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BETWEEN A KICK AND A CUDDLE

A FLUID-METHODOLOGY BASED

ON DOUBT AND CONFUSION

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SYNOPSIS

This works stands in response to the notion that dance has become stuck in its privilege of knowing (having at times been a provocative act, and has now become lost and oblivious, a repetition of existing forms). Prior work, among others Rudolf Laban's Movement Analysis method, Rosalind Crisp's methodology and Patricia Bardi's Vital Movement Integration practice, have been addressing psycho-physical expression and repatterning of habits as a potential approach to this concern. What deserves further attention, are the ways in which these processes can be shared in real-time, between dancers in their practice and between them and an audience in a performance, becoming a generative tool. With a fluid-methodology, designed to help dancers identify their habits, challenge their ability to attend to multiple stimuli at once, and to provoke situations which embrace confusion, doubt and uncertainty, my work focuses on integration of states of doubt and confusion, decision-making and an embodied cognition emerging from these, with the aim of rendering dancers resilient to the discomfort and able to share the uncertainty it may provoke. To accomplish this, dancers are given tasks, also called ATE, aimed at taking them out of their comfort zone. The result is an experience that can be described as an exploration of the unfamiliar.

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, Irina Baldini, hereby certify that I have personally carried out the work depicted in the thesis entitled "BETWEEN A KICK AND A CUDDLE – A FLUID-METHODOLOGY BASED ON DOUBT AND CONFUSION".

No part of this thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma to this date.

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You are wonderful, exactly because you are the way you are.

I hope not to condition you, or everything would change.

I would no longer desire you.

Not because you would suddenly be 'possible',

but because you would be something else. Not for me.

Remain, loyal, to yourself.

It does not mean that I do not desire you, but I desire you

as something I respect. A beautiful thing, to treat with delicacy.

A fragile thing I do not want to break. So, I handle you with care

as you are most important.

(author, 2018)

This short poem was dedicated to dance, written on a morning when I woke up needing to apologize for having betrayed it.

I have always related to dance as an entity in and of itself. It is not something I *do* but something that *is*. Dance has 'saved my life' on different occasions, reminding me of my personal freedom and teaching me through its physicality to respect my body and that of others. It has been there to encourage me to act from a place of presence and honesty towards my emotions, and to do it without embarrassment or concern of societal shaming. Just to be as I am. After having gone through about seventeen years of technical training, I realized I had trapped dance to make it into something prescribed. I had changed it to fit the needs of an industry, and I no longer desired it because it had become something else, in service of command. From this realization, I hoped for it to stop obeying. I wished it to find its voice, which I would respect, and help be heard.

The dance I want to be talking about is opinionated. It comes if it wants and cannot be domesticated. It is a wild dog that gives you warning if it does not like you. Not because it was taught to, but because it is intelligent and knows. Intuitively, knows. It leaves when it finds no purpose; it growls to prevent you from being hurt. It might bite if you do not leave it be (what it is) and certainly will if you try to command it and master it.

But it is loyal, if you are loyal to it.

I do not know how to see it. I accept I may never learn.

I wish that it may hear me and dare to come close.

I adore it. But it does not deserve to be adored.

It would be possessive. It deserves freedom.

Through my research I am hoping to find strategies to enable the appearance of a dance which does not need to fulfil expectations nor to conform to prescribed codes to be approved of.

INTRODUCTION

Dance urges to emancipate. It is stuck, it is gooey, it has become a victim of its own habit and, so in love with itself, it does not recognise its limitations. It is self-seduced, self-sufficient, and self-indulgent. Dance is not afraid of change, yet it is lost and oblivious, unconscious and mono-directional. It wants to wake up, get down to where its guts are and listen. Not to what it already knows and masturbate on the satisfaction of being good but listen deeply and carefully, until it hears something to reveal. Or it will be nothing, and it will go nowhere.

I consider much of the dance around me to be a perpetuation of conformism. Dance training has become increasingly technical in the pursuit of delivering excelling athletes into the industry. Higher education institutions (such as Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London, UK, where I studied over a decade ago) have now become factories of skilled bodies. The heading on their website claims to "prepare you for a successful career or further study in the competitive world of contemporary dance", with promises such as "you will develop your technical expertise and expressive skills" and no mention about a process of integration of the person beyond the skill (Trinity Laban, 2021). This feeds my frustration. No wonder dance is buckled up and silent. It has no voice of its own, because we (dancers) have taken it and made it ours. We have taken over the dance and claimed to have rights to perform it. When all we do is shine the bars of its cage, reinforcing the identity we gave it, because it made us feel good and proud.

Attempts have been made to uncage dance. Paradoxically, it was choreographer Rudolf Laban (giving name to the above-mentioned conservatoire), who from the 1920s onwards was committed to find ways to break codes, generating an entire method, namely Laban Movement Analysis (Trinity Laban, 2021) as a result. Dance improvisers founding Postmodern dance in the 1960s such as Simone Forti, Steve Paxton and Nancy Stark Smith, rejected the given confines and made statements through their dance based on a liberal idea of spontaneity (Cvejić, 2015, p.146) - they brought pedestrian movement into the dance vocabulary, questioning the notion of dance. For contemporary dancer and choreographer William Forsythe, the purpose of improvisation is "to defeat choreography, to get back to what is primarily dancing" (Forsythe, Bürkle, 1999, p.24). He does not decouple code from dance, instead he uses classical ballet technique, which he claims to be aiding 'visceral thinking' through a high degree of cognitive control (Cvejić, 2015, p.140) to generate new movement vocabulary.

I desire to see a dance that does not need to reject nor to depend on established techniques.

It will borrow from ballet or any other code. It will also take these apart or forget about rules altogether. Herein, I propose a practice that simultaneously liberates and celebrates dance. One that is free to second or to oppose invitations, to be androgynous in every sense, cross-dressing between techniques and the resistance to these. A dance that results in movement that cannot be named, and experience that cannot be described. A dance that does not know what it is but knows what it does,

and it is unashamed of showing the 'ugly bits'. Rather than to perfect movements, a dancer is given tasks in order to put in discussion, doubt, regurgitate and take apart what they know. This allows them to rebuild what is needed, when they need it. It guides them to create a constantly update/ing frame of reference, in front and with an audience who is involved in the process and enabled to witness the inner workings of the practice.

ORIGIN

> " Think for yourself. Question authority. Throughout human history, as our species has faced the frightening, terrorizing fact that we do not know who we are, or where we are going in this ocean of chaos. It has been the authorities, the political, the religious, the educational authorities who attempted to comfort us by giving us order, rules, regulations, informing, forming in our minds their view of reality. To think for yourself you must question authority and learn how to put yourself in a state of vulnerable, open-mindedness; chaotic, confused, vulnerability to inform yourself. Think for yourself. Question authority. " (Leary, 1996)

I have long believed that humans need to come to terms with the fact that there is no certainty. Writer and activist Anne Lamott states that "certainty is missing the point entirely", what matters is "noticing the mess, the emptiness and discomfort and letting it be there until some light returns" (Lamott, 2005). Only change is certain. Impermanent, unstable, unknown, insecure, fleeting: these are adjectives that are to me much closer to the nature of life. Forms and codes are an attempt to gain certainty. Dance, as other creative means, can afford uncertainty, which "is critical to the creative process. It opens you to the possibility that you don't know everything", which presents new options (Fields, in Henry, 2021).

A lifetime of technical training has conditioned my body-mind, setting parameters within which to think and move. Certainties to refer to, so to say. I have learned several dance techniques from the age of three and taught my body to satisfy the requirements of these: pointing my toes for Classical Ballet; open my hips and contract my core for Graham technique; design my body into curves and straight lines with Cunningham to name a few. I have also taught myself to judge actions as correct or incorrect, successful or failing, appropriate or unwelcome. Czech writer Franz Kafka talks insistently in his 1910 diaries about his education having done him "great harm", trying to make "another person" out of him "than the one he became" (1948, p.17). Yet, he writes "I too have my centre of gravity inside me from birth, and this not even the most foolish education could displace" (p.18).

If dance was Kafka, and myself its educator, I would have tried to make 'another dance' out of the one it was becoming. I wished for this 'centre of gravity' of dance to be brought to the surface. At a certain point I started to refuse to conform to the codes I had learned, denying the authority of my mind over my body. I wanted to 'let the dance make itself' and to get to know it in its becoming. In my early attempts, the dance that appeared was a patchwork of experiences glued together with no apparent linearity, or as writer Jon Savage might describe it, a "bricolage" of existing forms "stuck together with safety pins" (2007, p.16). I then began to observe this dance-in-the-making and tried to sit back to study it, as the foreign language I felt it to be.

I could not let my body rely on muscle memory - nor could I ignore that my mind had been conditioned too, to think of movements through codes. This started a dialogue between the movement of my body and that of my thoughts. What I observed fed into a loop of checking-in with an action and immediately ask myself if I could predict where it was going. It looked as if I did not know what I was doing, changing my mind constantly about a movement, yet never stopping in order to think it over. The thinking was part of the doing, in which changes would free the movement from my expectation, relieving some of the frustration related to conditioning. At the end my professional formation, I had the fortune of encountering dancer and choreographer Rosalind Crisp, who initiated me to her way of practicing *change*. I remember her saying: "be idiot, look stupid, do it anyway!" and this sentence being very influential for me. This encounter led me to further investigate interruption or diversion of movements from their sequential development, to notice my habitual patterns and give permission to what felt like awkward movements to join the dance.

Awake in confusion

Later on, I started looking for tools to support the exploration of these experiences. To find out more about these 'awkward' moments I used Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), which helped me notating and describing movement. LMA is a language used for visualizing and documenting a variety of human movement, and it uses a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating anatomy, kinesiology, psychology and notation among others (Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies, 2021). This

brought clarity and more options to affect or disrupt movement. It also gave me the possibility to classify and keep track of certain findings. Slowly I collected a number of tools to notice my tendencies and generated strategies to influence the way I was making decisions in the moment. I gave these strategies a name: *Accountable Temporary Expedients* (ATE).

The ATE started as tasks I would use to trick myself into redirecting or scattering my attention. The use of these led to an evident issue: by disrupting a pattern I would create another. One solution to this was never to stop: new habits needed to become catalysts for the next change. Based on the targeting of new habits, I would tweak, complicate and update the tasks to keep pushing against stagnation. Yet, I was not keen on mastering the skill of breaking habits, but on integrating the moments of 'breakage' into the dance.

In my experience, these strategies would certainly allow for different qualities and aesthetics to emerge, but I was drawn to something other than the mere movement. It was the shifts, switches and drops of attention appearing as a consequence of the changes I was embodying, which captured my attention. I was attracted to the causes of their emergence and the ways and moments in which they were manifested. To explore this interest further, I needed to make room for the *undomesticated dog* in my introduction to show up. Instead of erasing habits, I was going to include these moments of change into the dance. I noticed that it was mostly when I was uncertain or confused, that these shifts occurred. There, in the noticing of these changes I felt awake and present. I then started provoking in myself states of doubt and confusion. These were only

temporary and induced by the complexity of a tasks and designed to challenge me to do and think of multiple things at once. I invited the *dog* to mess around with my body-mind. This led me to experience at times frustrations, at times surprise and overall a strong sense of liberation in the permission to include these glitches in the doing. It was not a comfortable and gratifying practice I was onto, but one that challenged me to constantly renegotiate the reasons and the ways in which I was dancing.

With this as a foundation to my practice, I became curious about how other body-minds might be interfaced with it. If they would experience pleasure or discomfort and how they would contribute to my research with their own perspectives. During a research-period, I involved two other trained dancers to join me. I was prepared to be faced with the assumption that uncertainty, indecision, loss of attention through doubt and confusion might feel uncomfortable, and I set myself to train them and to perhaps change that assumption. Introducing the ATE to other dancers resulted in greater challenges to them than I had expected. Some truly found themselves at loss in the practice, sharing with me that they were trying hard to break out of their learned techniques, but were confronted by their incapacity to let go of these and the judgemental mind they implied. I became also interested to see how an audience might receive a performance of confusion, and to which degree I may be able to involve them. Since the practice originated from experiences, I needed to consider in which ways I could give audiences an insight into the work, that was not merely cognitive but experiential.

This research was born in and from the body-mind. It did not originate in purely intellectual thoughts but in psycho-physical experiences I reflected upon on the way. As beautifully posed by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, thoughts are "an echo and after-effect of your experiences: as when your room trembles when a carriage goes past. I know I am sitting in the carriage, and often am the carriage itself" (1961, p.12). The practice here is not a solution to a problem. It is the problem in its perpetual solving, and it is not friendly. At its best, experiencing it is like a trip to a place unknown. The person comes back consumed, yet stronger. They have grown accustomed to the unstable, and thus learned of an inner volition which was always there, urgent but unexpressed.

What this research aims at is not teaching how to do anything better, rather helping dancers (and not only) to practice the skill of becoming aware of their decisions and being at ease with the doubts and confusion that come with a process of decision-making. It encourages them to include in their performance vocabulary what does not conventionally make it into a dance. The practice of these, and the sharing of what they bring, hold for me a potential to become tools for the everyday. Ultimately, I define the ability to deal with confusion as an act of courage in the making.

CONTEXT

In order to practice no-certainty, I collected a bank of tools (ATE) which constituted what I call a *fluid-methodology*. *Fluid* because it allows for adaptations, and *methodology* because it groups a number of guidelines; although it has to be said, these can be followed or contradicted. The tools were informed by several artists in the field of dance, choreography and somatic practice, of which the most influential are mentioned below.

Earlier in this text I already introduced Rosalind Crisp, who dances and creates "with and from the materiality of her body" (Omeodance, 2021). The way her interest in the body led her to gather tools that facilitate dancers in paying attention to their movement, is similar to how I collected ATE for my fluid-methodology. What is different is that she skills dancers to identify their habits and clean the movement from the *noise* the habits produce. Crisp often uses the term "undoing". She believes that undoing holding patterns is possible, but that new ones are always forming, and that the dancer is always busy with a cleaning job" (HZT Berlin, 2016). What the fluid-methodology is aimed at is not to constantly 'clean' the body of its patterns, as I believe that would be taking up too much of the focus away from allowing the moments of confusion to join in.

According to somatic educator Liz Koch, humans are conditioned by early impressions, which have an impact on their perception of the nature of life (2012, p.75). Choreographer and scholar Susan Leigh Foster, in an interview with Crisp and choreographer Deborah Hay, speaks of

techniques that "make our bodies regimentalised, and others that teach the undoing of these" (HZT Berlin, 2016). She refers to codified dance techniques and to somatic practices. Hay sees the conditioning of the body as something that happens independently of formal training. She considers society and culture inevitably influential to the formation of psycho-physical habits. One of the questions in somatic practice is "how do we experience what we have never known?". This is addressed considering that experience is accessed through a larger field of memory stored in the body's connective tissues (Koch, 2012, p.75-76). Hay's interest in dance is deeply connected to this question and to the notion of society and culture becoming imprinted in the cellular memory. She investigates reconfigurations of the body by asking her dancers questions, inviting them to embody new sensations. In this way, impressions can be brought into the body, through sensing and imagining, freeing it to move, think, feel and express itself in novel ways (HZT Berlin, 2016).

From the field of Somatic Practices, Patricia Bardi's work of Vital Movement Integration (VMI) and Organ Rebalancing offers tools to enable a person to perceive their body's patterns. Her work is concerned with the therapeutic psycho-physical aspects of insight and self-awareness, including the emotional landscape of a mover and how this can be brought to expression (Patricia Bardi, 2021). VMI has had an impact in the development of some of the tasks in the fluid-methodology, which facilitate the acquiring of an accurate awareness in the body-mind.

Last but not least, Rudolf Laban, who played a role in helping dancers to find new structures that would shake them out of their patterns

and "into the unknown" (Dubble, in Foster, 2002, p.157). He was the founder of LMA and Choreology (Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies, 2021). Laban was influenced by the socio-cultural changes of the time during which he worked. Post WW1, there were constraints against showing emotions, which he questioned, aiming to free the feeling body. He believed that dance was the best means to do so. It was his spirit of enquiry to guide the creation of what was called *Der Freier Tanz*, the free dance. Around the same time, when psychotherapist Sigmund Freud discovered the human psyche, a door opened for movement arts to express freedom, valuing independent choices of movement and individual vocabularies (Preston Dunlop, 1998, p.55). I appreciate Laban's early move to abandon traditional steps and the reliance on music, to look for the body's own rhythms, steps and relations to space. I also resonate with the action of replacing the hierarchy of typical ballet ensembles with a democratic approach, creating works of participatory nature to educate socially aware dancers (Trinity Laban, 2021). This is grounding the practice of the ATE fluid-methodology, where dancers often have interchangeable roles in performance, and decisions are taken responsively, with an awareness towards the group.

Living in and with the noise

Although these figures were of influence and I strongly resonate with many of their motivations, I differ on the purpose. If Crisp's work is headed towards erasing habits, my practice aims to enrich the dance by including detailed choices within these habits. I re-imagine nuances that can make each movement different every time it shows up, to encourage

dancers to deal with the *noise* of information and to navigate different decisions fluently.

Hay's work has touched me profoundly on several occasions, having seen the live performance of her pieces. In my understanding, her work is directed towards the dancer's experience as "what gives rise to the movement", in this sense becoming a generative tool for choreographic material. She relies on clear rules, such as "no walking", or "no hanging out" (HZT Berlin, 2016), which give parameters to the aesthetics of the dance. The ATE of my fluid-methodology do not have such rules and are not oriented towards the production of movement. They generate movement, undoubtedly, which in turn provokes experiences. These are what affect the performance and initiate a feedback-loop which, in its momentum, allows for doubts and confusion to emerge. The dancers' response to these constitute the dance.

The Organ Rebalancing principles I use in the ATE are there to support the dancers' experience of psycho-physical states. They guide them to be mindful about the discomforts that may arise. Close to Bardi's interest, I am keen on an integration of the physical with the psychological impacts of a practice, addressing vulnerabilities through the body being in touch with emotions. I do not use the practice deliberately as a therapeutic tool, although I do not deny that there is room for a future inclusion of this purpose into the work.

Having acknowledged these sources of information, I care to highlight that the ATE fluid-methodology is not a technique to improve a

particular physical skill nor to detox the body from its holding habits (although these might occur as a side effect). The tasks - as the acronym ATE stands for - are expedients. They are a means of attaining an end, and encouragements to live in and with the *noise*. If there is anything that can be learned from the ATE, it is to deal with the mess the body-mind can be, without trying to put a leash on it. The processes involved in the embodiment of the *noise*, lead to revealing ways in which each individual engages with the confusion and the doubts that are provoked. Every person contributes to the practice with their own intelligence and approaches to handling given situations. Here is where the dance I am interested in can happen.

FLUID-METHODOLOGY

Clearly, the fluid-methodology generates movement, and at times sound, speech and interactions between these. What it really is after though, are the moments of loss of attention, distraction or uncertainty. These moments are not easy to find, especially for dancers who are taught to master their skill and to conceal mistakes, avoiding showing vulnerability. With the ATE, dancers are provoked and challenged to find, acknowledge and share these moments.

An Accountable Temporary Expedient is a task that generates, and responds to, a situation. Accountable means considerate of the consequences it will have on the circumstance; Temporary stands for not applicable to all circumstances at all times; Expedient implies that it is practically useful in a situation of action. The fluid-methodology can be practiced individually, or in relation to others. It is divided into two main segments:

The first has its focus on chosen *materials* of the body: organs, breath, body parts. For example, the task *Finding Ways to Begin* relies on knowledge based on the anatomy of the human body. In order to get acquainted with this, dancers are prepared with some basic notions: bones, muscles, organs, surfaces, through visual refences from anatomy illustrations, accompanied by hands-on practice. Dancers are asked to bring attention to the beginnings of a movement, while trying to internally define what they are doing in real-time. The task asks of them to drop the action as soon as they can give it a name, and to find another beginning.

They are also made familiar with compositional tools such as rhythm, effort qualities, and spatial planes (as described in LMA), to guide them to challenge their tendential choices.

The second segment deals primarily with what I refer to as the *ephemerals,* attributed to the activities of the mind: attention, thought, memory and imagination. An example is the *Ghost* task. This is a combination of breath and imagination, affecting a movement's efforts and rhythms. Dancers imagine an inbreath traversing an organ, and an outbreath spilling through another one. Different layers are added, as they progress into the task: breath is expanded in size, in order to stimulate imagery (some describe it as a "light group of feathers", others as "an arrow shooting in and out of their skin") reaching out and beyond the perimeter of the body. On top of this, a choice of two effort qualities is added and associated with each of the organs. Optionally, the movement that is produced can be put in conversation with the expansion of the breath (the 'ghost') of another person doing the same task. The act of bringing attention to multiple layers of the tasks, and to constantly guide themselves from one to another layer, takes the performers to a state of restlessness, noticing and decision-making.

Trigger words such as *drop, stay*, *switch and shift* are used to practice interrupting actions, and thereby to focus on continually shaping the dance. These can be called to oneself or to others, creating a relationship with other dancers and/or an audience. *Drop* is an invitation to disengage from any task; *stay* is a challenge to look for further interests within the task, if it has exhausted itself; *switch* is an abrupt change from an

ATE to another; and *shift* concerns space, continuing elsewhere on the same task. During a performance, audiences can be invited to call these words out for the dancers, who have the option to respond, ignore or contradict them. Audiences can also use them for themselves (dropping their attention, staying with one action they are looking at, switching direction of their gaze or shifting the position of their seat in space).

Some ATE lend themselves for an *individual* practice, others for a *relational* one, where duets or groups can form. Most ATE lead towards an embodiment of psycho-physical states of doubt and confusion, generating dynamic dialogues between movement and thought. Aspects of the tasks can be highlighted or inhibited, by applying something I call a *distortion pedal*. This is an imagined mental device that allows for modular control of various aspects of a task via a series of knobs. Each knob represents the following: *Breath, Size, Rhythm, Effort, Level, Body part; Naming-noticing* and *Gaze*. These can be applied to any of the ATE and turned up to different degrees, to affect a particular element of the same task.

Ultimately this fluid-methodology facilitates and addresses how real-time composition can use shifts, switches or drops in the body-mind as an alternative paradigm with which dancers can generate and interact from a place of confusion. A combination of more than one ATE, the use of *trigger words* and the association of these with a notion such as confusion, creates frameworks that are never fixed or absolute. They can evolve and adapt to each person's interpretation, revealing vulnerability, discomfort, or even joy and liberation. By acknowledging these, a dancer can afford to transform them into qualities, and to draw from them to engage playfully

with what emerges as choreographic material, as well as the experiences it provokes.

A RELATION TO EMBODIED COGNITION

I often receive feedback saying that my movement has resemblances to that of an infant, in their early explorations. The association is not far-fetched: the theory of Embodied Cognition attempts to explain the process through which humans attain spatial knowledge and understanding of the changes happening in the body-mind. Infants learn to walk, and later learn different affordances for phases of exploration to progressively occur. Exploration is therefore fundamental in cognitive development (Gibson, Pick, 2003, p.96). As infants grow up, fewer novel stimuli are presented to them, and many more patterns (some also necessary for survival) are learned. The ATE are facilitating exploration and proposing constant stimuli to keep the process alive, resulting in a framework for (artistic) self-learning. This can be seen as a feedback-loop of information that is being constantly inputted and outputted.

Learning, or acquiring knowledge can occur through thought and experience. Philosopher and neuroscientist Francisco Varela ties the term *embodied* to biological, psychological and cultural contexts and the fact that there is a dialogue taking place between the materiality and the ephemerality of the body (2016). Cognition is strongly influenced by aspects of the body beyond the brain. The Embodiment Thesis by Jon Garthoff (2004), leads me to believe that some of the discovery and new understanding emerging during the exploration of an ATE, occurs in realms of thinking, knowing, feeling, remembering, taking decisions or solving a problem. Hence there is an embodied knowledge arising from the practice. Some knowledge may not be possible to name, it might take

place in the shape of "information processing, transformation or communication", requiring "exploration and modification of the environment" (Milkowski, 2013, p.4).

As such, a dancer's mind is still grounded in mechanisms that evolved from imagery, memory and their acquired ways of solving problems. This may lead them to stagnation, redundancy or to lose interest in their movement. Confusion and doubt are brought in as strategies to shake up the ground. Psychologist Margaret Wilson claims that cognition can be "situated" within a specific context (in this case the framework of the fluid-methodology), and also "time pressured", as the tasks can be subject to abrupt interruptions, whether deliberate or accidental (2002, p.627).

In the context of the ATE, some pressures are external, such as the *trigger words* that are called out by another dancer in the space or by an audience member, and others internal, such as the *distortion pedal* which are layers added to the task at hand, upgrading the level of challenge. In this way, the environment becomes a part of the cognitive system, where the dancer is in dialogue with the tasks and with what surrounds them. Their minds are not left alone in a sort of autopoiesis but find external structures to feed from and into. The limits in human attention and working memory (Shapiro, 2001, p.20) make the confrontation with the ATE a challenge. The situatedness and the pressures that can be applied to the practice can function as supports and threats. They can help when the information is in overload but can also make the situation more difficult to deal with, reducing the comfort the dancer may have found in practicing a particular task. It is their discretion to decide whether to support or to

threaten their exploration. They can decide to deepen their experience of learning, pushing to go into less explored territories, or to preserve a safety-net to contain the practice.

The ATE fluid-methodology builds on the idea that cognitive activity takes place where multiple things are happening at the same time (Gibson, Pick, 2003, p.113). Broadly, the ATE provoke dancers to face and observe changes occurring in their body-minds, to ask themselves: "What is the task doing to me?" and "What do I do about it?". Changes can happen very fast and give rise to doubt in confusing situations. By maintaining the body-mind trained to deal with complex information processing, a tendentially uncomfortable circumstance is made into an enriching learning environment.

THE CONFUSION / DOUBT DEBATE

Doubt can be defined as a state in which the mind remains "suspended between two contradictory propositions", unable to be certain of any of them (Sharpe, 2021). From western to eastern philosophy, doubt has been represented as a strategy for accuracy of scientific research, and as a means to find focus and openness in life. According to historian Jennifer Hecht, doubt's narrow and negative connotation of mystery and disbelief is recent, having emerged only in the past century (2009).

French philosopher and scientist René Descartes addressed doubt in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) through the figure of a *Meditator* who finds it impossible to keep opinions and assumptions out of his head, and pretends that these opinions are imaginary, to counter-balance his habitual way of thinking (1993, p.13). His aim was to tear down his existing set of beliefs, and through doubt, to rebuild them afresh. In his *Discourse on Method and Meditation* (1637) he claimed that doubt "delivers us from every kind of prejudice" (2003, p.62). Another perspective invites to doubt the necessity of doubt itself: Japanese Zen philosophy claims that the sophistication of thought leading men to doubt, exposes an artificial construct of the mind, which in turn collapses as there is always an unknown, and doubt can therefore never be mastered (Leach, 2019). The idea of self-doubt was described by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche as a way to even deceive certainty, as the latter would be driving one insane (1968, p.246).

In the book *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, Nietzsche wrote "what is wanted are blindness and intoxication and an eternal song over the waves in which reason has drowned". What he referred to, were the systems of belief and Christianity by which doubt is declared to be a sin. "One is supposed to be cast into belief without reason, by a miracle, and from then on to swim in it as in the brightest and least ambiguous of elements" (Nietzsche, Hollingdale, 1982, p. 89). Philosopher Hannah Arendt, soon after WW2, wrote something that feels to me now as contemporary as ever: "In an ever-changing, incomprehensible world the masses had reached the point where they would, at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and nothing was true" (1973, p.382). She talks about political leaders founding their propaganda on the assumption that under such conditions of confusion, they could make people believe anything and its opposite, leading them to admire the leaders for their strategic intelligence.

Not far from this, but on a more contemporary note, the book *Merchants of Doubt* bring the ambivalence of doubt and confusion to the forefront (Oreskes, Conwaythe, 2010). The quote "it's all about distraction, it's all about confusion and preventing people to see where the action really is" from the homonymous documentary released in 2014, suggests how confusion and doubt may be used as a tool to mislead and divert attention away from the main issue at hand (Kenner, 2014, 1:10:00). What both the book and the documentary point out, through a focus on the tide of doubt coming out of the great recession where people started to doubt every institution, is how some powerful figures saw the opportunity to take

the lead in the midst of chaos, utilizing science to conceal the urge to change socio-political system malfunctions. They made of doubt their "product", manufacturing uncertainty "by questioning every study, dissecting every method, and disputing every conclusion" (Michaels, 2008, p.4).

It is worth contextualizing the notion of doubt into the current historical moment. This past year has been a one of doubt and confusion: a global pandemic has brought attention to a socio-political state of affairs rich of uncertainties, concerns and consternations. Cases of psychological distress have been pointed out following major social disasters, as people lose a wide range of benefits crucial to individuals such as growth, satisfaction and a sense of identity (Godinic, Obrenovic, Khudaykulov, 2020). American psychologist Susan Jeffers argues that the contemporary attitude of people to "grasp for control" leads them to become unbearably uncomfortable about uncertainty, which is dealt with by consuming anxiety medications or going into denial. She claims that an acceptance of uncertainty is empowering and that giving into distress without responding intelligently, leads to living in a cloud of anxiety (2003, p.7-11).

Intelligere, etymological root of intelligent, in Latin means 'to read in profundity'. Doubting is for me a way to read in profundity, beyond an apparent quantitative reading. Not a rational, but an intuitive, conceptual and qualitative evaluation, imagination and abstraction of what is experienced. In contemporary society, intelligence is being reduced to a capacity of calculation (calculating the distance between one and another person or the physiognomy of someone so they are recognized). It could

be looked at as the mere ability of solving problems. This is perfect for a utilitarian society in a techno-scientific world: the convenience of certainty over doubt (Rosaci, 2020).

I approach doubt as a creatively generative state, asking myself: "What happens if doubt is a place of potential?". Doubting has become important to me as it challenges the status quo of things. It helps me to think critically, and to be prepared for whatever may come. It also confronts me with my fears, in the face of multiple options. Uncomfortable and risky to inhabit, I nevertheless believe that uncertainty needs to be lived through. There are no guarantees of optimal outcomes, and outcome is not my goal either. The ATE are here to encourage an active practice of confusion, rendering someone resilient to the emergent discomfort. By practicing taking decisions within what appears as chaos, doubt earns a place of potentiality by which possibilities are opened up and fuller awareness can be brought to a circumstance.

More than an analytic method, a problem unworthy of mastering, or a strategy for manipulation, I would like to reclaim the worth of doubt in dance. If doubt is either used to disprove theories, or it is avoided because uncomfortable or even shameful, it can potentially become something to be afraid of. It becomes a 'dark attic'. Attics can be scary: full of forgotten things, unopened boxes, containers of history and of mystery. There, anyone without the resources to cope with the fear of that unfamiliar place, will be uncomfortable or even paralyzed by internal conflicts. I would like attics to be fun, messy, and rich in surprises. In the same way I wish for

doubt and confusion to be exciting, when there is courage to climb up the ladder and walk in, to see what is there.

DECISION-MAKING

If confusion creates internal conflicts, the (however temporary) resolution of these depends on decisions. These may resolve, redirect or worsen a situation. But they lead to new trajectories. In the ATE these trajectories are multidirectional and impermanent. The more frequent the decisions, the more challenging staying on top of them becomes. Deciding to *drop*, *shift* or *stay*, to contradict a trigger, not to engage, or to add an element of the *distortion pedal* to an ATE, are all vital parts of the fluid-methodology.

In live performance, decisions have immediate visible consequences. Whether a decision is taken impulsively, or it is being pondered for long, or avoided, it is visible there and then, perceived in real-time. In the practice of ATE a decision is not taken to prevent something from happening. It is also not taken to propel something into the future. It happens right there, unhidden. This presents an opportunity to *stay* with the conflict, and to explore all the nuances and possibilities it may present, allowing this process to be visible. I resonate with a statement by theorist Donna Haraway in her book *Staying With the Trouble* (2016). Trouble means for her "to stir up," "to make cloudy," "to disturb". She argues that in the face of "troubling and turbid times"..."the task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response". It implies an ability to deal with the trouble, or as Haraway puts it, "staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present" (p.1).

In life, so as in dance I do not consider confusion or doubt problems to be solved. Both are situations, with their own implications, which can be handled by hanging in there. There is a rich body of knowledge and subjectivity that emerges from the experience of staying. Different dancers will show different degrees of struggle with the fluid-methodology. Some responses have brought insight on the difficulties it faces them with, and on the ways in which they make decisions. For example, "cognitive styles" and "biases in judgment" such as tendencies to avoid changes, or relying on existing thought patterns in the face of new circumstances (Maqsood, Finegan, and Armstrong, 2004), can be noticed when dealing with a task. Some dancers actively screen out information they do not think is important and miss out on opportunities to embark different journeys. Others try to master the tasks, finding ways to re-present what they have previously generated. When tendencies like these are uncovered, they can become fruitful sources of information, and help to decide accordingly, fluidifying the process once again.

I laughed when I found out that one of my favorite way to engage with the ATE is referred to in science as 'Anti-authoritarian'. It consists in "taking the most opposite action compared to the advice of mistrusted authorities" (Singh, 2019). In the case of the ATE, the mistrusted authority is habit, and it is being pulled apart and put in discussion through a task. This is to question the validity of a request, and through the friction that emerges, to find my own stand. To generate confusion and initiate uncertainty, I also tend to rely on information overload, or 'infoxication', described as "a gap between the volume of information and the tools we have to assimilate it" (Jusoh, 2002, p.402). This is where the practice

reveals itself: in the gaps, the places where I am not able to have a complete overview and am left there to sort out the mess. Everything else becomes secondary: how I appear, how much time I am spending on something, where in space I am located. A sort of void materializes and allows for possibilities to show up, beyond those which I feel capable of mastering. Surprise is around the corner, if only I would not try to do things 'right'.

The induced confusion that the ATE provide, takes a dancer to a point they are forced to constantly decide. When change is perpetual, none of these decisions are definitive. They become catalysts for motion. Decision-making is therefore not addressed as a goal. It is a means to momentarily mobilize a situation remained idle. Taking a decision is hence not an end to a state of confusion. It is a temporary anchor, a point in time among others, continuously becoming present.

IN PRACTICE: ATE development and delivery

Hereby I will introduce how the ATE came to constitute the fluid-methodology, and in which ways they can be deployed for performance purposes. I will bring examples from a day of practice in the process of development and refer to the performance *Between a Kick and a Cuddle,* shown as part of my dissertation.

Development

The development of the fluid-methodology happened on-and-off over four years. The first ATE to constitute the bare bones, were the ones concerned with an *individual* practice, as I first set out to do the research on my own. Later on, *relational* tasks came in, as a result of inviting other dancers to experience my explorations. The use of the *distortion pedal* and the *trigger words* made it into the practice as each of the dancers in the group (there are at present thirteen dancers who are familiar with the fluid-methodology) became more at ease with the tasks and needed to be challenged further.

The way the tasks came about was tightly related with the physical and intellectual contributions of each dancer. They brought their insight, their difficulties and their excitement for the challenges. I have rarely, if ever, shown a task. Rather, I would initiate a problem by talking through a guided improvisation, and design the task in real-time, based on what I observed. These tasks became clearer with repetition over time but kept a quality of fluidity and openness, to meet the person each time they engaged with it. The ways in which each of the dancers approached a task,

their strategies to dig in or avoid a problem, were what informed and keeps informing the shaping of the fluid-methodology. My role became to make things difficult for them and to provide resources so they could do this by themselves.

Every practice session was framed by a warm-up, an embodied inventory of the ATE, and a written or spoken reflection at the end of the day. The body-mind was made available at a physical, sensorial, emotional, and rational level to inform the explorations. To give an example of the process of development of the fluid-methodology, I will describe a day of practice.

A day with ATE

A session began with a body-scan, guiding the dancers on a visualization journey through the contents of their body: organs, muscles, bones, skin. In this way they gained an anatomical base of reference. Principles of Organ Rebalancing were used to activate sensitivity and responsiveness around the area of an organ, including some bodywork. Clarity and specificity were brought to the description of actions, with a mention of rhythms, spatial planes, levels and effort qualities (as described in LMA). A guided exploration of space followed, inviting the dancers to pay attention to what they noticed as they moved in the studio and to the relationship between that and the contents of their bodies.

One of the warmup structures that I used involved *naming, knowing, dropping, watching*. Naming consisted in giving a word to what is noticed; knowing entailed acknowledging the noticed without labeling it; dropping

implied letting go of the action of noticing and watching invites to look at others in the space, without engaging in any other physical activity. Each movement was followed by a next one as soon as they registered what they noticed. One of the dancers said "I was trying not to name, but by trying to avoid this I was actually naming. I was stopping and starting and going back to it. I was playing a lot" (Artémise, 2021). Weight and breath were addressed as an added layer, respectively as an effort quality and a support or threat to a task (to help embody the physicality of light and heavy or to challenge the organic tendency of breathing in to find lightness, out to find heaviness, holding the breath to reverse the two as an option to invert these).

After this psycho-physical warmup I introduced a focus for the day. Focuses included: *doubt, conflict, decision, trajectories*, *interference* to name a few. In this case it was *confusion*, with a particular attention to the *materials* of the body. The notion was briefly discussed in the group to set a tone and again at the end of the session to reflect on findings. This conversation took into account emotional aspects attached to the notion - for example a feeling of anxiety emerging from overload of information, as well as more personal or metaphorical understandings of the word, looking up or imagining the etymological origin of it, to take distance from what was considered a common understanding or an assumption about it: *Con-fusing* = fusing together, making liquid, disorganizing, mixing without order, disturbing clarity, were some of the interpretations that arose.

I then led the group into a physical exploration of the task *Contradictory Beginnings*: the dancers were told to choose places to

initiate movement from their bodies, interrupting each beginning as soon as they could *name* it or *know* it (for example: the left hipbone, initiating with a slow circular clockwise motion towards the right, interrupted a quarter of the way in, by the right earlobe leading with an impulse a straight diagonal-right trajectory towards the floor, taken over at about hip height by a left heel moving continuously on a trajectory on the ground etc..). This led to fragmentated movements, by which rhythms were irregular and directions rarely predictable. What it did to the body-mind was to scatter the attention, generating a loop of moments of tension and release, and of noticing, registering and losing track. I observed how the dancers could not stop, always moving towards the next thing, as if they were 'consuming' attention.

In addition, the dancers were invited to consider the space around them and to choose where in the body, and where in their personal space (*kinesphere,* in LMA) they would place this body-part to initiate a movement. The aesthetic quality of these movements suggested restlessness and disorientation, as if the dancers were not in charge of their own bodies (despite being accurately choosing what body part to move, where in space, in which direction, and at what speed). Later another layer was added: to choose two organs of the torso, and to attribute to these two opposite effort qualities (for example liver = bound; left kidney = free).

The tasks became more complex in the attempt to give attention to the contradictory efforts embodied in the two organs, the body-parts where movement was initiated and the points in space where this happened. This provoked internal frictions and demanded clear decision-

making. The more complex a task, the more sophisticated the dancers' attention needed to be, to keep up with the demands.

At this moment the *trigger words* were introduced, giving options to call *shift* or *drop,* for oneself or for each other, to release the tension for a moment and to refocus on the task anew. When someone called one of the *trigger words*, others could decide to take it as an order or to challenge it by doing something else. For example: one of the dancers decided to respond to *drop* by opening and closing their eyes to see if their sense of noticing would change, another simply walked out of the room. Calling a *trigger word* was also used to challenge one another to change, implying reciprocal responsibility, or to question what the word meant to them in that moment.

After the practice of a task, the dancers transitioned to a few different ones and towards the end of the day, played them out in turns to exercise fluidity in interchanging, responsiveness and agency in following, bending or even contradicting tasks deliberately. This play time was the most fruitful in terms of information that we could then share and discuss together at the end of the day. The porousness of the ATE allowed for the embodied knowledge that had newly emerged to influence the next session as a feed of the loop.

It must be mentioned that the fluidity of the methodology does not make it kind. It is rather unpleasant and aimed at making things uneasy. At times it is unfriendly to those practicing as well as to those witnessing it. Dancers have on occasion felt ungrounded and experienced a loss confidence in themselves, as many of their certainties (based in learned

patterns) were fading. Because of this, before starting an intense period of explorations, the group normally agrees to make space for voicing anything that could feel destructive or emotionally unsettling emerging from the practice. We agree to erase any expectation towards responding to a task in the same way as any previous time. This helps to take the liberty to change things, and adapt them according to personal reflection, discovery or concern.

During this research, two dancers from the group, Artémise and Tashi, and an assistant Simona, joined me in an eight-week period of practical application of ATE. In this period, an event reminded me once again of how this work can take someone to a state of self-awareness, which can become confronting. Simona was present from the beginning of the process and witnessed each step of the way attentively. At about half-way the research-period she shared with me how, by being around us engaging with these complex tasks, she began to question her personal choices and life patterns, to a point she reconsidered what she often takes for granted, as something that could change at any moment. It was on this occasion that the group decided to install 'check-ins' about the (psychological) impact of the work, and to remember that as much as trust is present in the group, there is also an individual responsibility in looking for support within it. To be able to play with fire and take risks in the explorations, we needed to know there was an extinguisher in the vicinity.

The performance of a methodology

The creation of a performance based on ATE, and the idea of sharing the practice with an audience brought many questions around how to deliver this, and how to invite an audience to experience some aspects of the practice. For the performance presented as part of my dissertation, the dancers (Artémise, Tashi and I) decided it was not going to be an open workshop, nor would it be a piece of choreography to look at from a distance. We were keen on lifting the curtain to our universe and decided to work towards something we began to refer to as *Methodological-Performance*. This would be a sharing of real-time writing of the body-mind, in response to parameters grounded in the fluid-methodology. It could be supported, threatened or questioned by anyone in the room. It would be a diary, opened and read while thoughts are being formed and written. These thoughts could be influenced by internal stimuli, as much as by external ones.

In sharing this performance with an audience, we wanted to give them an opportunity to interfere with the work, by helping us to get confused, affecting our decision-making processes in real-time and to experience some degree of confusion or doubt. We wished for them to be stimulated by different information (intellectual, visual, sonic), and to be led to a moderate disorientation. I sympathise with the thought of music composer Frank Zappa who used confusion "to annoy people to the point where they might, just for a second, question enough of their environment to do something about it" (Zappa, in Winter, 2020).

The performance we composed lasted about half-hour. It was based on five chosen ATE, considered as some of the most psycho-physically challenging, likely to lead us towards confusion. We were looking for *Contradictory Beginnings*, while trying to embody opposite efforts; danced with our *Ghosts* by imagining how two organs in the torso were traversed by breath; moved small and large body parts *Away from a Memory of Touch*; used our *Voice as a Limb* and told the audience what we had just *Seen or Imagined* (for descriptions, see booklet in my *Project Portfolio*, 2021). These tasks took place on five different stations in space, circling around an audience. The audience was seated on stools, placed in the shape of a triangle at the centre of the stage. They faced different directions and had different proximities to the stations. In this way they could see the work from close and change their facing to choose the action they wanted to focus on, as the dancers would move around the triangular formation. A sound score was created as an integral part of the performance. This was made of overlayered recordings of conversations around the methodology, and amplified noise extracted from the silent gaps in these, all combined with our live interventions on microphones. The recordings were edited so it would be unclear where in the room the sound came from and could be operated by us from the performance area, which allowed for a certain degree of disorientation to reach the audience.

For the performance the audience was given an assignment: to actively look for moments where we lost our attention and to help this happen by provoking changes, shouting out the words: *shift, switch, drop* at any point. We could shift station and change direction, switch task, or

drop our attention based on our own decisions or on the audience's triggers. The audience was also invited to shift the position of their stool, switch the direction of their gaze, or drop their engagement for a moment. The moments of our uncertainty or indecision were as exciting as they were uneasy to find, since being familiar with the practice made us better at mastering the tasks. The audience's contribution became therefore of invaluable help in this operation.

Throughout the development of the ATE I have always been interested in revealing and sharing with an audience the processes experienced by dancers. The research-period did not allow for much interaction with an audience due to the restrictions in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, the performance became in and of itself a moment of research. It became an experiment in which to 'let the dance make itself'. We also said we would let it be 'fucked up', and that we would not try to re-present what we had practiced, pressured by the circumstance. This was an opportunity to take a risk and put the fluid-methodology into action with an audience. If *the undomesticated dog* would come play with us, it would depend on how daring or compliant the audience would be, and on our ability to provoke and handle situations, to let ourselves be vulnerable or be influenced by the events, trusting that we were supported in our trip to the *attic*.

As the audience engaged with the inner workings of the practice for the first time, we witnessed their difficulty in the impossibility to try and see everything simultaneously, as they were forced to make decisions on where to look and if or how to influence the course of actions. Talking to

some of those who attended the performance, I learned that they enjoyed seeing how we dealt with the triggers, but they also felt active in constantly adjusting their register, switching focus and looking for something specific. They were engaged not only with the dance-in-the-making but with one another, as each person was taking their decisions. I am now left hungry to investigate further into the potential role of an audience in the performance of this methodology: an aid in the ongoing process of challenging dancers to find unfamiliar constellations in their body-minds, as well as experiencing some of the core concepts of the research. I have a strong desire to keep presenting the methodology to the public, to explore what it can do to the work and to find out more about what the work can do to them. Not to reach an end point to the methodology, but for the waters and the winds never to stop. To keep the practice alive and fluid.

Reflections

Dancers working with this fluid-methodology will often refer to the fact that there are no rules, no expectations, yet there are agreements that remain unspoken. Rules can be bent, challenged, or even broken responsibly. It is part of the foundation of the relationship created among the dancers and with an audience. I remember the moment when someone from the audience called out *drop* and Tashi decided to walk out of the theater, to come back a minute later and surprise me, who had not noticed him leave. Because the practice can happen in groups, it is notable that decisions are made through various processes, in a combination of verbalized, implicit and embodied decisions. Even though there might not

be an evident consensus to reach a common goal, there is a sense of collaboration. Decisions are taken responsibly, with awareness to the consequences they may have on others. There is an element of community that derives from the practice.

It is not rare that during a practice-session the dancers would crack up laughing for something said, seen, or imagined. The ATE are just as unfriendly as they are fun. Moments of embarrassment, of being stuck, of having failed an impossible task and realized that it was ridiculous to try it in the first place, can lead to hilarious episodes. We were glad to have been able to include this layer of the practice into the performance, which revealed to us a playful participation of the audience. Some pseudo-comic moments happened, which allowed us to melt the seriousness of concentration that some of the tasks require, and to include the distractions into the dance.

Thanks to this research, I realized how the ATE fluid-methodology is not only a dance practice, but a mirror of life, showing the person behind the technical skill. Revealing internal workings through speech, expression, movement, and personal processes, the dancers share with each other and an audience the ways in which they handle situations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Through this research I have been looking for a dance that happens on the outskirts of the prescribed codes of dance. One that has the courage to show up and be seen for what it is, noisy and raw as it may be. This courage does not make it fearless. It makes it a dance that has permission not to conform, without hiding the discomfort that this may bring. The gathered tools and the tasks that were developed to create the ATE fluid-methodology were intended to allow me - and my collaborators - to provoke situations which embraced confusion, doubt and a state of perpetual change, and to use these as generative strategies in performance. They were designed for individual as well as relational practice, to lead dancers towards resilience and comfort in sharing these states.

Sharing this practice with others informed the evolution of the ATE and increased the fluidity of the methodology. During the development and delivery of the *Methodological-Performance*, I worked towards giving doubt and confusion a connotation of value, guiding dancers to play with their *undomesticated dog* and dare to live through the spaces between comfort and discomfort: *Between a Kick and a Cuddle*, as the performance was titled. Their decision-making processes were made visible and the consequences of these an integral part of the dance.

The engagement of an audience in these processes revealed aspects of playfulness, which were helpful to the dancers to let the moments of confusion join in and 'fuck things up'. It allowed for the

methodology to show more of its potential, by which the dancers could feel their relation to the practice resembled by the one they had with the audience: both could function as a support and a threat to the execution of the tasks, towards each of which they would have to take responsibility.

The ATE give permission and space for self-reflection, self-development, self-awareness to be included in the dance. Each performance of the methodology creates a unique version of itself, where an audience can see dancers as intelligent, capable and free to take decisions based on their overview of a circumstance. Yet, brave enough to trust, dare, follow a sensation triggered by an event, which may take them to uncomfortable, fragile or vulnerable places. The fluid-methodology can generate ecosystems of relations between dancers, the environment, and between them and an audience. An interconnectivity of the elements at play (space, sound, bodies, thoughts, emotions, postures etc.) becomes therefore crucial to the delivery of a performance.

This is nothing but a temporary closure of the research: new tools will be integrated, others lost, renamed or adapted. Anyone coming into contact with the ATE, will feed of what there is and contribute to it, enlarging the body of cognition created by the work. The practice has the potential to fulfill multiple roles: an instrument to train attention; a tool for choreographic improvisation; a guide to self-learning. I am determined to carry on working on the accessibility of its basic principles, delivering it by different mediums, such as the card-deck in my *Project Portfolio* (2021), so that more people -dancers and non- could encounter the propositions, and apply these to different realms or creative fields. Some of the ATE will

soon be taught during a summer artist-residency in Germany, and a composition of a choreographic work will be created and shown in Finland in 2022, which I expect will stir the research and show the way to more exciting *attics* to explore.

Out of place

Restless. A short Breath

catches me quietly.

It gets to nowhere

Before I know it.

The place of just about not

Or just too much.

The average does not exist.

What I give for granted does not exist.

It disappeared a long time ago.

Before me

Before itself.

It died in the moment of conception.

It ceased pretending

In that short breath.

I almost killed it as soon as I noticed it.

Will it kill me back?

I did not want to possess that air

I did not want to reject that air.

Yet I breathe.

By the urgency of not belonging,

Not owing

Not being owned

Running from a contract I considered a given

I talked to that breath.

It gave me a shiver in response.

(author, 2020)

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