*Johannes Birringer*

## Introduction –
## Is You me?  Dance and Choreomania

**Regimes of Madness**

How is "madness" (re)presented on the theatre stage or embodied in performance? Why would bodies that appear to behave paradoxically or paranormally be associated with dancing at all, rather than with illness? If illness is recognized or diagnosed, it would not be considered an art form but a condition expressing itself, behaving and manifesting something in individuals or the social body, in public and private sectors, in political and economic regimes or, more generally, "regimes of signs,"[1] and thus it is projected into the system of resonances. How do we then speak about a presumably resonant phenomenon like *choreomania* – a "dancing madness" that spread "epidemically" throughout Europe "in the fifteenth century [*sic*]", as Kélina Gotman states at the beginning of her article?[2] The dictionary she quotes is confused, placing the historical origins of an epidemic originating in Germany in the wrong century, forgetting earlier incidents of a "disease at present known by that name, a convulsive disorder, usually occurring in early life, and characterized by irregular involuntary contractions of the muscles."

Even if trying to avoid historiographic vertigo, one is tempted to go back further, perhaps to the beginnings of Dionysian rituals or – beyond the Western hemisphere – to the epic literatures or oral traditions, the systems of resonance in ancient cultures and cosmologies, perhaps tracking the sacred or the delusional in the figure of movement entered by spirit, by powerful avatars (a term we borrowed from Sanskrit). Since I'm not a historian, I shall try to walk on my own two feet (keeping in mind

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[1] Gilles Deleuze refers to such semiotic regimes as "historical," suggesting they might equally well be called "pathological," and gives examples of how they "cross over very different 'stratifications,'" in a Milan lecture titled "Two Regimes of Madness" (1974). Cf. Deleuze 2007, p. 13. At the time, Deleuze was collaborating with Félix Guattari on *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux* (Paris 1972/1980), the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In our volume, Helmut Ploebst discovers "innormative Bewegungserscheinungen" – "*jenseits von Regeln* und sogar *jenseits der Intention zu tanzen*" – when he discusses pathological social normativity.

[2] See Kélina Gotman, in this volume.

Balzac's "Théorie de la demarche"), looking into the modern era, briefly focusing a camera lens on some writings and performances that have troubled and attracted me, sharing with the reader a few questions about the subject matter of this book. Madness (*Wahnsinn*), understood as an illness treated by clinical psychology and medical psychiatry under various names, is hardly a subject to be discussed comfortably. Using it as a metaphor or discursive machine, of interest to dance and performance scholarship as much as to artistic practitioners, requires sensitivity and a political mindset, in light of events witnessed in our new century, an era of paranoid warfare, buoyant revolutions, and destabilizing economic crises in a global theatre of "perverse bio-capitalism."[3]

Our book shows ways of approaching the various paradoxes built into the idea of linking dance to madness, as suggested by Fenger's introduction to the cultural imaginary – the historical, philosophical, legal, medical and artistic discourses or practices which reflect the intricate connection between movement, perceived as happening inside ordinary, respected and normative dimensions, and movement perceived to fall outside such dimensions, resisting or failing to be recuperated under the guise of normativity. The historians in our book make remarkable forays into the normative controlspaces, with Fenger proposing that on historical grounds one can perceive *choreomania*, from its ancient ritual associations to more contemporary modes of carnivalization, as a double figure, a trance-inducing movement behavior that produces ecstasy and its cathartic or healing effects, and thus is both symptom and cure: a medium which stages – and is thus intricately theatrical – its own exorcisms.

However, what can movement exorcise, how can it ecstatically and therapeutically heal by amputating the elements of power and operate against the controlspace (Law, Theology, political and medical institutions)? What is there that needs healing or desires the ecstatic intensities, the "complete, streaming naked realizations" of the theatre of cruelty that Artaud raved about?[4] We must also assume that carnivalization,

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[3] Boyan Manchev, in "Odpor plesa/The Resistance of Dance," *Maska* 25 (2010), pp. 9-19, finds comfort in dancing's potential to impede the total commodification of life forms under perverse capitalism. But he suggests that dance resists dancing. For a political context, see Per Roar's courageous engagement of war time traumata, in this volume.
[4] Artaud 1958, p. 52.

or the kind of hybrid constructions and polyphonies that Bakhtin espoused, is merely temporary. Its tearing down of social norms and its elimination of boundaries implicitly acknowledge entrenched hierarchies and the dominance of the normative order, and thus reinforce the distinctions made, say, between order and disorder, authentic movement and anarchic movement, permitted vocabulary and contestative culture jamming.[5] Exorcisms are temporary carnivalizations of the body, violent inversions that flash in the face of the reductive understanding we probably have of trauma and demonic possession, if Artaud's case offers any indication. In *Phantasmatic Radio,* Allen Weiss recounts a description of Artaud's moving through his live reading of "Le Théâtre et la peste" in 1933 where he inverts himself – or becomes possessed – into a seemingly impossible point of view of his own death:

> But then, imperceptibly almost, he let go of the thread we were following and began to act out dying by plague. No one quite knew when it began. To illustrate his conference, he was acting out an agony, "La Peste" in French is so much more terrible than "The Plague" in English. But no word could describe what Artaud acted on the platform of the Sorbonne…His face was contorted with anguish, one could see the perspiration dampening his hair. His eyes dilated, his muscles became cramped, his fingers struggled to retain their flexibility. He made one feel the parched and burning throat, the pains, the fever, the fire in the guts. He was in agony. He was screaming. He was delirious. He was enacting his own death, his own crucifixion.[6]

The description of this disruptive scene, which Weiss uses to introduce Artaud's 1947 recording of *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, in my view points to an important distinction – and convergence – between experience of pain and performance of pain. When I discussed it with London based psychiatrist Monia Brizzi, we came to think of Artaud's obsession with cruel necessities – the theatre he envisioned was to live with energetic delirious force, compared to the plague, where cosmic force was to become libidinal production and where the symbolic was to be transformed into the corporeal rhythms of collective human passions and torments – as a paranoid struggle against the judgement of others and, in extension, the judgement of God. Artaud's

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[5] Cf. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* ed. and trans by Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis, 1984, pp. 129ff. For approaches to culture jamming, see the African-American theories on signifyin', for example Henry Louis Gates 1988; Caponi 1999, but also more recent raps by DJ Spooky and others on hip hop and techno mixing.

[6] Allen S. Weiss, quoting Anaïs Nin in chap. 1 ("From Schizophrenia to Schizophonica: Antonin Artaud's To Have Done with the Judgment of God") of *Phantasmatic Radio*, 1995, pp. 9-10.

excruciating incantatory radio piece *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu,* fully mad and completely credible, is of course also a performance of becoming-mad, and of the experience, as Artaud claims, of "the absolute intrusion of my body, everywhere."[7] As contemporary psychiatry suggests, such experiential splitting (also implying a simultaneous acknowledgement and disavowal of the Oedipal law) is always based on the dissociation of "scapegoated" thirds in favor of agendas of certainty and security, of reintegration, but we must see the performance of pain also as relational, contextual, and temporal. Madness and its embodied manifestations are acrobatic, in the sense in which Nietzsche posits the positive physical movement, the integrative power of the Dionysian,[8] as a process of recognition on the edge of the abyss.

But such acrobatics, if we think of Nijinsky and his final traumatic performance at St. Moritz (his "marriage with God") before he slipped into delusional suffering and insanity, are a *skandalon*, and cultural critics of modernity argue that "scandalous choreography" might well be the master narrative of modernist performance with its emphases on the iconography of sacrifice.[9] At the same time, other master narratives such as Freudian psychoanalysis (during Freud's early work on obsessional neurosis and hysteria, he was influenced by Charcot and became interested in hysteria appearing in epidemics as a result of psychical contagion)[10] came to the fore, writing how bodies signify, and reading how foreign bodies (like traumata) enter our system. Charcot's and Freud's writing down the movements of patients (lest one forgets them, as Arbeau centuries earlier had named the technology of choreography) appealed to

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[7] "Between the body and the body there is nothing, nothing but me. It is not a state, not an object, not a mind, nor a fact, even less the void of being, absolutely nothing of a spirit, or of a mind, not a body, it is intransplantable me. But not an ego, I don't have one. I don't have an ego…what I am is without differentiation nor possible opposition, it is the absolute intrusion of my body, everywhere." (Artaud OE 14, p. 76).

[8] For a careful examination of Nietzsche's philosophy in regard to the choreomanic tightrope walker (*Seiltänzer*), see Aura Cumita, in this volume.

[9] Andrew Hewitt (2005, p. 156) comments on the dangerous faultline of gender and aesthetics (the gendering of modern dance as a viable and serious art form through pioneers such as Loïe Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, Martha Graham, and others), suggesting that Nijinsky's "queering" of the "scandalous male icon" both disrupts the gender binarism of the "natural" and the "constructed" body and yet tends to refigure a male-oriented canon of modernism foregrounding "those moments of pain, suffering, discordance, work, and the like that have become commonplace in our vocabulary of the self-reflexive modernist artwork" (p. 175). Hewitt's main purpose is to propose a methodology of "social choreography," rooted in an effort to think the aesthetic as it operates at the base of social experience. His term "social choreography" denotes a tradition of thinking about *social order* and *cohesion* that derives its ideal from the aesthetic realm and seeks to instill that order directly at the level of the body.  See also Manning 1993; McCarren 1998.

[10] For a riveting account of Jean Martin Charcot's "innovative 'sci-art' lab where photography, sculpture and line drawings ... captured the hysteric's shape-shifting," see Anna Furse, in this volume.

Henriette Pedersen's curiosity about the "chameleon disease," and when she choreographed "hysteria" in her trilogy *Animal Magnetism,* it was to foreground the obscene, burlesque, grotesque and vulgar details that especially female dancers and their choreographers do not normally allow on stage, unless they want to be considered hysterical.[11] In another recent feminist rereading of hysteria, Anna Furse's production of *Augustine (Big Hysteria)* subjects Charcot's medical theatre to a close examination of different templates, the 19th century scientific psychology diagnosing a pathological condition and collecting the evidence of its topography, signs, stigmata and behavioral traits, filtered through a revisionist critique of Freudian interpretations of psychosomatic traits of hysterical symbol formation – Furse's protagonist, the hysteric diva Augustine, simulates real traumatic traces and real somatic pain in excessive theatrical gestures derived from the repertoire of choreomania.

Once we speak of "repertoire," we slide into analogies and metaphors, comparing non-sense, as Deleuze would say, warning us not to confuse the child, the poet, and the schizophrenic. For Freud and 20th century psychoanalysis, Furse argues, the dramatic gestures become a kind of forensic hieroglyphics from which to deduce traumatic cause. If this is the case, then how do we compare the institutionalized embodied posing to the choreomania on the streets in Southern Italy, where Salentine tarantism, in Fabrizio Manco's account, belongs to a bewildering folk tradition (perceived as shameful by some locals) now reconsidered positively as vibrant "somatic acts of emancipation" through which the *tarantati* danced their possession until collapse, aspiring to ecstatic transformation and re-integration in the community?[12] A remarkable case of profane "social choreography," tarantism seems to exemplify contextualized, "site-contingent" phenomena of a variegated kinaesthetic continuum that some of the authors in this book examine in different locations and

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[11] See Sidsel Pape, in this volume.

[12] See Fabrizio Manco's personal reflections on returning to the Salento peninsula, in this volume. See also Furse's comments on tarantism in her essay on hysteria, and Neil Ellis Orts's review of Joachim Koester's powerfully disturbing *Tarantism* (2007), a 16mm black and white film exploring the tarantella ritual or dancing cure, staged for the camera as a choreography of frenzied, trance-like dancing performed by professional dancers (in this volume). Koester's film, exhibited in *Dance with Camera* at the Houston Contemporary Arts Museum, is included here as it yields provocative comparisons with Eila Goldhahn's filmic visualization of a "Long Circle" (Movers and Witnesses in Authentic Movement), as well as the staging of Mats Eks' *Giselle* described in Annette Hartmann's essay, Nicolas Salazar-Sutil's performance of *I am not I,* and Ploebst's analysis of films by Fritz Lang, Stanley Kramer, Jean Delannoy, and Darren Aronofsky, all in this volume.

historical periods,[13] and which Manco connects, in an unexpected transcultural maneuvre, with Tatsumi Hijikata's *Ankoku Butoh* (dance of darkness). Like tarantism, Manco claims, Hijikata's "psychedelic" and pre-modern performances of the body *in extremis* presented a negative view of the social realities in rural Japan, re-connecting and re-living trance dance as a rebellion celebrating peasant traditions in the form of vitalism, animalism and debauchery (Manco cites Toshiharu Kasai's reference to Hijikata's dance as an "un-dance").

In the second part of this essay, I shall connect butoh's "un-dance" first with the appearances of European Konzepttanz pretending to mute dancing and destructure the choreographic capture system, then with the technological sublime in digital dance as another late form of choreomanic hysteria hacking into the social ontology of choreography through the currently available technology of compensatory de-subjectivization or self-othering. Hijikata's un-dance did not travel much into the West, but since the 1980s we have seen a spread of butoh's "grotesque" image of torque, of bleached contorted figures (in Sankai Juku's stylized stillness or Derevo's emaciated ghosts) both in the landscapes and on theatre stages. Like Charcot's photographs of *Attitudes Passionnelles,* images of butoh and of the self-lacerating performances of chaosmotic body art are our archive of 20th century paranoia-machines, the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre (George Foreman), Hermann Nitsch's Orgiastic-Mysteries Theatre, the Grotowskian sacred actors signalling through the flames, the crazed participatory mystiques initiated in Dionysian ritual "living theatres" of the 1960s and, less frequently, thereafter (I remember the terror felt by audiences in some of the wilder performances of La Fura dels Baus in the 1980s when they ran at us with chain saws). Dancing, in recent years, rarely incited such holy terror nor produced the schizoid bodies or the epidermic play of perversity Deleuze or Foucault had imagined in their writings when Artaud's war against organs (the "Body without Organs," Deleuze hoped, was full of ecstasy and dance following its sado-masochistic track where "a dead God and sodomy are the thresholds of a new metaphysical ellipse")[14] was already over, i.e. when choreomania had become academic, or moved street level in the South Bronx (with early break dancing) or

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[13] See Gregor Rohmann, Katharina Stoye, Kélina Gotman, Alexander Schwan, and Yvonne Bahn, all in this volume. See our website (www.choreomania.org) for some of the films and visual documents.
[14] I am paraphrasing Herbert Blau's psychedelic essay on "Performing in the Chaosmos" (Blau 2009, p. 30).

underground to the secreted locations of techno rave parties, then above ground into the commercialized public Love Parades. With the latest academic dispensation, "swarm behaviors" are studied in German research think tanks and Swiss laboratories.[15]

When Isadora Duncan reads the "epidemic" of popular culture (for example the convulsions of the Charleston and the ragtime which she abhorred), she sees only caricatures of the natural fluidity of movement. More precisely, in her (eugenic) obsession with beauty and health, Duncan reads "convulsions" as national and sexual caricatures that troubled her ideology of the national (her America) in ways that bear on the somatic terms used in medical discourses on hysteria at the time.[16] All this of course happening in an era of intense nationalisms and World War I, soon to be superseded by fierce racial ideologies and totalitarian formations ending in the camps.

In Foucault's genealogy of biopower, the somatic terms show up in the psychopathological configurations where medicine and law, after the decline of the classical model of sovereignty (*Discipline and Punish*), compete with new biopolitical *dispositifs* – technologies of power – which seek to take control of life and biological processes, ensuring that they are not disciplined but regularized or optimized, thereby intensifying the power directed both to the individual and the collective body.[17] From older deadly rituals and Nazi bio-thanatopolitics to more recent biopolitical strategies: capitalist societies now cannot safeguard the security of the subject (individual or multitudes), and new conceptualizations of the common (*communitas/immunitas*), shaped by new social formations of singularities connected by informational networks, would therefore imply changes in the way contact and contagion, or health and vulnerability, are named, and the body's "continual rebirth" (Esposito) fleshed out into the world – in the manner in which Francis Bacon visualized zones of indiscernibility, or *interbelonging*, amongst bodies. In his extraordinary paintings,

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[15] For example at the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (Universität Zürich) or the Sonderforschungsbereich Kulturen des Performativen (FU Berlin); regrettably, no essay on love parades or raves was submitted to the editors, but see Gabriele Brandstetter, Bettina Brandl-Risi, Kai van Eikels, eds., *Schwarm Emotion: Bewegung zwischen Affekt und Masse*, Freiburg 2007.

[16] Cf. Hewitt 2005, p. 139.

[17] Foucault 2003. For a critical rereading of Foucault and the origins of biopolitical discourse, see Esposito, 2008. The critique of biotechnologies and genetic engineering is relevant regarding the blurring between therapeutic and enhancing interventions, and the "extended operationalities" celebrated in the technological sublime of contemporary digital dance and art.

Bacon performs what Esposito calls the "slippage of flesh."[18]

It is not easy to imagine what Esposito argues here, but the reference to the disfigured figures in Bacon is meant positively – excorporation or exteriorization as an opening out of the enclosure of the body, making the nonorganic, material-like savage flesh stream or move centrifugally and anarchically. Esposito here also validates Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the flesh operating between body and world, constituting the tissue of relations between existence and world. The spatiality of the flesh, Merleau-Ponty suggests in *The Visible and the Invisible,*[19] moves and is thus temporal.

The temporal dimension of becoming, in the bodily return of the repressed, relates to the question of *chorea* – of dancing and the nonverbal, of movement toward and beyond the communicative gesture, independent of the kind of purpose that would tend to underlie the notion of the choreographic, in the sense in which William Forsythe considers it the organizing principle of moving bodies in time and space. But such a simple definition of choreography does not help us here, and it is also misleading vis à vis the complexity of Forsythe's propositional algorithms (the "little machines," as he calls them)[20] that generate the unfolding of temporal events in spacetimes, of bodies moving through – to use a mathematical or Deleuzian formulation – iterative equations that can evolve through the randomness of their difference in repetition. Dancing is not the same as choreography, Forsythe also reminds us repeatedly,[21] and the abovementioned notion of the *chorea* – and thus of *choreomania* – invites us to imagine dancing also as uncontrolled/involuntary forgetting and not knowing, consciousless purposeless or unconsciously proliferating with unreadable, "non-normative" bodily ejaculations. Not stumbling or flailing, as Balzac ironically observes movement "in everyday life," but folding dynamically and uncontrollably, propelled by a vast repertoire of emotion as the throb and rhythm of the ongoing changing process of experience at both the biological and psychosocial levels? The loss of the syntactical is what interests us here in this book – choreomania

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[18] Esposito 2008, p. 168.
[19] Merleau-Ponty 1968, pp. 258f.
[20] Cf. Forsythe 2008.
[21] "Choreography and dancing are two distinct and very different practices." Cf. Forsythe 2008, p. 5. More provocatively, he also asks: "is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principles, a choreographic object, without the body?" (ibid.).

pointing above all at social phenomena and only secondarily at the more "controlled" aesthetics of the choreographic in theatrical performance. Some artists we read about here are imagining the choreomanic or faking it, as in the case of Joachim Koester's film, *Tarantism*.[22] Others have studied bodily disorganization, ritual possession, rapture or trance-inducing whirling, and seek to induce perturbances of normal patterns of perception and motion control in the dancers they work with.

The loss of the syntactical returns us to Artaud's theatre of cruelty and affective athleticism, and the artist's emergence (after World War II) from internment in psychiatric institutions where he endured electroshock and insulin shock therapy (while he suffered from delusions, auditory hallucinations, internal torments and uncontrollable spasms as well as nearly total dispossession of his personal belongings, even though he continued writing and drawing). He was able to draw (on) his deliria, and then his disturbing drawings become radiophonic, when he recorded the incantatory screams and glossolalia of *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu.*

It is noticeable how critical Artaud's rapture becomes for Deleuze and Guattari's proliferating machines and machinic assemblages in their writings on schizophrenia and society, and their insistent emphasis on the primacy of "affect" and "becoming." Becoming-different, self-differing by variation or movement, appears to be an idea that has gained much currency in recent theories that reconnect performance to philosophy as well as to a politics that takes into account the continuing reconfigurations of the social and the technical in late capitalism (the becoming-digital). How paradox (as a mathematical problem) can be "dislocated" as a figure of thinking and moving, proposed by Nicolas Salazar Sutil, therefore suggests a scientific dimension in our book which embraces the "schizophrenic body" as uncomfortably as political activism – in the case of Per Roar's fieldwork in Bosnia –

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[22] See Yvonne Bahn, Annette Hartmann, Natascha Siouzouli, and Hanna Walsdorf, in this volume. On the other hand, see also Anja Weber's and Alexa Junge's s examinations of the possibilities of dance for expressing the unspeakable, engaging with preverbal and prethematic meaning subtleties in dance-based therapies that are receiving increasing attention in the mental health professions due to their capacity to address complex issues, such as trauma and dissociation, in a non-reductionist and democratic, first-person subject (rather than "expert") centered way.

encounters its limits in working through "griefscapes" of "traumatized bodies."[23] Coining the notion of "para-dance," Salazar Sutil proposes that the schizophrenic body is not to be addressed in a clinical sense in his experiment, but that stereotypy can be considered a rendition of paradox through choreographic movements that might be circular, looped, or knotted. The subject of this movement, Salazar Sutil argues, "denies its own predicate, in the sense that the decision to move is cancelled out by the folding back of the movement to its starting-point," deciding not to move or not to communicate the movement. Movement returning to itself in denial rudely violates the logic of dance: the effect of para-dance is ultimately to remain rooted to stillness. This provocative thesis suggests, contra Deleuze, that the para-dancer, like an autistic person repeating certain gestures, remains locked in repetition without difference, without emerging intensities or transitive moments at the level of the biogram. Neither passing into ecstasy nor catharsis, the para-dancer moves in the "total hereness of the cage," like a captive subject, a unanimous "I" that is also a double (I am not I), dancing with himself and unable to reach anyone outside the self.

**Tracing Organ-Machines**

In the context of contemporary postmedia, notions of foldings, becomings and "live traces" assume a complicated depth of meaning and touch on the maddening paradoxes of dance, if we were to understand it as a kind of choreographic object. The most ephemeral of art forms, dance has naturally refused the status of an object, and like music it tended to comprehend itself as purely time-based. It vanishes before it can be collected, it escapes the "apparatus of capture" implied by the organizational, enframing mechanisms of the choreographic or, in extension, the document of the choreographic.[24] Interesting interferences or dysfunctions happen, of course, between the vanishing and the recurrent mechanisms of "modification" that Deleuze and Guattari predicted, when in *Mille Plateaux* they imagined the replenishing floating movement of forms (and of sound), forms replaced by modifications of speed and affect. If you remember, Deleuze was also an admirer of the apparent non-performance of John Cage's *4'33"* of silence, not to be confused with the catatonic

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[23]  See Nicolas Salazar Sutil and Per Roar, in this volume.
[24] Lepecki 2007, p. 120.  A crucial Deleuzian essay on organ machines and machinic connections/disjunctions is titled "Schizophrenia and Society," Deleuze 2007, pp. 17-28. See also chapter 6 in Deleuze/Guattari 1987.

stasis of the body without organs alternating with outbreaks of delirium. Variations of Cage's music have been heard in a number of recent dance, or not-dance, performances even if they didn't trust the silence, while we were holding it together.

*The Fact of Matter,* as Forsythe titled a recent installation made for the exhibition *Move: Choreographing You* (Hayward Gallery, London), was neither a choreography nor a dance, as a matter of fact. Informal yet materially concrete, it pretended to be a "choreographic object" and looked like a loose gymnastics sculpture waiting to be acrobatically entered. I entered and hung in the ropes for a while, trying to float my body and climb through the rings, losing and gaining momentum, getting trapped in the physical crisis of effort. But what is this installation, and how could it choreograph me?



Fig. 1 William Forsythe, *The Fact of Matter*, MOVE: Choreographing You, 2010. Photo: Michèle Danjoux/DAP-Lab.

Concluding, I briefly trace the supplements of increasingly unstable forms in contemporary dance and dance technologies, looking especially at the risks involved in real-time systems and the unhinging of "dance" from its stage apparatuses and from perceptual integrations (again severely jammed by Forsythe's other machinic installation, *You made me a monster*). "Un-danced," the body felt dangling in the ropes, dislocated into contorsions and deformations obeying some unfamiliar sensomotoric il-logic without having recourse to control or will. Later, when the body had recovered, memories of postmedia dance vaguely returned – fragments of European Konzepttanz of the 1990s, for example Xavier Le Roy's becoming-animal in *Self Unfinished*, mingled with other associations from the stuttering engines and obsessional tics of bourgeois despair in Pina Bausch's early work (later parodied in Brazil by Wagner Schwartz)[25] or the Baconesque disfigure studies of Meg Stuart's no-longer-readymades.

What happens when the event (dangling in the ropes) moves into contradictory, liminal constellations, the no longer readymade organisms provided by the ill-defined form of installation art or projection art – the latter now also connected into the burgeoning world of online social networking where distributed biograms are passed around through asynchronic interactions (as in Susan Kozel's "IntuiTweet" or other flash mob phenomena) that permeate the social controlspace? Addressing such transductive forms of experience, Sher Doruff speaks of Web 2.0 non-places of real-time performance characterized by a kinesthetics of affective, vibratory intensities and polyrhythms. No longer choreographic objects that can be documented and "applied," as Forsythe's platform *Synchronous Objects* (http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu)[26] suggests, but the fracturing of perceptions of the emerging and perishing synaesthetic forms or affective modalities.[27]

I associate such transductions and complex assemblages with the dissolutions of form built into the amputational and manipulatory digital operations in contemporary

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[25] For example, in *Wagner Ribot Pina Miranda Xavier le Schwartz Transobjeto* (shown on tour at the IN TRANSIT Festival, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2006).

[26] *Synchronous Objects* effectively presents itself as applied research, uncovering various interlocking systems of organization in Forsythe's *One Flat Thing, reproduced* (the prototype), through a series of "objects" that variably allow us to explore choreographic structures and elements, reimagining what else they might look like, where else they might take us.

[27] Doruff 2009, p. 136.

choreomania. Such operations are predicated on the mutability of the data, the manic data scattering and differential filtering that can reveal how art and life are performed or how dancing/un-dancing can interrupt a given order. Live art hacktivism today implies both chaotic and constructive partitioning forces that can block or traverse the political controlspace which Deleuze had diagrammed after Foucault and Artaud's theatre of cruelty. To repeat: when I am speaking of choreomania here I think primarily of interruptions of the existing order of things, and this is the significance of Artaud's struggle against the *organs* and their cultural correlatives – syntax, organism, language, aesthetic form, identity, and of course representation/theatre itself. For choreographers working in the theatre of representation, such struggle may always be self-contradictory:

> The theatre of cruelty has to begin making the BwO, freeing life of its inauthentic attachment to representation and reconnecting it to the forces that underlie all forms. The theatre of cruelty is not therefore a theatre as such, but an entity defined by a fundamental *conflict* with theatre, a critique of all the institutional practices (the organs) of the theatre in the name of a principle of vitality that dissolves '*notre petite individualité humaine*' (our trivial human individuality). As such, it approaches the efficacy and liminality of ritual…[28]

As ritual appeared mostly hollowed out in late industrial societies, Konzepttanz choreographers tried particular strategies of un-dancing that soon proliferated across Europe, slowing down the kinetic energies and accumulation principles of self-mobilizing subjectivation, resisting vitalism and interrogating self-presence – *notre petite individualité humaine* – in the ontology of performance. Le Roy's *Self Unfinished* and Jérôme Bel's *Nom Donné par l'Auteur* (followed by *Jérôme Bel; The Last Performance*) relentlessy question the generation of form, and the functioning of the entire apparatus of recognized identity categories of authorship, subject, object, masculinity, femininity, human and animal, etc. Le Roy moves into unrecognizable form, machinic and organic, becoming pathetically distorted, faceless; while Bel dismantles the sense of choreography as such, quietly pulling apart the relations between an object (or subject) and its name, between "a 'you' and a 'me'"[29] or between singularities and multiplicities – thus pushing indetermination to the brink, which one might consider a Deleuzian strategy of bifurcation that seeks to escape, to have done with the judgement of God on the theological stage. Bel was caught in the

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[28] Scheer 2009, p. 45.
[29] Cf. Lepecki 2006, p. 50.

Catch 22, working in the theatre, performing mutating roles ("Ich bin Susanne Linke," "I am Andre Agassi," "Je suis Jérôme Bel," etc), being or not being, and so he followed *The Last Performance* with more work, *The Show must go on*, realizing along with other performing artists that "madness" is a controlled technique (as "Hamlet" shows us) and has a method. Just as the whirling dervishes of the Mevlevi order – performing their accelerated Sufi ritual as tourist attraction – cannot spiritually transform their audiences, conceptual dancers cannot achieve catharsis nor contagion through their decelerated un-dancing in front of frustrated spectators.[30]

Some controller-tools are at work as well for contemporary dance seeking to affect or infect audiences through the technological sublime and the transformations of in-forming techniques, yet relying more often on chance in complex live systems, thus shifting attention to dynamically perceived behaviors on part of performer and system. Glitches and flickers, cracks and breaks, to use sonic allegories, are naturally occurring malfunctions or (desirably) involuntary random events when the system is pushed and distressed. The intrusion of noise into the system merely indicates that the embedding system itself is not stable or closed, but always dynamically evolving into a becoming and unbecoming of form (*informe*), not unrelated to what Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss describe in their take on Bataille *(L'Informe: mode d'emploi)*. The generative principle, informe's "instructions for use," which are like a set of operations, permeable and provisional, cannot but do violence to the formalism on which the aesthetic precepts of modernism were built (and which postmodernism couldn't get rid of). It also implies that (authentic) acting out or re-enactment are

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[30] Further below, Yvonne Bahn argues, however, that trance-induction has been used therapeutically to treat obsessional neurosis; Natascha Siouzouli examines the performer-audience relations, precisely focussing attention on the difficulty of disarticulating the overcoded segmentarity of theatre. Artaud's vitalism (he does not mention the dervishes, but Balinese dancers and the Tarahumara Indians he witnessed in Mexico) desperately clings to symbols and allegories when it imagines theatre *as* life. Susanne Foellmer has published a huge "inventory" of carnivalized excesses, implosions and decompositions in contemporary dance, referring to them as "Verschiebetechniken"(Foellmer 2009, p.196), which Klaus Nikolai (Festspielhaus Hellerau), in an essay draft for our volume, also describes succinctly as controlled techniques for uncontrolling exertions ("Entregelung der Sinne"): "Stellen wir uns vor, dass es um Ekstase ginge, um ein vollständiges aus dem Körper-Treten durch den Leib hindurch? Dazu möchte ich eine spannende Arbeit von zwei Forsythe-Tänzern in Hellerau als Beispiel anführen, die ihre Choreografien selbst getanzt haben: Das sah wirklich aus wie Wahnsinn, beruhte aber auf einer unglaublichen Trennung zwischen Körper und Geist, wobei der Geist ganz allein extreme Körperaktionen zu steuern schien. Da knallte man nur so gegen die Wände mit starrem Blick. Der Körper war ein einziges physikalisches Objekt und am Ende an keiner Stelle verletzt... Unglaublich! Aber ich denke, das hat etwas mit Körper-Bewußtseins-Arbeit zu tun, weniger mit Wahnsin, nichts mit Ekstase oder Rausch."

useless concepts in a larger context of always interactional or distributed/networked art. Dancing is data – pro-actively usable, re-usable. Losses of data are to be expected. As a consequence, there never will have been an original "I" but only a becoming without measure, at the breaking points in the relations between the natural and the artificial, into the friction effects and clicks.

*Is You Me* is created by Louise Lecavalier, Benoît Lachambre, Laurent Goldring and Hahn Rowe.[31] Ostensibly a duet between Benoît Lachambre and Louise Lecavalier, this dance reflects some of the fascinating aspects of a "cracked medium" – in the sense in which Caleb Kelly has examined 20th century musical and artistic production by looking at experimental usage of playback and sound-producing technologies whereby tools of media playback are expanded beyond their original function as a simple playback device for prerecorded sound or image. The generative and glitch aesthetics of cracked media point to processes of alteration and malformation, usually enacted on the material surface of a medium.[32]

The first malformation once notices in *Is You Me* is the occlusion of the individual subject/performer. On a raked white platform, which backs up into a slightly curved white screen, we can barely make out anything initially, except for a black pullover with sleeves and hood, lying there as an abstraction of a torso. A puppet-like shadow appears, seems to become animated, with tiny legs, but it is "only" a projection, lines drawn and then redrawn, with swift marks of a pencil. Then first one, then another figure gradually appears in black hooded costumes; for a long time we do not recognize dancers or their gender, no body no subject, we only perceive stunningly quick brush strokes, animated lines that circle and dance around the hooded pantomime of silhouettes, creating scene after scene in a constantly moving universe. Perplexing scenes of phantom realities. In terms of animation (e.g. Miyazaki), one can see the scenes as *doga*, moving pictures or animated drawings.

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[31] I experienced the performance at the Dansens Hus during the 2009 Coda Dance Festival in Oslo.
[32] Kelly 2009. After Hijikata, Ohno and Teshigawara, it is particularly interesting to see the manic punk aesthetic in current Japanese dance, sonics and manga.
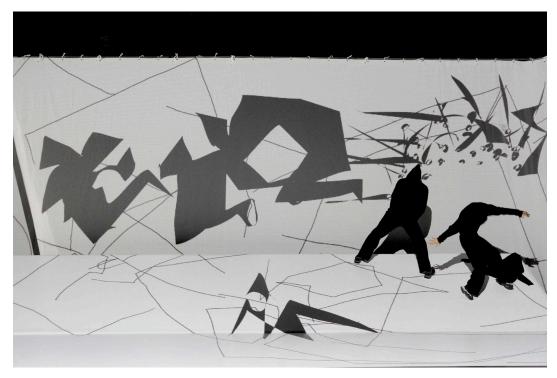
Fig.2 *Is You Me,* co-created by Benoît Lachambre, Louise Lecavalier, Hahn Rowe and Laurent Goldring. A ParBLeux production © 2009 André Cornelier. Courtesy of Latitudes Prod.

The figures on the platform, flat and nearly two-dimensional, move in strangely wobbling and flapping ways, they are manga characters perhaps, appearing to engage in a surreal cosplay to the haunting electronic violin and innumerable crackling sound effects generated by Hahn Rowe, standing downstage left, while on the opposite side of the stage, seated at his laptop, light and projection designer Laurent Goldring creates his live kinetic sceno-graphies and drawings, perishing in real-time, under constant erasure. The movement of the performers remains two-dimensional for some time, limbs popping, contorted twisting and trembling extremities, stretched cloth and Kafkaesque forms emerging and combining with the line tracings, marks, blotches, smears and extraordinary zigzagging calligraphies created by Goldring's hands on the computer tablet. Now there is a full landscape, then it is wiped away, and on a blank canvas the tracings of motion start again, while eventually, now in yellow and green hoods, the dancers reveal a face, a hand, a bare back, almost as if animal or human-like bodily contours form associations with an imaginary story (metamorphosis, à la Kafka) that resembles an uncanny nightmare, a dream with (at one point) a black and white film scene of a car driving through heavy rain, we look at the night through the windshield, one performer stands sprawled in front of the projection as if he/she were

an insect caught on the glass, smashed up. I can barely believe what I am seeing. Near the end, the live animation draws a horse shape, a huge Picasso-like cubist monster with a wide open mouth, red color bleeding from its belly as if this troubled image wanted to be more than cartoon, shapeshifting into a densely emotional virtual landscape.

What can we call such a dynamic real-time kinetics, with its seamless integration of drawing and movement, which at the same time appears corrosive, not centered on fusion but on the physical cracks and breaks in the surface, on decomposition of identities, on concealable (bodies) errors and layerings that slip away and cannot surge into the heart of the matter? Returning to Esposito's claim for discorporation, the instability of open systems – as theorized by Doruff and modeled into the digital performance of *Is You Me* – implies rethinking the relations between norm and life. There is no more crucifixion, no God, no sacrifice and no bare life, once no fundamental norm exists any more from which others can be derived, and once the notion of the individual no longer indicates an individual subject but always emerging multiplicities of interrelations. The ethical consequence would be toleration of all life-forms, and reciprocal movement toward life. I propose that all of this is post-choreographic, since changeable and inherently unstable or indeterminate within intelligent systems. An assemblage such as *Is You Me* (performed interactively by dancers in close unison with generative software as it was also modeled in Chunky Move's *Glow*[33]), suggests infectious improvisatory rhythms, jazz-like call and response modulations that dilate with the effervescent human body, asynchronously mixing temporalities, durations and syntheses in what some DJs and VJs have called synaptic – firing up the immanent circulations of flows. This also echoes Deleuze and Guattari's anti-Oedipal schizoanalysis of political culture, having done with the judgement of God, and imagining choreomanic possibilities, not choreographies, that are points of reversal away from determination. If dancing Is You Me were a poetic incantation, in the spirit of Artaud, it would signify positively "mad" transitional world-body relations, impeding the body's own absolute immanence.

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[33] The Australian company, which I saw perform at Hellerau's CYNETart_2007encounter Festival, worked with the machine vision of the software – wonderfully named "Kalypso"– devised by computer artist Frieder Weiss. It observes and analyses the dancer and reacts (anticipates) to her movement; its Greek name, translated, means "the camouflager, the hider."

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