in dissonance, nor that given and contained in any one individual difference, tension or dissonance. This composite buildup of tensions, of points of dissonance, of extremities of difference, concerns and produces a force of expulsion, of ejection—in what otherwise could look like dejection and sad confusion but is rather an access of elation—in an exundancy of energies.

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The encounter between actors is therefore, even as communicative exchange is precluded between them, a source of energy, of an energetic excess. The crack of decomposition for its own sake—a positive minus—occurs within composition, that is composition through inaction, in the connection of one to another. The exteriority of one to another, from which the force of expulsion, is affirmed a second time by extemporisation, from which the force of selection—of what, in inaction, in action is the anticipation of return.

IX.

The prominence of inaction carried over from the *theatre of an other* or *of an individual* at work, invisible work, in *Marks of Lispector*, to the *theatre of elements* developed as part of the invisible work for *At the Stock Market Meeting*. Decomposition, corresponding to composing with inactions and affirming their unnatural selection of elements, return in the latter, where the focus is on the trans-collective, rather than on the intra-psychic, where it may be said to lie for *theatre of individual* or *other*. The moment of transindividual encounter remains, of an actor alone beginning a piece and forgetting to perform and all that technically pertains to performance in its preference for performing actions. The moment of encounter in the ensemble, of an actor preferring inaction and noncommunication to reaction and interaction, remains, as does the active preference for receptivity over unnecessary activity and forced action remain—in the service of a story or creative effect, for example. An actor suddenly finding herself performing for the sake of the composition, or an actor suddenly self-conscious of having lost motive, purpose, intent, makes pause and hesitates for the sake of hesitation, for the sake of an

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interval through which, although remaining in the scene, he may exit and leave into another temporality, out of time, as if time's waste and raw excess, time decomposed, extemporised.

The focus changes in *theatre of elements* to the emergence of individual elements. The organising principles to be distributed across the working space are here understandings that emerge from the encounters, first of the self-understanding of the transindividual encounter, then of the ensemble's elemental understanding of what is necessary in the exteriority of encounter for the piece to have life that is not given but must be made, imagined, fantasised. Following this thought—elements including small things like chairs and large like the atmospheres, conditions and images in which the group is taken up—I wanted to pursue an image and have the understanding of the actors to do so.

The image turned on the voluntary ritual sacrifice of each actor. A rollcall of prominent personages in the contemporary world was to be made up, of those whose inaction, in view of the elemental degradation of the earth and air, belied the power to act in their possession. Their names were to be written down in black letters on a long white sheet and then each actor, having chosen how he would die, was to prepare herself, with nudity optional, for final passage up the sheet, crawling, the others assisting with sprays of blood, smearing the black names with red viscera, up to a crack whence a cold bright light entered the space as its only source of illumination.

May returned to Minus in time for the preparation for *At the Stock Market Meeting*. Rose had joined the group, with Mancio, William, Gabriel and Xiaolian. Everybody, except May, agreed to make the image,

Decomposition

which set the tone of the stories coming out of extemporisation each provided, that the image was to follow. Near the end of our preparations, I decided that this final image could use some sonic support in addition to the vocalisations the group were adding.

May, who had taken it upon herself to make the blood at the biochemicals company she worked for, said she would like to play the cello, since Xiaolian had one, for the image. She had never played before. Xiaolian gave her a couple of lessons and, after one rehearsal, we agreed on a style of long slow reverberant sustains. We decided she would sit among the audience until the rollcall was written up and the cold bright blade of light cut into the room, along the glowing white sheet, right up to the audience. Then she would retrieve the instrument and begin bowing through until the end.

Afterword

Really the afterword to the foregoing writing is *theatre of elements*, that is it signals its continuation. *At the Stock Market Meeting* was the most well-attended of Minus's productions so far, as well as the best-received. Many of the audience stayed after the final image—the ritual sacrifice, for which May provided the cello accompaniment. The comments to me were not only that this was felt to be our best work but that it was clearer overall. In preparation, in the invisible work—where my practice as director is most engaged, a practice and engagement the present exegesis largely follows, in preference to the visible work before an audience—*At the Stock Market Meeting* had entailed a development in working methods.

The methods of *theatre of individual life* or *theatre of an other* seemed to prepare a shift towards something they revealed but left unaccounted for, a ground unworked. This ground was at stake in the image that ended *At the Stock Market Meeting*. The image attended on it as the positive horizon of encounter of human and inhuman concerns and interests. To the latter belong the elements on which life depends, of which it is the horizon of encounter of each one with every other. *At the Stock Market Meeting* dramatised the external conditions of life from the angle of its stock being on the market and from the viewpoint of the degradation wrought by markets on the encounter with actual conditions understood as inhuman elements. Understood as such, elements not only constitute

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the horizon in its externality to human interests and concerns but also in the underlying fortuity of elements as schema freely provided for extemporisation, like the waste products of decomposition on which we rely, and from which the human play is wrought.

The earlier methods, of *individual* and *other*, go rather to internalities. Actors take from one of the group gestures, details of expression, they find to be essential to that one, and, taking them on, they distribute them across the working space. Disorganising, in its timeline and spatial positions and dispositions, the body of the story, they decompose, through the inactions of their encounters, the piece to compose its new elements. The later method, of *theatre of elements*, for the preparation of which, the earlier, in the invisible work preceding *At the Stock Market Meeting*, continued to serve, goes to externalities. Actors distribute the fortuitous elements of the various encounters across the working space, that, decomposed, allow new elements to come through. The working space undergoes a transformation. It becomes matrix of possibility for encounter as such, the condition of its necessity in the here and now, which is the place given by chance. The place given by chance is an elemental understanding: what it understands is the place of extemporisation in the methods of Minus.

The questioning of this elemental understanding can go further. It can pass through cultural understanding and the representation of diverse cultures and languages in the group, but also go to their decomposition, in the transindividual and ensemble, which do not then invent a new culture or theatrical language to succeed or supercede. It neither suffices an elemental understanding to declare for a new convention, nor to give off its significations in findings, however general, diffuse, like smoke, or

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insubstantial, like mirages. However ethereal, ephemeral or fantastic its form, it is not found in a community and not bound to a common undertaking. An elemental understanding is able to surpass language, as it must, as well as culture, community—and representation in the service of these.

An elemental understanding goes to disconnecting representation from service, for representation to survive of the sort with which I have identified the work of theatre of Minus, considering its service to be to private ends, even as they are bruited as being public and held in common. It goes to the disconnection of theatre from a public whose efforts of life and living time is service and servility. It disconnects representation from a servility become definitive in relation to the contemporary rapacity of a mercantile culture (and socius), Lingis yet calls *petulant* (2011:137)—that is stellivorous. It effects such a disconnection through an understanding that is not in human species, neither in its signs, nor in its acts, outlines or diagramme, but is given without reserve, as its horizon, in that which understands species, signs and acts, in elements.

In elements understanding would be the negation, as Deleuze writes of Nietzsche's—of which the same is to be said of *decomposition*, *disorganisation*, *immunity*, the *impossibilities*, both of improvisation and of theatre, and of all the negative turns this writing has taken—that it passes into the service of an “excess of life [and] only here is it completed.” (2006:175) By this excess must also waste be understood, while elements comprehend what is without human interest and, in the interest of the inhuman, to which inactions attend, comprehensive: the air, warmth, light and atmosphere; the earth, given without reserve in

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enfolding darkness, underground; the water flowing to the lowest point; the fire and conflagration that each fuel, gas, oil, vibratory matter, matrix and source of energy has the potential to be—including the materials of Minus.

That such an elemental comprehension can continue, that it can go further, in respect of an inhuman theatre of elements, is the task of Minus's next production to show. It draws from Richard Nunns and Jerome Kavanagh's revival and reinvention of the Māori musical tradition, in *tāonga pūoro* (literally *singing treasures*), that, each one a voice, return to the land, to a place, singular powers of expression which are its own (Wolffram, 2014; Cattermole, 2016). It takes from this tradition not only the notion of expressing an elemental understanding of the human by the inhuman but also the lack of necessity for a human presence to hear this voice: for it to be *without audience* (Mader, Kocambasi & Streuber, 2015). Bystanders, those who overhear what is going on there may be; witnesses may come—it is for everyone and no one (Nietzsche, 1969). The audience is not the reason for *Visit Me Genius*. Neither is to be heard, nor to be seen the purpose, nor even in immanence is it located, but that comprehended in a sense of place and in excess of place there is the encounter and the question—which elemental understanding is chosen, which is felt, which one by chance is here, where the stranger's gesture resonates in our own?



minus theatre:

AT THE STOCK MARKET MEETING

november 19
7pm

cash koha donation
old folks association
9 gundry street
auckland

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