Exercise: Les Noces
Translation as a Mode of
Performative Postproduction and the
Historical Dialogue Between Dance and
Visual Art

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Abstract

This research proposes 'translation,' as opposed to other appropriating strategies, as a theory and practice which invites the possibility of performative postproduction throughout the making, performing and attending of dance.

Translation theory is proposed as a model for reading dance works as well as a choreographing tool for making postproduction works which use historical citation and/or are hybrid choreographic projects between forms and mediums. In this thesis, translation theory is used to discuss Bronislava Nijinska's *Les Noces* (1923) as a modernist choreographic work which renews notions of dance and movement through consideration of the project of the Russian avant-garde. Subsequently, translation theory forms the choreographic method through which I am able to translate *Les Noces* into *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017).

Exercise: Les Noces is not just a historical project, and thus, it is not a reconstruction, revival or reworking of the original ballet. *Exercise: Les Noces* is not a gallery installation either which adapts a ballet work to a visual art platform. This thesis proposes *Exercise: Les Noces* as a 'choreographic site'; as the site where different authorial voices, different temporalities, different mediums and texts are invited to co-exist in the tension between two extremes: their total presence and total absence and as such to negotiate and possibly change their form and meaning. Thus, translation is proposed as a transhistorical and interdisciplinary choreographic theory, method and practice which works towards the expansion of the mediums involved with a view to engaging them in a new cultural and historical milieu.

Acknowledgements

Introduction[1]

This research proposes 'translation,' as opposed to other appropriating strategies, as a theory and practice which invites the possibility of performative postproduction[2] throughout the making, performing and attending of dance.

Translation theory is proposed as a model for reading dance works as well as a choreographing tool for making postproduction works which use historical citation and/or are hybrid choreographic projects between forms and mediums. In this thesis, translation theory is used to discuss Bronislava Nijinska's *Les Noces* (1923) as a modernist choreographic work which renews notions of dance and movement through consideration of the project of the Russian avant-garde. Subsequently, translation theory forms the choreographic method through which I am able to translate *Les Noces* into *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017). *Exercise: Les Noces* is not just a historical project and thus, it is not a reconstruction, revival or reworking of the initial ballet. *Exercise: Les Noces* is not a gallery installation either which adapts a ballet work to the visual art platform. This thesis proposes *Exercise: Les Noces* as a 'choreographic site'; as the site where different authorial voices[3], different temporalities, different mediums, and forms are invited to co-exist in the tension between two extremes: their total presence and total absence and as such to negotiate and possibly change their form and meaning. Thus, translation is proposed as the

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[1]Please see Appendix 8 for an alternative Introduction: Exergon.

[2]Although the term 'post-production' is usually understood as part of the process of filmmaking, video production, and photography, the term 'postproduction' in art is coined by Nicolas Bourriaud in his book *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (2002) and refers to artworks made of preexisting works. According to Bourriaud, the artist takes already produced cultural objects and, through creative postproduction means, expresses a new cultural configuration that both speaks to contemporary culture as well as the source material that has been remixed. Of course, as Bourriaud points out this practice is not new but can be traced back to Marcel Duchamp.

[3]The different authorial voices such as the choreographers', the performers' and the attendants'.

choreographic theory and method which works towards the expansion of the texts and mediums involved in order to engage them in this new cultural and historical milieu.

This thesis started as an attempt to develop an understanding of what postproduction in dance works could actually constitute. This means asking not only which dance works count as postproductions but also whether certain modes of production apart from making, such as performing and attending, are considered postproduction of the same work. The answer necessarily has implications for how we generally translate dance texts; this is how we read, make, perform and attend dance. This thesis therefore began with the aim of developing a method for how to read postproduction in dance which also resulted in developing a practice in postproduction.

When thinking of postproduction in dance, we are usually referring to works which perform a return to the past and therefore, use historical citation. Different terms have been proposed to express different ways of engagement or different levels of dependency on source texts. Thus, many terms exist, such as reconstruction, recreation, reenactment, revival, resetting, reworking, remaking and so on.[4] What about the 101st performance of *Swan Lake* from the Royal Ballet then, would that count as postproduction? Is any performance of a dance work in itself a mode of postproduction? What about attending a *Swan Lake* performance? Would the spectating of any performance count as postproduction too? In other words, where does the performative agency of postproduction lie?

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[4]*Reconstruction* suggests intensive labor, research, piecework, maybe educated guesswork about some details, and generally implies a date of performance distant from that when the work was produced. *Recreation* implies that the spirit of a dance is captured [even] though the details maybe totally wrong, and the term is often used, for example, when discussing a modern performance of medieval entertainment in which descriptions from the period are scarce. If dance with costumes and sets from one production is being set on another cast within a relatively short interval of time, the term *resetting* is often used. The term *revival* is often used when a dances produced, usually under the direction of the choreographer, after not being performed for several years' (Smith, 1992, pp.248-49). 'Reworkings are engaged in a dialogue with tradition, often challenging established premises' and 'differentiated from other essentially more restorative trends'(Midgelow, 2007, p.10). '*Reenactment* denotes the redoing, restaging or re-performing of an artistic performance—meaning a live act or action by a visual artist—and is as such distinct from the repetition of a theatrical performance, choreographed dance, or scored musical performance'(Bryzgel, 2018).

On the other hand, postproduction could also refer to works that transpose a source text (for example Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597)) to another medium (Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet (1955)*) and which are usually defined as adaptations or appropriations.[5] The work *50 ans de danse (50 years of dance) / Flip Book / Roman Photo* (2009) by Boris Charmatz which reconstructs a monograph on Merce Cunningham[6], is another example of a book which has been adapted into a dance work. This movement is amplified by the recent invitation of dance into the museum and gallery environment in the form of thematic exhibitions or retrospectives. Dance works which are being placed in direct relation to material artifacts are obliged to repeat, to be played in a loop and thus, are being forced to adapt and exist in different temporalities. To name a few recent 'dance exhibitions': *Move.Choreographing You* (2010) in Hayward Gallery, *Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark* (2011) at the Barbican Art Gallery, *Table of Contents* (2014) at the ICA on the work and archive of Siobhan Davies, *Retrospective* (2012) by Xavier Le Roy which has already been presented in Barcelona, Paris, New York, Hamburg and Singapore, and the most recent invitation of *Musee de la danse* of Boris Charmatz at Tate Modern in May 2015. How does the structure of the previous medium inform the present form of the work? How do these choreographies adapt to another medium or how do they appropriate other forms in their own medium? Do such exchanges between mediums have the potential to change both domains? Moreover, how do we attend those works?

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[5]According to Julie Sanders both adaptations and appropriations are of intertextual nature: adaptations are amplificatory or proximations and appropriations are embedded or sustained texts. 'Adaptation […] constitutes a more sustained engagement with a single text or source' whereas 'appropriation carries out the same sustained engagement as adaptation but frequently adopts a posture of critique, even assault' (2006, p.4).

[6]It is important to note that this work exists in many versions: *50 ans de danse* is performed by former dancers of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, *Flip Book* is performed by professional dancers, and *Roman Photo* is performed by non-trained dancers.

This study is not looking to offer another term, such as the proposed 'translation', in order to name a different kind of relationship between dance texts. Instead, it seeks to develop a choreographic method, that of translation, which is about making, as much as it is about performing and attending dance. Hence, I propose 'translation' through Walter Benjamin's and Jacques Derrida's writings as the choreographic mode which allows the transfer of artwork from one body, era, medium to another body, medium, era. Every performance of the translated work (may it be in the making, performing or attending of the work) is proposed as always being incomplete, revealing its virtual possibilities and acting as a promise of the work's continuous transformation and enrichment. This proposal is in response to Andre Lepecki's choreographic concept of the 'will to archive' which he asserts in his essay 'The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances' (2010) and defines as 'a privileged mode to effectuate or actualize a work's immanent field of inventiveness and creativity'(p.45). I believe that the 'will to archive' and the 'will to re-enact' that Lepecki advances are subsequently, 'a will to translate' and thus, a will to re-constitute the work's multiple and generic and yet 'heterogeneously singular plane of composition'(p. 45). My task in this thesis is, therefore, first to acknowledge the immense potentiality that lies in the text that I am translating (*Les Noces*) and secondly, to be able to seek and bring together 'other' texts which will potentially realise different aspects of *Les Noces* which are not directly related to its balletic history. It is important thus to note that translation, as opposed to other appropriating choreographic methods, is proposed as an all-encompassing theoretical and practical tool, through which, we can make postproduction work regardless of whether we are dealing with temporal or medium transpositions. Subsequently, translation is proposed as a post-analytical method which speaks about the work it translates as much as about the fact that it is a translation.

Jacques Derrida's book *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1995) became an important work in the wake of an emerging choreographic movement of reconstructions and reenactments in the 2000s. Derrida points out that the word 'archive' comes from the Greek word *αρχή* <arkhé> which in ancient Greek means both beginning and law. Derrida, therefore, understands the archive as a place of commencement and commandment, a place where all sorts of origins are preserved, guarded and policed. During the past two decades, Derrida's book has become a common reference point for many choreographers, academics and critics who have dealt with choreographic practices of postproduction. *Archive Fever* became a sort of dance/performance/live art archive, the common place of commencement and commandment which ironically, involved the critique of a practice which consists in returning to a single origin or a stable archive. An increasing number of European and American artists, towards the end of the previous century and since the beginning of the 21st century engage in postproduction practices questioning notions of the dance archives as stable repositories and thus cite, reference, copy and appropriate historical material in order to challenge traditional reconstructive and archivisation procedures. 'Turning and returning to all those tracks and steps and bodies and gestures and set and images and words and sounds performed by past dancers paradoxically becomes one of the most significant marks of contemporary experimental choreography' (Lepecki, 2016, p.117). Here are a few examples: *Twenty Minutes for the Twentieth Century* (1999) in which Tino Sehgal enacts signature movements from 20th-century choreographers; *Schwingende Landschaft* (2008) where Fabian Barba re-enacts seven Mary Wigman solos; *Urheben Aufheben* (2008) where Martin Nachbar re-enacts Dore Hoyer's *Affectos Humanos* (1962). Additionally, a number of symposia and conferences worldwide are dedicated to the themes of reenactment and reconstruction in dance and performance such as: *re.act.feminism*, Berlin, 2009; *Archive/Prac-*

tice, Dance Archive Leipzig, 2009; *Re-constructions and Re-imaginations*, Performance Space 122, New York, 2009; *Dance Legacies*, DanceHouse, Dublin, 2014. The conventional relations between performance (ephemeral and unstable) and archive (permanent and stable) that were understood as oppositional are questioned. Choreographic works which consider and use the body as their source text, dispute conservative notions of the archive, so that the body is also considered as performative, transformative and therefore, unstable. Hence, choreographers call into question traditional reconstructing methodologies and their performative agency in how they produce bodies and dance history.

However, the practice of returning is not foreign to western theatre dance but historically embedded in the medium. All dance works are understood to be organised under temporal and spatial regimes, and thus, in order to be staged, they are organised in interpretable choreographies/scores, which allow them to be performed repeatedly. Hence all ballet, modern and contemporary dance repertoire from Petipa's *Giselle* (1884) to Jooss's *Green Table* (1932), and from the works of Merce Cunningham to the works of Michael Clark and Akram Khan are subjected to continuous repetition. Especially since the 1980s, numerous reconstructions, revivals, and reworkings of the Romantic, Classical and modern eras in dance history have taken place.[7] Although some of them are very popular productions, according to dance artist and academic Vida Midgelow, they have received 'very little academic consideration' (2007, p.2). Typical examples of such works are, Pina Bausch's *Frühlingsopfer (The Rite of Spring)* (1975), Mats Ek's *Giselle* (1982), *Swan Lake* (1987), *Carmen* (1992), Maurice Béjart's *The Nutcracker* (2002), Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* (1995), *Nutcracker!* (1992) *The Sleeping Beauty* (2012), Raimund Hoghe's *Sacre - The Rite of Spring* (2004), *Swan Lake - 4 Acts* (2005), *L'Après-midi* (2008). According

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[7]In this light, Lepecki's assessment about reenactment being one of the marks of the 'experimental contemporary choreography' becomes rather questionable. Why does Lepecki consider a very specific genealogy of contemporary choreographer as experimental?

to Midgelow, although many of the above works[8] considerably alter the narratives and 'refigure the body in unruly ways,' the canon is still visible and 'continues to reverberate within these dances' (p.5).

One could argue that the repetition which takes place in reworkings always entails difference, as the choreographic text is transferred to different situations, bodies, and contingencies and thus it has to adapt, to transform — it has to translate. However, Lepecki argues that, although all repetition entails difference, some works follow a 'habitual-reproductive line' which performs the 'least differing-oriented return' (referring to the repetition of repertoire in dance companies); other works follow the 'fugitive-differentiating line' which is seen as 'a will for a critical augmentation of difference' referring to certain reenactments by Xavier Le Roy, Martin Nachbar, Julie Tolentino and Richard Move (2016, p.114). Lepecki is reading the agency that invites the potential for performative postproduction in the intention of the choreographer. The performative potential of reenactment, according to Lepecki, lies in the intention of the author, in her will to reenact in such ways so as to become multiple, in order to 'cut off the authorial anchoring' (p.131). However, what happens if the author is already multiple? If the archive of a work is not a body, but many bodies, many texts? Where does the performative potential of such a work lie?

Dance has been associated with performance because of its immateriality and disappearing nature, whereas choreography has been read as the mnemonic device or the 'writing' of dance. Thus, often dance and choreography have been discussed as opposites. The ephemeral nature of the medium of performance has been extensively discussed as well as critiqued after Peggy Phelan's seminal essay 'The Ontology of Performance: Representation Without Reproduction'(1993). Although Phelan writes about

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[8]Midgelow is excluding Hoghe from this assessment. She is also talking about works that rework ballets of the Romantic and Classical era and not so much of modern ballets such as *Sacre*, *Les Noces* or *L'Après-midi.*

performance art, her thesis has influenced dance[9] scholars dealing with notions of writing, presence, gaze, subjectivity and history (Cvejic, 2014, p. 12). Phelan argues that performance 'becomes itself only through disappearance' (p.143) and thus, it is an ephemeral medium which cannot be saved, recorded or documented. Phelan has interpreted performance's status of non-repeatability as a privilege and political resistance posed against objectification. This claim initiated discussions on the dance/choreography binary, involving notions of lack, loss, absence, and mourning (Lepecki, 2004; 2006). In 2001 Rebecca Schneider challenged the anti-archival notion of performance by arguing that the western world has been conditioned within an archival logic which itself produces a loss. Our understanding of performance as ephemeral and as therefore antithetical to the archive participates in the same archival economy that comprehends immateriality as a loss. Schneider states: 'if we consider performance as a process of disappearance, of an ephemerality, read as vanishment (versus material remains), are we limiting ourselves to an understanding of performance predetermined by our cultural habituation to the logic of the archive?' (p.100). Hence, Schneider invites us to imagine performance as something that remains but 'remains differently.'

Instead of focusing on the body as a transformative and performative archive this study will propose the schemata of 'translation as performance' and 'performance as translation' in order to discuss dance performance as always multiple and incomplete and thus, challenge notions of the ephemeral nature of both dance and performance through translation. As I will discuss in detail later, our encounter with texts is always through translation. Poststructuralist theory and Jacques Derrida have challenged the

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[9]Due to being perceived as an ephemeral medium.

idea of the existence of the 'original' through *différance*[10] since signs only point to other signs and no ultimate referent. Thus, if all we ever encounter is a translation, then there is no text outside translation. Consequently, translation by definition, is producing multiple originals or differed copies and therefore, its performative agency lies in the non-originality of the performance event. This idea blurs the boundaries between postproduction and production for translation to be eventually discussed as a theory which can be applied to all dance works.

The loci of the performer and attendant will be considered as modes of translative production and as such, both performer and attendant will be employed as co-authors of the translated text. Taking my cue from Schneider, I will also argue that translation is not about struggling to remain alive; translation does not prolong the life of the work, neither does translation give an 'extra life.' Instead, translation is about 'over-living'; it is about living a longer and better life. Translation is not repetition either because there is no recourse to a previous moment. The work, as I will be able to prove later, is already a text in 'afterlife' and as a living entity, is already in a state of constant change. When we are translating, we are encountering texts already in afterlife, texts over texts over texts. The task of the choreographer is, therefore, to try and read these palimpsests as well as to invite 'other,' 'foreign' texts in her choreography. Her decision is political because she is making the choice of texts and not because she chooses which lives to save or prolong — this is anyway out of her reach because, as I will prove later, translation marks the

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[10]*'Différance* - French term coined by Jacques Derrida and homophonous with the word "*différence*". *Différance* plays on the fact that the French word *différer* means both "to defer" and "to differ." Derrida first uses the term *différance* in his 1963 paper "*Cogito et histoire de la folie*".The term différance then played a key role in Derrida's engagement with the philosophy of Edmund Husserl in Speech and Phenomena. The term was then elaborated in various other works, notably in his essay "*Différance*" and in various interviews collected in *Positions.* In the essay "*Différance*" Derrida indicates that *différance* gestures at a number of heterogeneous features which govern the production of textual meaning. The first (relating to deferral) is the notion that words and signs can never fully summon forth what they mean, but can only be defined through appeal to additional words, from which they differ. Thus, meaning is forever "deferred" or postponed through an endless chain of signifiers. The second (relating to difference, sometimes referred to as espacement or "spacing") concerns the force which differentiates elements from one another and, in so doing, engenders binary oppositions and hierarchies which underpin meaning itself' (Différance. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/317698).

changes; translation does not make the changes happen. The translator's decision is political because translation is all about allowing other texts to question your ground as much as it is about having the potential to change the world around you.

In *What the Body Cost* (2004) art historian Jane Blocker, states that 'to write a history of performance, [...] is to experience and engage with desire, desire for that which is always already lost'(p. xii). In her own experience dealing with history, to delve into the archive expresses a desire for what is already gone. Blocker attempts to write history not from her own experiences as a witness but rather from her involvement in the archive where, according to her descriptions, all the liquidness, smell, sweat and blood have transformed into the solidness of the inorganic nature of paper and tapes. Having seen glimpses of life in and with the documentation she calls herself 'a second degree-reader' after Barthes (p. xiii). She does not try to restore the performances as they have happened but instead, track them as they have been played out in history. She attempts to read the desire behind the words, fill in the gaps, understand their appearing/disappearing game. Blocker is dealing with historiography as a translator of desire; she asks, 'What kind of beloved do historians invent from its remains?'(p. xiii). In her book, the historian becomes a practitioner, a maker, a doer. The historian makes the performance happen again and again as a fantasy. The beloved then is a new life, born in the relation between the document and the reader, the document and the historian. The beloved is a performance, a text. This beloved, as I will suggest, is a translation and it does not take a historian to make one but a choreographer, a performer, and an attendant.

Blocker talks about desire as 'something that is always already written; it is usually moulded to fit preexisting narratives, narratives that, not surprisingly, often depend on the economy of difference, are tinged with sexism, are to some degree or another heteronormative' (2004, p. xiii). She then takes on Catherine Belsey to add that desire 'in

Western culture demonstrates the inability of the cultural order to fulfil its own ordering project.' Her project, her book, her history is about resistance as much as it is about domination. Ultimately, she says, it is about 'postmodern love,' which she defines as the desire beyond commodity but always 'in seeking and doubt' (xiii). The historian is in search of the beloved. The historian here is me, writing a text, creating a new performance, a translation of *Les Noces*, always seeking and doubting. The historian here is also you, creating a new text out of this thesis, out of this performance, always seeking and doubting. We have the same responsibility, the same debt towards the past: to restore the source, an original *Les Noces*. But something unexpected happens: every time we try to translate the past, we move away from it. The archive of dance is a tricky thing — it always slips away; no paper can conquer its force; maybe just because it was never meant to dwell there. Rebecca Schneider insists that if we are thinking of performance as the one that flashes away and disappears, this is because we are conditioned to think this way — the performance is there, always there, playing in front of us, in our memory and living inside of us, in our bodies.

Textuality

The relationship between dance and language is vital in querying how representation functions in dance. This discussion is going to be very useful in this research given that translation has a particular relationship with textuality; as I will demonstrate later, all texts exist in this condition of continuous translation which is called 'afterlife'; a continuous layering of texts which works towards the growth of every text. This thesis will discuss the dancing body and choreography as texts which, through translation, become these accumulative entities that potentially behold the traces of previous voices and as such, discover new ways of being.

In the past, there has been a reluctance to apply the notion of text to dance as it has mainly been associated with art forms that rely on tactile, written or recorded documents. Traditional notions about dance depend on the 'unstableness' of its interpretation or performance which explains dance's troubled relationship to the idea of the text. Consequently, dance has mainly been understood, theorised and examined on the basis of its evanescent and ephemeral nature. Choreography, however, from the outset as Lepecki posits, was the technology of dance which created a body according to the commandments of writing (2006, p.6). In 1589, the Jesuit priest Thoinot Arbeau coined the term choreography and as such, the dancing body became the consequence of text (p.7). Dance scholar and choreographer Mark Franko states that, this relation was not empirically adopted but became institutionalised and bureaucratised under the regime of Louis XIV in France. As a result and after the king's commandment, Pierre Beauchamps developed and later Raoul-Auger Feuillet[11] published an advanced and detailed notation system. The dancing body was the representation of the social status: 'The royal body dancing was made to represent itself,' and the choreography that the body performed, was symbol and carrier of the state and its power (Franko & Richards, 2000 p.36). Hence, dancing created a body in the king's image and according to his likeness, and this body was made possible via text. Franko describes this body as an early 'techno-body' which is being produced through writing (p.36). In the eighteenth and ninetieth centuries, in classical ballet, dancers represented characters in works of symbolic and imaginary content (Cvejic, 2014, p.18). In the early twentieth century, as dance historian John Martin writes, the pioneers of modern dance such as Mary Wigman and Martha Graham, disassociate the body from ballet's mimetic representation and declare movement the essence of dance (Lepecki, 2006, p.4). 'Graham's generation

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[11]*Chorégraphie, ou l'art de décrire la danse* was published in Paris in 1700.

of modern dancers in both Europe and North America had defined the modernity of their practice by saying that it was a living work of art presented through the human body as a means of expression (Wigman), that it worked from the inside out (Humphrey), and that dance movement never lied (Graham)' (Burt, 2006, p. 15). Michel Foucault in 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (1977) argues that 'the body is the inscribed surface of events' and that genealogy's aim is 'to expose a body totally impregnated by history and the process of history's destruction of the body'(p.148). Judith Butler (1990), commenting on Foucault's essay, questions his claim that genealogy 'exposes' and reveals a body because such a conception would assume a pre-cultural body. Instead, she argues that it is impossible to return to an absolute beginning, to a kernel or a place before the regimes of representation and repetition started. She asserts that the 'body is actually produced by the process of cultural inscription' (pp.130-131). Thus, Martha Graham's claim that the body never lies becomes particularly problematic after Foucault's and Butler's assertions regarding the performative constitution of the body. Butler understands the body as a surface of inscription where no recourse to a pre-representation state is possible; however, she advances the idea of 'sedimentation' as the materialisation of the natural body.

> Consider that there is a sedimentation of gender norms that produces the peculiar phenomenon of natural sex, or a real woman, or any number of prevalent and compelling social fictions, and that this is a sedimentation that over time has produced a set of real styles which, in reified form appear as the natural configuration of bodies into sexes which exist in a binary relation to one another (1988, p. 524).

Therefore, layers and layers of gendered norms sedimented in the body become the material of the body which make the corporeal body.

Similarly, Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence acknowledges the inescapability from representation. He posits that 'there is nothing outside of the text [there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors texte*]' meaning that, all we ever encounter is a

representation (1997, p.158). Everything is linguistic, a representation; everything exists in language and history including bodies which, however, does not make them less corporeal (Lepecki, 2006, p.132). Thus, bodies-texts, inscribed by layers of texts, become bodies of history and corporeal bodies; and the question is how do we access them?

> To exit from historical dust is to refuse the sedimentation of history into neat layers. […] Historical dust is no simple metaphor. When taken literally, it reveals how historical forces penetrate deep into the inner layers of the body: dust sedimenting the body, operating to rigidify the smooth rotation of joints and articulations, fixing the subject within overly prescribed pathways and steps, fixating movement within a certain politics of time and of place (2006, p.15).

Lepecki claims that dancing can offer access to the past, to texts and our bodies. Dancing is the force which refuses neat sedimentation and has the potential to blur the divisions between 'the sensorial and the social, the somatic and the mnemonic, the linguistic and the corporeal' (p.15). According to Andre Lepecki, the task of choreography is to rethink the process of subjectification through the body. This thesis will add that, choreography can also offer the rethinking of history through the multi-layering of texts that translation reveals (p.5). Every choreography has the potential to perform a return to the 'body as archive' that Lepecki advances. Later, I will argue, that every choreography has the potential to perform the 'dramatised' conversation that takes place between the multiple authors sedimented in the work, across mediums, places and times (Bermann, 2014). This dramatised conversation is the mode of translation which has the potential to unsettle sedimented texts as well as to invite the change which happens in the encounter with the 'other,' or the 'foreign' text/body. Lepecki speaks about the 'body as archive' and choreography as the mode through which we can contemplate the performative constitution of our bodies. This thesis will propose the body and artworks as texts in 'afterlife'[12]. The mode of translation will reveal bodies and works as parts of a

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[12]E. Chapman (2016) the translation scholar in his PhD thesis proposed the schema 'text-in-afterlife' which describes texts as part of a continuum: 'the text as it exists now, its antecedents and its translations yet to come'(p.16).

continuum, where all texts continuously translate and are being translated. The chore-ography of translation, therefore, can propose a rethinking of the performative constitution of our reality may that be our body or the present as part of a historical progression.

I take this opportunity to add that, for the purpose of this thesis I will be adopting Roland Barthes's (1990) definition of 'text' as an open-ended construction, durational process, with no reference to a specific medium whether that is dance, art, music or literature, and multi-authored.[13] The term 'text' will be used to highlight dance works and dancing bodies as constructions or networks of references, quotations, voices, and echoes, that work towards their development, and whose existence depends on the reader's contribution. The choreographies and the dancing bodies are text, made of text, and producing text.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality has become a reference point of structuralism and post-structuralism, with the work of prominent theorists such as Kristeva, Bakhtin, Barthes, Riffaterre, Genette, Derrida, Paul de Man and many others. 'Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.' (Kristeva,1986, p. 37). From quotation, citation to indirect reference (*allusion*), to loan (*emprunt*) and from Genette's plagiarism (*plagiat*) to pastiche and parody, the intertext, explicit or implicit depending on the form it assumes, is a critical element in the contextualisation of the for-

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[13]According to Roland Barthes 'text' is defined as opposed to 'work' and it is: 1.'only experienced in an activity of production'. 2. The text is 'not contained in a simple division of genres' and therefore 'poses problems of classification'. 3. 'The text practises the infinite deferment of the signified […] through a serial movement of disconnection, overlapping and variations.' 4. 'The text is plural […] woven entirely with citation, references, echoes, cultural languages, antecedent or contemporary', the text is 'quotation without inverted commas'. 5. The text 'reads without the inscription of the Father,' the text is a 'network' that is developing and so the text does't have a designated origin. 6.The text is not 'an object of consumption', it is a 'play, activity, production and practice.' The text asks the reader a practical collaboration rather than recognisability or affirmation (pp. 156-164).

eign text as well as in its decontextualisation and recontextualisation during translation. The relationship between translation and intertextuality is currently studied systematically in Translation Studies, while translation is considered by some theorists as one of the forms of intertextuality.

The translative methodology of this enquiry will suggest that every element of a choreographic work pre-exists in the same way that all texts invoke or rework other works according to Kristeva's definition of 'intertextuality.' However, applying the methodology of translation and thus introducing other works within the scope of *Les Noces*, I will explore how other texts affect, infect and reveal the afterlives of the texts in translation. This thesis does not engage with this type of 'intertextuality,' a synonym for 'influence' or 'allusion.' In the terms developed here, a 'translation' is understood to be a text that enacts a potential latency in another text. A translation expands upon an incomplete element of another text, demonstrating that text's potential to acquire a new relationship to language and history. Rather than source-hunting or tracing 'influence,' reading with an awareness of afterlife requires asking what potentialities are enacted or revealed by reading certain texts together. What matters is not the authorial intention or whether a text has a historical connection to another text. The potential exists within texts themselves, and is recognised when particular texts are read together.

Structure and method

This thesis is structured through two Chapters followed by a Conclusion. In Chapter One I examine the concept of translation as it has been philosophically interrogated by thinkers of the twentieth century mainly, Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. Through a comparative reading of Benjamin and Derrida, I propose translation as a choreographic mode of reading and making artworks. The primary texts used in this

dissertation are Walter Benjamin's 1923 essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1968) and Jacques Derrida's responses to Benjamin's essay: 'What is a "Relevant" Translation' (2001), 'Living On/Border Lines' (2004) and 'Des Tours de Babel' (2007). I examine translation as a mode of making, performing and attending choreography, as well as a production of an autonomous text which acquires its own, individual life. Translation will be further discussed through the notion of 'afterlife,' which is the state in which all texts exist, in continuous renewal and transformation. Texts in translation will also be examined through the notion of their 'translatability' which the tension between the full presence and absolute absence of meaning. Through the notions of 'afterlife' and 'translatability' texts are linked to other texts which do not necessarily belong to the same mediums and temporalities and, in this way, the proposed choreographic mode of translation will start to formulate. Secondly, by disavowing the hierarchy between original and translation through theories of oral tradition, citationality and, performativity, I will assert the schemata 'translation as performance' and 'performance as translation,' through which, I will discuss the loci of the performer and attendant as alternative modes of production.

Moreover, through the suggestion of the notion of 'equivalence' in translation, I will adopt Paul Ricœur's formula of 'constructing comparables' with a view to constructing my own choreographic 'comparables' in order to construct *Exercise: Les Noces*. The notion of 'equivalence' will also be considered in the relationship between dance and visual art in order to engage in the historical dialogue between the two mediums. Finally, in Chapter One, I will introduce the idea of 'choreographic readymades' to discuss choreography as a postproduction practice which functions within the wider field of the everyday economy of cultural exchange — where, for example, a sculpture or a music video can be considered a 'readymade' choreographic form. This practice will also

insinuate the possibility of expansion of the languages involved (visual art and dance), as systems of signification, as well as the enrichment of the forms of the mediums and their modes of display.

In Chapter Two I introduce *Les Noces* (1923), the modernist work choreographed by Bronislava Nijinska which is also the choreographic text I am translating. This Chapter begins with some historical notes on *Les Noces*, the social and political context of post-revolutionary Russia, as well as, the cultural and social influences around which Nijinska and Stravinsky developed that particular collaboration for *Ballet Russes*. In this Chapter, I will also discuss the extent of Nijinska's influence by the Russian avant-garde in order to explain my reasons for choosing to translate *Les Noce*s through certain visual artworks. Subsequently, this thesis proposes *Les Noces* as one of the first works of modernism, and Nijinska as a pioneer artist in dance history, subscribing to an alternative approach to dance historiography. Part of Chapter Two is also the live performance of *Exercise: Les Noces.*[14] Finally, applications of the choreographic theories developed in Chapter One come in the form of exercises in Chapter Two, which exemplify my studio practice, as well as, the outcomes of translation processes and theorisations as they take place across the multiple loci of choreographer, performer, and attendant.

Since the '90s the fast-growing numbers of 'Practice as Research' community and projects in the arts are cause for challenging fundamental assumptions and definitions concerning 'research' and 'knowledge' production in academia. Of course, art practice research had to face much distrust mainly for questioning established methodologies and the 'quantitative and qualitative methods' of non-art related disciplines, as well as, for being yet, another competitor in research funding (Nelson, 2013. p.4). At the same time, debates on the development of artistic research within the field of arts were attempting

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[14]Please see Appendix 1(A) and 1(B) for documentation of *Exercise: Les Noces.*

to establish modes of doing that the researcher engaged with, the role of practice in research as well as the types of outcomes that one might produce from performance practice research.

Different propositions as to the role of practice in research have been proposed in furthering knowledge and, indeed, terms have varied from 'practice-led,''practice-based' to 'studio research' and so on. Different terms have been chosen around the world that served different curricula, institutional rules, and methodologies. For example 'artistic research' was a term mainly used in visual arts. Baz Kershaw (2002) defines 'practice-based research' as the 'research through live performance practice, to determine how and what it may be contributing in the way of new knowledge insights in fields other than performance'. He continues that, 'practice as research' is the research into performance practice which determines 'how that practice may be developing new insights into or knowledge about the forms, genres, uses […] of performance itself' (p.138). Therefore 'practice-based' research is contributing new knowledge outside the field of performance whereas 'PaR' projects offer new insights solely to the medium of performance. Brad Haseman (2007), after Carole Gray, states that 'practice-led research,' which is a term widely used in Australia, 'asserts the primacy of practice' and insists on its 'on-going and persistent' nature (p. 147). Yet, by adopting 'practice-led' as a term, I would have to agree with Robin Nelson (2013, p.10) in his claim that, this specific wording might imply that knowledge is secondary to practice.

This research project lies between the terms 'practice-based' and 'practice as research' as it is indeed using practice as its key method of enquiry to offer new insights in the field of Dance and Performance Studies as well as in other fields (such as Visual Art Studies or Translation Studies) through art-making and dance performance.

This is the written record of my research that supplements and supports my practice, *Exercise: Les Noces.* This thesis does not stand as an attempt to put my practice into words. Instead, I propose that this practice in writing is the articulation and evidence of my research. Estelle Barrett (2006) notes that a common problem in research writing that the artist produces is that she tends to 'fall within the domain of criticism, a discourse that tends to focus on a connoisseurial evaluation of the finished product'(para. 2-3). Artists often reproduce in writing a report that is more a description of their creative work. As a way to overcome this problem, Barrett suggests that the artist-researcher should move away from the idea of work as a product and highlight their artistic process as their central vehicle of knowledge production. Barbara Bolt adds that writing, should be an 'exegesis' which 'provides a vehicle through which the work of art can find a discursive form'; or as Nelson suggests writing should be, a 'resonance between complementary writing and the praxis'(Nelson, 2013, p.11).[15]

For this research project, a distinction between theory and practice is impossible. This writing is also my practice and praxis and my studio practice re-invents or rediscovers the proposed theory through processes of embodiment. Therefore, I do not subscribe to the separation between theory and practice as they both include one another. Thus, I propose as the methodology of this practice-based/PaR project the methods and techniques that derive and evolve in the intersection between theoretical and practical explorations of translative methodologies. Translative practice is embedded in theory and translation theory does not exist without the practice. Philosophical theories on translation underscore the discursive form of the research and yet, they become initiators and motors of the translational/choreographic exercises of embodiment. The theories return transformed as bodily practices and choreographic methods.

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[15]This is Robin Nelson's term and it is defined as 'theory imbricated within practice' (2010, p.5)

There are four strands within translation theory that I have chosen to be further explored, embodied and applied as choreographic methods. These are the notion of 'afterlife,' the notion of 'translatability,' the notion of 'equivalence' and the relation between performance and translation.

1. 'Afterlife' is the state of continuous transformation and growth that all texts exist in. Studying a text in 'afterlife' is being able to hear/find connections and links between texts in order to reveal something else about these texts as well as about the languages which they belong to. 'Afterlife,' as described by Benjamin, and in relation to his distrust of historical progress in the study of history, is about finding links with other texts regardless of their historical causality. Through this process, texts in afterlife have the potential to reveal something else about the project of history. As such I will be able to read *Les Noces* in relation to the Russian avant-garde and its contemporary visual art project as well as in relation to certain historical narratives of modernity in dance.

2. The 'translatability' of the text is inextricably linked to its 'untranslatablility.' Derrida posits that we should always read texts as if they exist in the tension between translatability and untranslatability, between the full presence of meaning and the absolute absence of meaning. Hence, Derrida invites us to look into each text/translation and study the discrepancies, holes, and gaps that internally exist; after all, no text can be equivalent to another, as no text is ever identical to itself; no text possesses full presence. Derrida describes the indecisiveness of a sign to settle in one language. Instead of looking for texts outside the text in translation, like Derrida in this practice, I chose to 'inflate' the source text (*Les Noces)* by looking internally for gaps and voids. The copying and learning of re-performed movement will become an undoing and unlearning of the initial movement, and hence, I will create spaces and voids in the 'source' text, to enforce discontinuity and impose a state of 'babelisation'. As a result, the previous text will

suspend in time, losing its prescribed meaning and value. Although recourse to a past body, text or choreography will not be an option, yet, these fragmented glitches will have the potential to reform and perform anew.

3. The translative method of 'constructing comparables,' which I adopt from Paul Ricœur, will allow exploring ideas on 'equivalency' and 'relevancy' amongst different texts which belong to different genealogies, cultures, and temporalities, as they are traced within the reconstructive practices in dance. Furthermore, placing an understanding of all appropriating strategies (reworkings, adaptations, reconstructions, reenactments) and their performance as products of the restless cultural inscription, I seek to explore how translational practices act upon them, challenging social and historical choreographic norms across different genres and cultures. The translative methodology of 'constructing comparables' will prove to be extremely useful in finding ways to present dance as part of a historical dialogue with visual art. The idea of translating cultural products such as design objects, drawings, sculptures, photographs, to 'choreographic readymades,' has the potential to expand notions of choreography. Additionally, translation will try to transform stable objects into historical subjects, living historical entities whose performance will unravel new ways of making meaning in art. This usage, once more, will question the categorical distinction between theory and practice, as I will be able to translate works into scores and discourses and vice versa, making it difficult to uphold binary position.

4. By disavowing the hierarchy between 'original' and translation, through theories of oral tradition, citationality and performativity, I will be able to assert the schemata 'translation as performance' and 'performance as translation' as a single path with interexchangeable start and end; through the equation of the terms translation and performance, theory will become immediate and experiential to return as embodied knowl-

edge. Exploring the performance/translation relationship I aim to gain insight into the operations of translation while it materialises, embodies and performs what it promises: the encounter with the 'other' as an invitation of the 'other' to become 'self' and vice versa. Translation is proposed as a process and a rare opportunity to experience the space and time of the performances that exist during, before and after the occurrence of translation. As such, I will be able to experience and explore subjective historical trails of changes and transformations, resistances, modifications, permissions, and violations that the texts in translation endure and perform. Translation is proposed here as a choreographic practice but also as performing and attending practice. Proposing the interconnectivity between the operations of translation and performance, I will also consider appropriating strategies as discourses on authorship and spectatorship.

Taking into consideration the 'practice-based' nature of this research, this project proposes this translational choreographic methodology as theory and practice which can be applied to other disciplines and practices (other than dance) offering new ways of appreciation of archival interventions as well proposing a methodology which can be applied for making and analysing interdisciplinary projects.

Returning to PaR and the problem of documentation in performing arts in general and as evidence of research enquiry specifically, I would like to stress that this writing, as well as the videos of the performance included in the Appendix section, will inevitably become part of the translation that the reader of this document will perform. Yet, it is incredibly pertinent to stress that I chose *Exercise: Les Noces* (as a 'choreographic site')[16] to be part of this very doctoral submission. Although documentation of this performance is also included in this thesis, I regard the translational practice that will take place after the live performance an utterly different text/translation. Reading, compos-

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[16] Presented as Part of Parallax series on Sunday 29 January, 2017 at the Asylum, London

ing and eventually translating the different elements (text, video, photographs, and sound) is merely a different kind of performance to that of the attendant of the live event. This comment is not made in order to evaluate these translations/performances as one better than the other. This is not even to say that I privilege one over the other. It is simply to note the difference and to acknowledge that, from now on you are all second-degree readers, seeking and doubting. Translators of desire. Performers of desire.

Chapter One: On Translation

1.1 The afterlives of works and their translatability

So the first question I ask is why do we want to translate? What is this 'will to translate'? At the beginning of this enquiry is Water Benjamin's seminal essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1968) written in 1923, in which he questions traditional theories of translation that define its process as that of communicating meaning and intentions of an original. The purpose of translation and therefore, translation itself, is not explanatory, expository or illustrative of the source work. Benjamin states that a translation is not about communicating content (p. 69). By that he is not disputing the ability of language to communicate but, the existence of communicable, stable content. Clearly, he suggests that art is not made for a specific audience, because in that case, we would have to accept that the purpose and life of a work begins and finishes within its root cause, namely the intentions of its author; and furthermore, we would have to pre-suppose an 'ideal' receiver who comprehends 'completely' the intentions of the author. Thus, Benjamin asks if art is not perceived of as having determined meaning, why should its translation serve the reader in such ways and so transfer explicit content? Furthermore, is the purpose of translation to communicate particular cultural and temporal agendas? If the source text is clearly not made for a specific reader how is it possible to understand translation through such a reduction? Impossible indeed, and moreover such an equation would be equivalent, according to Benjamin, to a 'bad translation' (p.15). Instead, a translation, Benjamin continues, is not mere mimesis or repetition but it is an accumulative process which is working towards the growth and renewal of the original text.

Illegitimate history

Let us look closer at how the practice of traditional reconstruction in dance operates. Muriel Topaz in her essay 'Reconstruction: Living or Dead? Authentic or Phony?'(2000) argues that, in order for the reconstructor to have a responsible and productive approach towards a historical piece, one should concentrate on the cultural context of both the author and the piece, and the text which is the notation/score. They should also find detailed documentation that includes as many resources as possible, as well as, look for living witnesses for possible body-to-body transmission. Finally, the reconstructor should find dancers willing to commit themselves to the project (pp.97-98). Having to follow all the steps as described above, it seems that reconstruction is not just the product, the result of research, but also a methodology which provides a system to read and understand history. Indeed, in theatre and dance, we get to encounter history only through reconstructions. Inevitably, everyone has been acquainted with the classical theatre or ballet repertoire through their contemporary staging. It seems that reconstruction is validated by history, but also, history is produced by reconstruction. Writing history says Benjamin, does not rediscover the past but creates 'history,' which is a way of understanding the relationship to the past, or rather to the 'passed' (Mosès, p.101). Taking into account Topaz's reconstructive methodology as well as Benjamin's statement that history can only be understood through historiography, we can think of reconstruction as performing similarly to historiography. There is causality in the relationship between the two terms: reconstruction is signified by history and vice versa.

In what follows I will examine this relationship between history and traditional reconstruction through Benjamin's model of historiography and contemplate how a non-linear approach of time in historiography adds to the multiplicity of voices that exist within translation and render recourse to a source redundant.

Most of the times traditional dance reconstructions or any works that use historical citations reinforce a relation between choreographer and audience which is that of sharing information, knowledge, and memory. The reworkings of the choreographer who is bound to the canon, and therefore to a linear approach of history and time that reinforce fixed choreographic norms, depend on the value and exchangeability of the source's currency. At least this is what Ramsay Burt (2003) argues when he writes, 'in such works bodies are inscribed with cultural meaning in the ways that histories and memories are cited'(p. 41). It is quite common to read reviews praising the choreographer's or director's fidelity to the source text; even when the choreographer chooses a radical or challenging approach to a ballet work, her reconstruction is still in relation to a stable original, and thus the existence of the source text is valued as well as its authority. Therefore the choreographers, in their intended canonical reinterpretation of works 'reinforce the dominant power relations' (p.41). As for the audience, they become passive consumers who affirm their intellectual/cultural status in a pseudo-critical, self-indulgent experience of art by confirming their expectations on the basis of historical knowledge, information, and memory. Reconstructions as such inform us of their sources and reproduce the canon whether they repeat it or criticise it, not allowing the fluidity of meaning to run through and imbue or change the text. These works enter the archive with a desire to restore, in one way or another, old intentionality and not as Blocker would suggest seeking and doubting and foremost love their object of desire. Reconstructions as such, seem to echo Jameson's idea of pastiche which is that of replicating or reproducing the logic of consumer capitalism.

> Capitalist industries have proved adept at recuperating signs and forms of dissent and converting the threat of revolt into desirable, and commercially profitable lifestyles and subverting shopping. Products are marketed which seem to offer premises of wholeness, completeness and coherence that are focused to appeal to particular, identified sets of desires and aspirations (Burt, 2003, p.73).

Therefore, canonical reproductions of historical works seem to perform similarly according to Benjamin, to 'bad' translations. In Benjamin's concept of translation, there is no meaning that can be transferred since the original is always a shifting, unstable text which does not produce receivers and as an extension, capitalist consumers.

Vida Midgelow in her book *Reworking the Ballet* (2007) has looked into ballet re-workings from the Classical and Romantic repertoire posing that certain reconstructions can work towards the deconstruction of the canon. However, these operations are relational depending on the ways the works are 'received, perceived and interpreted' and therefore she underlines the importance of the reader/audience stressing the intertextual nature of the revisited choreography (p.3). In other words, Midgelow stresses the importance of the multiplicity of voices (through intertextuality) in the interpretation of a work. As I will argue later, translation is by virtue intertextual and therefore, to translate a text is foremost to accept, listen and focus on the multiplicity of voices that exist, precede and follow this text.

Ramsay Burt proposes an alternative use of history through the misfires and gaps produced by the bodies of the performers in the relation between original and reconstruction. Burt insists that 'the function of citation may, however, be primarily the experience of the performer, and their relationship to the past' and that historical citation should not be intended for the audience (2003, p.41). For Burt, the potential of choreography and dance to become sites of resistance to the normative regimes of the dance establishments lies in the use of history which is filtered through memory and the bodies of the performers.

Rebecca Schneider in 'Solo Solo Solo' (2005) speaks of 'illegitimate history' as the process of 'listening for a syncopation of intention not 'properly' resolvable in direct lin-

eage, and, more radically perhaps, joining that syncopation as a critic with one reading among many' (p.32). This 'syncopation of intention,' that seems to echo Benjamin's idea on non-linear historiography is what interests me the most; the gaps, the misinterpretations between texts, which make room for the readers's/performer's/translator's/audience's agency. To be able to read history not as a singular truth, but far from policed legitimacies, multi-authored; and yet, to be willing enough not to impose another authority, but to leave the space wide open for a multiplicity of voices to emerge. It is, therefore, important to consider the multiplicity of voices that exist within a text taking into consideration the concept of time, namely its history, or better its 'illegitimate history' that hides in the gaps of the work. Furthermore, bodily memory should function as a vital agent rather than being dismissed as non-credible access to the dance archive. Because we cannot return to an original, it is through dancing that we start to realise the performative constitution of the text. What would happen if we were to examine traditional reconstructions in ballet and theatre in terms of Benjamin's notions on historiography and translation theory?

According to Benjamin's 1940 essay, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (1968) events should be important for the ways they link and connect to other events and not due to causality. 'Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical.' Benjamin writes. 'It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated by thousands of years' (p.263). Historiography should disregard causative narratives, separating the events from their 'historical context' as singular events and placing them in what Benjamin calls 'constellation,' putting different historical events into dialogue (p.263).

'The concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogenous, empty time' (p.261) Benjamin writes, pointing out the centrality of 'history' as a linear 'filling up' of time in the post-Enlightenment European thinking. According to Benjamin we should study and understand history through singular events and not through attempts to conceptualise history as a system or reducing history to a single narrative. Benjamin's critique of historicism derives from his rejection of the past as a continuum of progress. For Benjamin, the least justifiable structure for historical comprehension is 'progress'. Historiography, for Benjamin, should approach the historical subject 'as a monad,' understanding events in their uniqueness (p.263). It is vital however to stress that, if the singularity of the event is essential, then it is impossible to completely restore or recover the past as this would compromise the uniqueness of the event (p.255).

Benjamin recommends we 'read' the connections between events, separating them from a place in 'homogenous empty time.' Returning to translation, rather than reading individual texts within their historical contexts, our reading should be informed by the connections drawn between texts — their similarities, or points of dialogue between texts. Understanding these connections would help us understand the nature of translation,[17] just as the constellation helps us understand history and the present as 'the time of the now'(p.263). The constellation proposed by Benjamin does not form a unified image, and hence, it should not be regarded as a totality; instead, a constellation is a model of reading history, encouraging connections being made between its seemingly disparate parts. The relationship between the recontextualised fragments allows for a greater understanding of the relationship between the past and the present, and thus of history itself. Radically different or remote events from the past and the present will, when

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[17]Or the purpose of translation which in the reconciliation of all languages according to Benjamin. Later I will discuss Benjamin's concept of 'pure language' and its messianic purpose.

brought together, reveal different meanings and a view of history as part of a constellation.

Benjamin's thoughts about historiography seemed to echo Peggy Phelan's claim that 'performance becomes itself only through disappearance' (1993, p.143) to the extent that an event (this is performance for Phelan) is unique and therefore, is non-repeatable. However, Benjamin's demand for the uniqueness of the event, in my opinion, does not derive from a western consumerist concept of art[18] which values the original over its descendants. Instead, the concept of 'constellation' as non-linear historiography, advances translation to an equally individual and unique event that is produced within the afterlife of the work of art. A non-linear concept of progress does not distinguish a translation from an original as one more important than the other, but renders them different. Therefore, if we combine Phelan's claim with Benjamin's rejection of linear historiography, it implies that the performance text is marked by disappearance as much as it is marked by its past or future appearances as translations. In other words, performance will never return as the same but it will definitely return, or it has somehow pre-existed as translation. Here I should also stress the importance of the individual event for Benjamin (whether that is an original or translation) as indicating 'conception of the present as the 'time of the now''(1968, p.263).

> What is at stake is not to portray literary works in the context of their age, but to represent the age that perceives them — our age — in the age during which they arose. It is this that makes literature into an organon of history; and to achieve this, and not to reduce literature to the material of history, is the task of the literary historian (1999, p.464).

In other words, reconstructing an event from the past should not lead to an understanding of the present as part of the canonical historical narrative. Benjamin, suggests

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[18]Phelan claims that complete documentation of performance is impossible and therefore this is where performance's radical stance against commodification derives from. This claim places Phelan's understanding of the art work against a consumerist Capitalist definition but unavoidably in relation to it. In other words if we are thinking of a work of art in relation to its commodification we are certainly reproducing the canon that sees art works as commodities.

a more informed reading of the individual event that includes its current translation and therefore, proposes a better understanding of the nature of 'time of the now' and history itself. Benjamin's model of 'constellation' as a method for reading and writing history could also be applied to texts if we approach them as events in afterlife. To return to his translation theory, Benjamin suggests that a text evolves in time and exists in its afterlife in the process of translation. Therefore all text in afterlife is evolved text. Whether we are dealing with an art (physical) object that may still exist or a performance (an event in time) that exists differently in time neither can be understood as they were in the past. Therefore, we can only encounter texts, or events, as different from their previous existence. What this means is that, regardless of the precise nature of a text, we can only ever understand texts as translations.

In 'The Task of the Translator' Benjamin writes: 'The life of the originals attains them to its ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering' (1968, p.72). Hence, if recourse to a previous moment is impossible, if we cannot understand a text as it was in the past then all text we encounter should be regarded as a translation and moreover, as Benjamin's model of history suggests, change occurs in the connection between the past and present. Literary critic and academic Shoshana Felman writes that 'the translation is thus not quite a cognition but, rather, a performance of historical change to which it testifies in the very process of achieving it, of putting the change into effect'(1992, p. 163). By removing translation from 'homogenous empty time,' we start to comprehend translation as the performance of a text which marks the changes in the text; thus, translation is not the agent that makes the changes but demonstrates what has already changed and puts the changes into work. As a result, 'historical change cannot fully come into cognition but testifies to its own process of occurring' (p.163).

Attempting to translate *Les Noces* by linking only to Nijinska in an attempt to integrate it into a single narrative of dance history or more precisely to ballet history, will only ever be partially successful. For Benjamin, the attempt to reconstitute a whole is fruitless because, as exemplified by the 'broken vessel' described in 'The Task of the Translator,' such a whole never existed. This applies to history as much as to text: 'The angel [of history] would like to stay [...] and make whole what has been smashed,' writes Benjamin, but "the pile of debris before him grows skyward" (1968, p.258). Furthermore, attempting to recreate the past, following Benjamin, is 'unethical' as it remains within the logic that valorises only history's 'victor'[19]and hence, benefits 'the rulers' (p. 256; see Section VII). Benjamin asks us to avoid narrative history but use historical fragments to make 'constellations', 'to blast a specific era out of the homogenous course of history,' drawing new connections in the present to blast open 'the entire course of history' (p.263).

The histories of texts and their afterlives are not linear, but spread in multiple directions at once, with multiple centres. Texts remain fragmentary and should be put together to ask what happens if we think of these texts as linked.

Afterlife

Benjamin argues that original and translation should be two different texts that hardly approach each other.

> Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point, with this touch rather than with the point setting the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity, a translation touches the original lightly and only

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[19]This kind of reading has already placed *Les Noces* in ballet history and Bronislava Nijinska as its choreographer. This study is trying to expand the work's definitions in the already established dance historical narrative proposing *Les Noces* as one of the first works of dance Modernity and Nijinska as the female pioneer choreographer who shoot the ballet establishment by bringing within its scope alternative modes of production in choreography in terms of form, training, thinking and so on.

at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux (1967, p.80)

He thus, establishes that a translation has no significance whatsoever to the original, has no effect on the original work. Translation moves away from the intentions of the original text, and as a product is not mimesis, a representation or a copy, but acquires its own life, a distinctively different one from that of the source text. Nevertheless, one asks, what kind of life is that? Is it yet another life of an 'original' or instead, a derivative, secondary, provisional and dare I say, parasitical? To answer that, I will have to examine the relation between original and translation which also brings me to the assertion of the concept of 'afterlife' as the state of perpetual translation, as discussed by Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida.

Benjamin in 'The Task of the Translator' is in search of the relation between original and translation when he states that a 'translation issues from the original — not so much from its life as from its afterlife' (p.71). For Benjamin when a work is translated, is a sign that it has reached a certain stage of life and this stage is 'afterlife'. Furthermore, Benjamin's thesis implies that a text must already be within afterlife to be translated, thus translation designates a state of afterlife to the work. He adds, 'the idea of life and afterlife in works of art should be regarded with entirely unmetaphorical objectivity' (p. 71). After Benjamin has established the essence of the life of works, he makes a vital connection between life and the concept of history. Life for Benjamin is not solely regarded as biological corporeality but also as an attribute 'to everything that has a history[...] the range of life must be determined by history rather than by nature' (p.71). Therefore 'life' is to be understood neither metaphorically nor spiritually, but purely objectively, not limited to organic life. In other words, for Benjamin history defines life and it is in this sense that he explains the historical framework of the life of works of art.

The term *fortleben* is the word that Benjamin has used repeatedly in his 1923 essay on translation. *Fortleben* as a word is a German compound: the second component is formed from *leben*, which as a verb means 'to live', and as a noun means 'life.' The linguist and translator Caroline Disler (2011) argues that *fortleben*, which has been translated to English as 'afterlife' is a highly problematic and obscure term that is difficult to find equivalent in English because of its first component 'fort' which in English cognates to 'forth.'[20] According to Disler the English word 'afterlife' that Harry Zohn has used in his translation, and it is consequently, the most popular English equivalent word is thus, perhaps misleading. 'After-life' could imply being temporally secondary to life, and in my opinion this is not the case for Benjamin.[21] Disler keeps the term in its initial German version as an untranslatable[22] and in her attempt to redefine *fortleben* and quite convincingly argues:

> *Fortleben* is transformation and renewal of the living. This is one of the key phrases in attempting to comprehend this enigmatic word. There has been no death, no damage, no catastrophe to the original. There is no afterlife. There is no survival. Neither is there a simple continuation of the original that was. There is *Fortleben*, metamorphosis, evolution, transformation, renewal, renova-

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[20]'In other words, *fort* originally denoted a forward progression in space, had come by Benjamin's era to designate separation and distancing in space but had retained the connotation of progression and continuation in expressions involving time. It is thus tempting to conclude that *Fortleben* could mean 'continuing life.' Yet, had Benjamin simply wished to describe the concept of an identical life that continues unchanged then he could have chosen the much more common and familiar *Weiterleben*. If he had wanted to indicate "another life after" the (life of) the original, he could have chosen the more transparent *Nachleben*. If he preferred the implication of 'survival,' he could have maintained his use of the very common *Überleben*. To express the idea of 'renewal,' he could have (and has in a totally different context in Die *Aufgabe*, chosen *Aufleben*' (Disler, 2011).

[21]'The words used by Benjamin and Derrida contain different implications. Benjamin's *Überleben* and Derrida's *survie* might be rendered in English, as 'overlife.' Both the German and French words use prepositions, *über* and *sur* – over, on, above – rather than the temporal 'after.' *Überleben* and *survie* both suggest the sense of following and going beyond 'life' that is also implied by 'afterlife,' but the German and French words do not imply being temporally secondary, as 'afterlife' does' (Chapman, 2016, p.14).

[22]I am not, however, going to follow Disler's proposal in keeping *fortleben* untranslated, instead I am going to be using the generally accepted equivalent word 'afterlife'. Yet, the purpose of this discussion is to examine the afterlife of 'afterlife' and consider possible texts that define its historical trajectory.

tion, supplementation. And, translation is a sign of this *Fortleben* stage (Disler, 2011).[23]

Hence, not only is an original moving away from its source acquiring its own life away from the intention of its author, but the work of art, in its afterlife, thus in the state that translation occurs, changes by definition as it enters a stage of metamorphosis, evolution, renewal, transformation, renovation, and supplementation. Therefore, and as we have established earlier, the original is not a fixed, stable text. Because translation is a sign of afterlife, the clear implication is that the original and the translation cannot resemble each other. Striving for similarity is pointless because original and translation are inherently different. Therefore through the concept of 'afterlife,' Benjamin disassociates translation from the original rendering issues of similarity or resemblance moot. Furthermore, if we consider Benjamin's concept of 'history', the temporal superiority of the original does not assume superior status over its translation. Thus, translation has been liberated from an assumed relation of similarity or resemblance to the original. The next question I would like to consider is how 'after' is the afterlife for Benjamin?

Derrida seems to have an appropriate answer in his discussion of *fortleben* and *uberleben* as 'living on,' prolonged life, continuous life and 'sur-vival' in his essays on Benjamin and translation, 'Living On/Borderlines' (2004), 'Des Tours de Babel' (2007) and 'What is a "Relevant" Translation' (2001). Derrida states that 'living on' is 'neither life nor death,' and 'is not the opposite of living, just as it is not identical with living,' and in 'Des Tours de Babel' he poses that in a state of 'sur-vival' [*survie*], 'the work does not simply live longer, it lives more and better, beyond the means of its author' (2004, p. 110). Hence, the afterlife is not a secondary 'life' that comes after an already completed

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[23]'It must also be clarified that although the meaning of *Überleben* is unambiguously 'survival,' at no previous point in his essay had Benjamin alluded to, implied, hinted at, or in any way indicated the death, destruction or any damage of the original. The idea of translation as a destructive process, or the translated text as a manifestation of 'survival' of some catastrophe is therefore not within the tenor of Benjamin's thought process' (Disler, 2011).

life. Textual afterlife is about exceeding and extending life, an 'over-living' which suggests an excess of life rather than a later life that comes after completion or destruction of a previous one.

The idea that texts in afterlife are in the process of change which also results in a plethora of new links made underlines the intertextual character of translation. This study will engage partially with 'intertextuality' as far as it is a synonym for 'influence' or 'allusion,' however, it is mostly interested in translation which expands upon the always incomplete text, demonstrating the text's potential to acquire a new temporal and textual relationships. Therefore, understanding the notion of the 'afterlife' is foremost about looking for the potentiality enacted or revealed by placing disparate texts together. As we are constantly being reminded by Benjamin, what matters is not the focus on temporal or authoritarian agendas; in other words, I am not solely trying to find historical connections to another text; but subsequently, to reveal the potentials that lie within *Les Noces* and in its margins with other texts which are recognised only when these particular fragments/texts are put together.

Translation, Benjamin insists, is a 'mode,' a process and a practice, which signifies the target text in the same way as the source. He states 'the task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original' (1968, p.77) 'not as reproduction but as a harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself' (p.79). It is the 'mode of intention', a similar effect to the original that the translator is after. Therefore, translation should not be considered a passive textual transposition that merely allows clear vision of the original but an active, dynamic process that deals directly with 'the central reciprocal relationship between languages'(p.72). Through Benjamin's transla-

tion theory and his messianic purpose of reconciliation of languages, translators, as Disler very accurately suggests, become 'creative agents'(2011, p.196).

Though this Benjamian reading, I begin to organise and develop a model for choreographing based on an understanding of texts as necessarily linked to other texts despite the historical progress or their contextual belonging. These connections allow me to structure the choreographic mode of translation, and reveal its immense potentiality through expansion, proposing new relationships between the languages (of dance and visual art in this case) at work, between eras and mediums.

Translatability

Translation in 'afterlife' is the demonstration of a text's potential to acquire a new relationship to other texts and languages. If translation is part of the afterlife of a text, 'translatability' for Benjamin is an attempt to understand the text's potential for change. Benjamin states translatability is the manifestation of 'a special significance inherent in the original' (p.71). The 'special significance' is made clear not by the text's translation, but in its translatability, this is, its potential for change.

Here I want to pause and ask what if we were to think of translatability in relation to Butler's definition of performativity?[24] What if the ability of a work to translate is neither in the capacity of a translator nor in the greatness of its making/author, but it is located as a possibility in the social matrix of contexts that saturate the text as a reiteration? Translatability then, as the inherent ability of the text to repeat, but to repeat differently. Thus, the translator enacts the idea of translatability not by communicating the meaning of the original work, but, on the contrary, by repetition which is a deformation

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[24]Judith Butlet in *Bodies that Matter* describes performativity as 'that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains'. Later I will use the relation of performance to translation to argue against the original/translation distinction but also discuss the performative potential of translation that arises in the oratorical paradigm

or even destruction of the work in so far as it has been the expression of an individual intention. However, I will return to this conversation about performativity and translation later in this thesis.[25]

Similarly the importance of translatability is picked up from Benjamin and developed by Derrida as not merely the potential for translation, but as the text's call for translation (Benjamin,1968, p.71; Derrida, 2007, p. 211). 'If the original calls for a complement,' writes Derrida, 'it is because at the origin it was not there without fault, full, complete, total, identical to itself' (Derrida, 2007, p. 211). Derrida and Benjamin, both agree that the text is never a totality, complete within itself — if text were a totality translation would be impossible. Derrida has repeatedly insisted that no text is self-identical or self-contained, as the production of textual meaning participates in the play of *différance*. There is no ultimate referent as signs only ever point to other signs, 'meaning' is always deferred, and only exists as the difference between signs; meaning is a continual process of difference and deferral. A self-contained text would be unrecognisable as a text, as it negates 'iterability' and therefore re-citation, repetition, and changes in meaning (1988, pp.47-50). If an untranslatable text ever existed it would be incomprehensible, impossible to copy or repeat any of its elements. Thus, if there is no untranslatable text, then, all texts must possess translatability, by virtue of being incomplete and thus, all text must possess translatability in order to be text. In other words, if translatability defines textuality, then all artworks are incomplete by being texts, and therefore possess translatability.

The scholar E. Chapman (2016) after reading Benjamin and Derrida comparatively suggest that all text is in constant and eternal translation. If according to Derrida all text possesses translatability and if by following Benjamin all text in order to be translat-

[25]Please see sections 'Translation as Performance' and 'The Performative Translation' where the theories of performativity and the performative potential of translation are discussed in detail.

ed must be within afterlife, that means to possess translatability is to be in afterlife, which also results to the conclusion that all text must already be in afterlife: already translated and in a state of potential translation. All text must be in constant and eternal translation with no residue to a stable identity. As Chapman posits 'all life of a text is 'afterlife' or 'overliving'; afterlife never 'begins' or 'ends.' The text's 'life' exists only inasmuch as it has already been surpassed, because the text is never identical to itself and has always already entered the state of potential for change' (p.28).

Derrida goes one step further and implies a redefinition of translatability in writing that,

> A text lives only if it lives on [*sur-vit*], and it lives on only if it is at once translatable and untranslatable (always 'at once...and...': *hama*, at the 'same' time). Totally translatable, it disappears as a text, as writing, as a body of language [*langue*]. Totally untranslatable, even within what is believed to be one language, it dies immediately. Thus triumphant translation is neither the life nor the death of the text, only or already its living on, its life after life, its life after death. The same thing will be said of what I call writing, mark, trace and so on. It neither lives nor dies; it lives on (2004, pp.82-83).

Derrida's claim implies that all text exists in the tension between being 'totally translatable' and 'totally untranslatable,' and he defines this tension as 'translatability.' Not every text is translatable but 'at once translatable and untranslatable' (2004, p.82). If all life is an over-living, afterlife too is the tension between translatability and untranslatability. Derrida's claim that every text in afterlife exists between those two extremes is to acknowledge that every text exists between the total absence or the impossible presence of the totality of meaning. In other words, this tension is to be able to read *Les Noces* as all choreography ever made and to be made and as non-choreography (and this reading is limiting *Les Noces* to its source language which is dance). That claim could go as far as to suggest that an understanding of *Les Noces* in the tension between translata-

bility and untranslatability is being able to read *Les Noces* as every text ever made and to all texts to come, as well as a non-text.

Acknowledging *Les Noces* as singular and multiple, while looking for the gaps between the texts involved in translation, and focussing at all points on potentiality is what this project is all about. *Les Noces* has already been going through afterlife and, on the other hand, it has never been singular, thus, not a translation. Benjamin says that change exists between the past and the present; what we encounter is always a translation since the original is unrecoverable. Every occurrence of *Les Noces* has been a translation, but that can only mean different, more prosperous, greater but definitely not inferior. Even *Les Noces's* most 'faithful' performance is a translation — a text is never identical to itself since the context within which we encounter them in is always different. Every translation, staging or performance of *Les Noces* is not changing *Les Noces,* just renders the changes visible. *Les Noces* is constantly becoming multiple other texts, simultaneously changing in various ways in the afterlife as changes occur on top of changes. *Les Noces* is multiple and singular, nothing and everything I have ever seen. This study is not about offering another translation as 'historisism' of *Les Noces*. The purpose of this thesis is to put to work the mode of translation and therefore to look for the interconnections that exist within the texts that comprise *Les Noces* as well as to look for the 'other,' the 'foreign' texts which translate *Les Noces* and possibly give a different significance to the work. This attempt is all about acknowledging *Les Noces* in its singularity, as a radical monad, as nothing else ever made as well as totally transparent and contiguous to other texts in the way that fulfils the other texts' potentials. This attempt is also formulating a choreographing methodology which is that of translation; a methodology which is about connecting texts, mediums and eras in a non-hierarchical fashion in order to speak of the

immense potentiality that lies in the newly expanded life with the other, the foreign text, medium, and era.

1.2 Against Originality

Performance as Translation

Benjamin, following the previous discussion, seems to distinguish two different types of texts: originals and translations. Although very different as two adjoined fragments of the same vessel[26] and freed from any temporal hierarchy Benjamin, according to Derrida, 'repeats the foundation of the law' (2007, p. 217). This is meant both in terms of the 'quasi-transcendental law': Benjamin reinscribes the sense of 'presence' Derrida wants to deconstruct, and in the positive law: Benjamin upholds the distinction on which copyright law rests (p.217). Derrida states that if recourse to a previous event is not possible and thus, the previous event is undiscoverable, how is it possible to make a distinction between translation and original? The fact that Benjamin acknowledges such a distinction, for Derrida, is exhibiting 'the possibility for copyrighted works and author, the very possibility by which positive law claims to be supported' (p.217). The hierarchical opposition that privileges the original and its author over translation and translator is what the translation studies scholar and academic Kaisa Koskinen calls 'the most paralysing dichotomy' (1994, p.446). Koskinen posits that the binary original/translation that our thinking has been conditioned effects our awareness regarding certain presuppositions that lay beneath the theories. Rosalind Krauss makes a similar statement in her essay 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde'(1986). After describing the experience of watching a film documenting the 1978 cast of *The Gates of Hell*, she concludes that 'to some—though hardly all—of the people sitting in that theater watching the casting of *The Gates of Hell*, it must have occurred that they were witnessing the making of a fake.'

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[26]'Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel' (Benjamin,1968, p.78).

Her answer to the question she poses about whether one can consider original a work which was produced so long after the artist's death in 1917, and which was based on a cast that had never been fixed in a final arrangement, is a provocative 'neither-yes-nor-no'. 'The cast had the legal authority of Rodin's bequest to the French State of both the works in his possession and reproduction rights, but the lack of a lifetime cast or even a definitive arrangement of the plaster suggests that *all* the casts of *The Gates of Hell* are examples of multiple copies that exist in the absence of an original' (as cited in Buskirk, p.73).

As we have seen so far, texts are always moving away from themselves, never have a 'connection' to their authors, and never have a stable identity. This applies to all texts, and therefore to both translations and originals and so such distinction easily collapses. Hence, all texts exist as, and therefore are translations. Yet, in a quotidian sense, things are perceived quite differently. I have chosen to discuss the concept of 'originality' through notions of 'performance' and 'performativity' that will lead us to the formulas of 'translation as performance' and 'performance as translation' which will prove extremely pertinent in discussing works of dance. The connection between performance and translation will enable the discussion of the three loci of the choreographer, performer, and attendant as three distinct sites that perform translation. Hence, I will discuss translation as the textual production that persists in the making, performing and attending of a work. Secondly, the link between performance and translation will suggest a 'dramatised' conversation which takes place between the intertextual — the already existent and the newly invited voices of the text in translation. Being able to connect texts as well as being able to read the interconnectivity of texts as a discussion, will allow this conversation to expand between mediums and eras with a view to testing and expanding upon their previously, foreclosed grounds and definitions.

Usually, we understand translation as a work which is always in relation to another already existing work. The translator is never in front of a blank page; intertextuality and post-structuralism question the existence of such a thing as a blank page. The artist does not look into her own intellectual banks for inspiration; instead she is already working on a text made by someone else. International Law defines such works as 'derivative' which, nevertheless, are protected as originals. The Law professor Paul Goldstein in *International copyright: Principles, Law and Practice* (2001) states:

> (v) Derivative Works (Including Translations, Adaptations, and Arrangements). Article 2(3) of the Berne Convention provides that "[t]ranslations, adaptations, arrangements of music and other alterations of a literary or artistic work shall be protected as original works without prejudice to the copyright in the original work." Article L. 112-3 of the French Intellectual Property Code includes "translation, adaptations, transformations or arrangements of works of the mind" as copyrightable subject matter. The German Act provides for the protection of "[t]ranslations and other adaptations of a work which constitute personal intellectual creations of the adapter." The British Act assimilates the full range of derivative works into its basic protection of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works, and the U.S. Act defines "derivative work" as "a work based upon one or more preexisting works, such as a translation, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgement, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed or adapted (p.173).

Derivative works are defined in opposition to the creation of 'original' works, which are not supposed to recreate an already existent text substantially. However, translation is also original because it produces a new text — not a copy of the source text, but a text which, while different in appearance, is deemed equivalent to that of the source text. Thus, translation is both original and not original, invention and not invention. It therefore complicates notions of authorship.

The concept of originality is only a recent formation, contemporary to the invention of authorship and the development of copyright law. Professor Mark Rose, the writer of *Authors and Owners* (1993), informs us that originality is traced back to the Re-

naissance as an asset of the genius of the author. It was not until the eighteenth century that the representation of originality as a cultural value was integrated with the author's proprietorial rights (p.6). 'Copyright is founded on the concept of the unique individual who creates something original and is entitled to reap a profit from those labors.' (p. 2) Literary works (and as an extension all artworks) entering a market depend on their originality, that is on the originality/creativity of the author, which translates into the capacity of merchandising their rights so as their works become profitable commodities. Hence, it is during the eighteenth century that the aesthetic ideal of originality is, for the first time, inextricably fused with an economic demand for originality.

> Thus the concept of the historically transcendent masterpiece, the notion of the work that speaks to us directly, person to person, across the ages disappears, and along with it goes the notion of the creative genius, the autonomous author (Rose, 1993, p.3).

Therefore it is during the eighteenth century that originality emerges as a cultural construction to be further examined and treated as such via post-structuralism and theories of intertextuality.

In 1957 Albert Lord wrote the book *The Singer of Tales* (2000) in which he advances the hypothesis and research of his Harvard teacher, Milman Parry on 'oral tradition.' Besides the obvious tension between orality and writing which I will not discuss here, Lord suggests homogeneous and multiple definitions of authorship and originality in Homeric poetry through research of traditional singers of the Balkan peninsula. Not one, but multiple authors, through the process of the embodied performance of singing, have succeeded in transmitting, transferring, transporting the first known piece of Western epic poetry. Lord discovers glimpses of Homeric poetry in the 'craft'[27] of traditional Yugoslav singers whom he met, exploring their performances during the 1950s. Narra-

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[27] I chose the word 'craft' as opposed to 'art' because I want to stress that the traditional singers do not perceive themselves as artists/authors of the work they perform, but as performers whose artistry is similar to that of the craftsmen.

tive, structure, and language are just some of the features which mark the performances of the songs, leaving their traces of the past in the structure of the songs, resembling the dendrochronological rings inside tree trunks. Characterising Homeric poetry as songs 'in flux' (p.151), Lord describes the singer as an author who is not 'original' since 'The truth of the matter is that our concept of 'the original,' of 'the song,' simply makes no sense in oral tradition' (p.101). Instead, he invites the reader to imagine a poet, a singer who remakes and recomposes what she knows as she performs; a performative translation; a singer who perceives oneself as a mediator rather than the creator and whose performance is, nonetheless, always original and always descendant with impossible and unsubstantial recourse to a singular beginning.

> The real difficulty arises from the fact that, unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity. We find it difficult to grasp something that is multiform. It seems to us necessary to construct an ideal text or to seek an original, and we remain dissatisfied with an ever-changing phenomenon. […] From one point of view, each performance is an original. From another point of view, it is impossible to retrace the work of generations of singers to that moment when some singer first sang a particular song (Lord, 2000, p.100).

In Lord's terms performance is both the site of originality and citationality, singular and multiple as the singer is always singing simultaneously specific and generic songs. The singer is transferring the voice of the predecessors as well as incorporating her own words, meaning and syntax into the song, leaving one's own trace and signature. The oral singer is not interested in creating something new, and yet, she is offering a new interpretation: a 'performance as translation'.[28]

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[28]This is not a practice which was specific to epic poetry; performances varying from monodic to choral, with or without instrumental accompaniment were the main means to present lyric poetry in archaic Greece too. As Millman Parry himself states in 1932, Sappho's poetry is related to oral compositional techniques. However, placing her in a more specific performance frame is much more difficult. (Garner, 2011, pp.413-415) As Scott Garner (after Andre Lardinois) observes, it is important to stress that the perception of herself as an artist is more of that of the performer rather than that of the author: 'Sappho herself imagined her own fame and that of her subjects as carrying on through the memory of her poetry's actual performance rather than through textualized transmission' (2001, p.415).

Going back to the previous discussion on translation and being reminded of Derrida's assertion that translatability and afterlife are inextricably connected, one can think of the traditional Yugoslav songs as texts in the afterlife. Their 'performance as translation' throughout the years marks the transference and growth of the text/song and confesses this notion of 'over-living' where the potential for change is always and continuously enacted. Hence, if we try to compare the performance of the dancer in a choreography/translation with that of the singer 'in flux' we realise that the performer is a translator and her agency is equally important to the text as that of the author/choreographer. The performer authors the work as much as the choreographer by donating her body to the work. It is through the performer's body that the changes to the text occur and become visible. Individual performances though do not 'create' afterlife, or donate extended life to an 'original,' but show how the process of change occurs in relation to a particular text. The performance equally marks the afterlife of the work along with the choreographer's text. Where does such a statement leave the genius of the author then?

Much earlier, Roland Barthes, in his legendary essay 'The Death of the Author' (1967) disavows the creator role acknowledging their regime as resting on 'the capitalist ideology' and denunciating the culture that 'tyrannically' is 'centred on the author' (para. 2). Instead, he recalls the primitive societies where 'narrative is never undertaken by a person, but by a mediator, shaman or speaker, whose "performance' may be admired (that is, his mastery of the narrative code), but not his genius' (para. 2).

'Performance as translation' can speak of an alternative, fluid mode of authorship which is that of the performance; 'performance as translation' is a process, a mode which acknowledges authorship as performative and therefore, an author is something we 'do' rather something we 'are'. In 'performance as translation' the performer/author is not conscious of her role as it is a role which is always drifting, in a state of constant

negotiation, not able to consolidate in one singular subjectivity and yet, powerful enough to mark the changes in the text in translation.

This concept of 'performance as translation' which works towards the growth and renewal of the text-in-translation and at the same time disavows the role of the author as originator is evident in *parades & changes, replays* (2008) a work of Anne Collod who re-works Anna Halprin's *Parades and Change*s from 1965.

Parades and Changes (1965) is Anna Halprin's first 'collective creation' and one of her most seminal works which inspired many Judson Dance Theater choreographers including Trisha Brown and Yvonne Rainer. The work was based on composer's Morton Subotnick's scores which consisted of actions that transformed a dancer into a musician, and vice versa.

The initial score provided a flexible structure for the artist from more than one discipline to work hand-in-hand together. The choreography was nothing but a complex network of scores which revealed the open-ended structure and potential of the work. The dancers used these scores as the building blocks of the performance. The performer's tasks consisted of a selection of instructions describing several parades: the parade of the ritual of dressing and undressing, the parade of dialogues and the parade of a paper soundscape (Collod, 2016). *Parades and Changes* meticulously analyses the process of the performance, the surroundings, action and interaction, and the performer. Between 1965 and 1967, Anna Halprin presented 12 versions of this work. When premiered in Stockholm in 1965 reviews where celebratory since the nudity involved in the work was characterised as 'ceremony of trust.' Yet, when the work was performed in New York, due to the nudity involved, Halprin was arrested, and the piece was banned for 20 years (Rocco, 2009).

In 2008 and more than 40 years later, French choreographer Anne Collod revisited, interpreted and translated the work with the help of both Halprin and Subotnick. In *parades & changes, replays*, which I saw at the Southbank Centre as part of the *Move: Choreographing you* (2010) exhibition, six performers revised the piece anew. 'You know you will not watch the original, of course,' Collod says. 'That's why I made this project: to keep it alive' (Kourlas, 2009).

Collod has long been interested in aspects of dance history: she co-founded the organisation *Quatuor Albrecht Knust*, which was dedicated to re-creating 20th century works. In the case of *Parades,* Ann Collod states:

> The piece has always been going back and forth between our work and Anna's feedback and not trying to do as they were doing in the past, because that is impossible and not so interesting, and at the same time, not going into something totally new (Kourlas, 2009).

The first time that Halprin saw the revived piece she was disappointed as she thought it was too similar to the 'original.' Her approach towards her own work was not so much about preserving the past but instead to resist 'repertorisation' through mimesis and a melancholic-historiographic compulsion to repeat. Allowing this reading of 'performance as translation' to *parades & changes, replays* allows 'other' texts, including Collod's, the performers' to inform the afterlife of the 1965 work. However that was Halprin's intention all along; she never wanted *Parades and Changes* to result in one performance which the performers would repeat night after night. Instead, she insisted that the work would be performed each night differently (Rocco, 2009). Therefore Collod, after Halprin's encouragement, approached the initial score as the primitive shaman in order to reach its potentiality, producing friction instead of coherence between the old and the new version of the work. That particular approach was also reflected in the performers' backgrounds; the cast was composed of artists and choreographers, including Alain Buffard, DD Dorvillier and Vera Mantero. Not just the reconstructor's but several

translations were enabled to converse as the performers were equally choreographers, makers, authors.

> 'In France, Anna's work was not known when I started,' Collod says. 'A lot of people told me, 'It's totally has-been,' or 'It's going to be something for a museum.' And I knew the piece was really not about that, but to be sure that people understood it was something related to history—not from a museum point of view—I decided to work with choreographers who were known as today's choreographers. That was a way to affirm that it was a current reinterpretation and that I was not pretending I was reconstructing the piece'(Kourlas, 2009).

Similarly to Benjamin Halprin and Collod do not believe that recourse to previous moments in time is possible or productive. What they want to offer is a translation of the work. And yet one asks what did we see in 2010? How did we, as the audience, understand and translate these series of parades and changes that happened on stage 40 years after their initial performance? In what follows I aim to remember my own experience of *parades & changes, replays* from 2010 in order to examine the translatability of the work through the eyes of an audience member such as myself.

The first sound is a loud cacophony that comes from all places around the auditorium but the stage. Slowly, individual voices while shouting, crying, reciting memories come on stage to combine and unify. This is how *parades & changes, replays* begins in 2010 in Queen Elizabeth Hall, by Anne Collod, and guest artists.

Ordinary tasks such as walking with heavy steps, hugging or the famous 'dressing/undressing' tasks — which, was the cause of censorship of the work in the United States — eliminates the boundaries between dance and life, recalling Marcel Duchamp and his readymades. Common, recognisable, and functional gestures become a choreography which celebrates collectivisation placing viewers and performers at the same level; 'performance as translation' in action, where performers and audience equally become the translators of the work and practise democracy in participating, marking and authoring the afterlife of all the parades and changes that are taking place. All the elements of the

show perform and translate as subjects on their own. The light, the dialogues, the costumes, and the performers appear on stage in a parade. Classical headlamps, small ammunition or balloons in suspension are displayed next to shoes and hats of all kinds. The traditional relationship between performers and scenography is questioned, and the conventional hierarchies are abolished to the extent that objectivity overflows to the subjective. The slow pace of the dressing/undressing task unravels choreographies of verticality, balance, fluidity and the continuity of the movement. This double reading of every movement as mundane and choreographic, this possibility of the simple and ordinary gesture which also unravels as an extraordinary dance, allows glimpses of the multiplying and accumulative process of the afterlife of the 1965 work and paves the way for us to imagine anew, moving and collective forms. In fact, *parades & changes, replays* is a model in the sense of re-thinking history of performance shaped through alternative modes of postproduction (such as the proposed translation). Halprin's and Collod's intentions resembled the mode of translation as it was practised during the ancient, pre-copyright times where the artist would freely change the original to make it fit contemporary conditions. With a review of *Parades and Changes*, Anne Collod as a performer/translator and the performers extend the spirit of an era where democratic ambitions involved and evolved choreography in a quest for experimentation on collectivity and equality. However, the choreographer/performer/translator/attendant in 2010 is also asked to take possibly into consideration, more globally this time, the fragility and the uncertainty of our contemporary situation in terms of our relational, political and artistic trajectories.

Speaking of the translatability or rather the untranslatability of *Parades and Changes* I would like to stress the importance of the existence of a score as the springboard for the afterlife of the work. Therefore I would like to highlight that the translation of a

piece of writing to choreography involves a process of ambivalence, of attractions and repulsions between the literal and dance texts which undoubtedly invites friction (Brandstetter, 2011, p.125). Hence, is it possible that the performative potential of Halprin's work lies in the fact that *Parades and Changes* exists initially as a score? Romeo Castellucci has a similar view about transferring literature to the theatre as he explains to Nicholas Ridout in a question regarding his inter-semiotic translation[29] of *The Divine Commedy* (1320).

> The texts that aren't made for the theatre are somehow more available, and simpler if it's possible to use that word, because they're a desert. Because *The Divine Comedy* is a desert that's made up of a completely filled space, it's a completely saturated space, saturated with imagination. The saturation necessarily becomes a sort of field in which everything is possible. (Laera, 2014, p. 99)

This friction, this state of untranslatability due to the fact that *Parades and Changes* exists as a score, allows for the potential of the gaps and obstacles (created from the translation of words to movement) to be creatively filled or surpassed, identifying improvisation and teamwork as experimental processes. This idea of untranslatability, which here is understood as a creative force through the existence of the work as a score, returns to this idea of tension that all texts exist in. Yet, through Collod's and Halprin's example, this tension could be understood as an 'ethical openness' of the work. The notion of 'ethical openess' will be discussed later, in relation to the idea of the 'ethical project' understood and experienced as an 'interruption of selfhood'; and thus as a practice of making, performing and attending open to alterity.[30]

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[29]As Margarita Laera notes, in the introduction of her book *Theatre and Adaptation* (2014) and following Roman Jakobson's classification of translational practices, Castellucci's productions *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso (2008)* are intersemiotic translations which are the translations that happen between two different sign-systems (p.5).

[30]Both Derrida and Butler rely on specific 'foreignizing' strategies in their translation theories. As Butler posits 'the dominant discourse will have to alter by virtue of admitting the 'foreign' vocabulary into its lexicon' (2000,p.168)

Translation as Performance

The first thing that came to my mind right after reading Lord's book about the traditional Yugoslav songs is the word *ερμηνεία* [erminía] which in Modern Greek is often used to describe the performance of an artist (usually of a singer or actor). According to *Lexicon of Modern Greek* (Babiniotis, 1998), one of the definitions of *ερμηνεία* is 'the performance of a role, in the theatre or cinema, by an actor or of a music score by a musician.'[31] Indeed, the term often constitutes an accomplishment or a reference to the performing proficiency of the performer. A similar definition is found in English for the transitional verb 'to interpret' which is 'to represent by means of art**:** bring to realisation by performance or direction <interprets a role>' (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2011). However, the word 'hermeneia' (interpretation) has a very long history as the academic Eugene Vance suggests during the 'Roundtable on Translation' (1985):

> In Greek thought, the term *hermeneia* signified not so much the return, by a way of exegesis, to a kernel of hidden meaning within a shell, but more the act of extroversion by the voice, the natural instrument of the soul. It is an active and prophetic productivity which is not connoted by the Latin term interpretation. For the Greeks, the poetic performance of rhapsodes was a "hermeneutic" performance (Derrida, 1985, p.136).

Hence for Vance 'hermeneia' is much closer to a 'doing,' a performative act of the voice rather than a 'saying,' that is, an exegesis or transference of hidden meaning. The 'prophetic productivity' that Vance advances bears many similarities with the afterlives of works in the sense that they mark the future; this is the continuation of the work as a production. This production, this performance is the afterlife, the growth of the work that is put forward. This productivity is also the translatability of the work; the performative potential of the text which inevitably performs difference as a revelation. Vance goes on suggesting that the term 'translation' should be reconsidered in relation to 'hermeneia' as it has become 'greatly impoverished today' (p.136).

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[31]This is my translation.

So what happens if we think of translation as performance? If translation has been marked by performance as Vance suggests? Translation then too, as it has already been argued, is always citational and always original: not just secondary or derivative but performative. A life becoming in the making, discursive, not prescribed or pre-decided: 'Translation as Performance'.

The 'hermeneutic performance' is not an unknown concept to Translation Studies. The translator Edith Grossman has used the exact same words to describe the task of the translator as similar to that of the actor where 'source' text and theatrical script have comparable functions. Grossman goes as far as to suggest that translation is an auditory process where she can hear the voices of the author and the text in her head which she then interprets with her own voice to her audience (Grossman, 2010, pp. 11-12). Translation becomes her stage where the 'hermeneutic performance' takes place which also leads us to a perception of translation as theatrical in general; to a scene of gestures that maintain and justify the exchange of signs and meanings in the afterlife of texts. Therefore, the performer/choreographer/spectator/translator while 'performing on stage' — theatre stage, rehearsal studio, desk, auditorium — is encountering a network of other intertextual voices which she repeats and translates through her own body.

Sandra Bermann notes in her essay 'Performing Translation' (2014) that, historically, the focus of translation as a discipline has shifted from an essentialist, original (first) — translation (secondary) hierarchy, to a rather more performative approach (p.288). Translators slowly abandoned the idea of examining how translations transferred semantic content through theories of equivalence and moved towards the observation of the deeds of translation; they moved towards the direction of the relations between language and texts, translator and audience. This movement parallels Benjamin's invitation to historians, which proceeds from the negation of historical progress, to read history as

a 'constellation' of decontextualised events as opposed to a chain of events. This performative shift signalled an engagement with 'distinctly theatrical metaphors that heightened awareness of the interpretative act of translation, its citational quality and the issues of gender and identity it implies' (p.288).

Performative translation

In order to follow this course of thought, I need to pause here for a moment and make a brief reference to the theory of performativity and citationality through the writings of Austin and Derrida. J. L. Austin first introduced performatives in his book *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) as the utterances which enact what they name; the utterances that perform an action while it is voiced. They were defined in opposition to 'constative utterances' which are describing or referring to a situation. Austin adds that performatives cannot be declared 'true' or 'false' since they do not cite a situation outside of what they utter so as to evaluate it. Instead, performatives can be 'felicitous' or 'infelicitous' (happy/unhappy) depending on the context within which they are articulated. It makes me think that one could almost precipitously argue that all theatre is a performative as it 'creates' — at least provisionally or as an illusion — the world it enacts, namely characters, places, situations and so forth. However, Austin would strongly disagree with this hasty proposition, underscoring that theatre is one of the few contexts in which performatives fail as they are quotational; thus, they are deprived of what they enact. 'A performative utterance will, for example, be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy' (1962, p.22). Moreover, he describes such uses of the utterances as 'non-serious' and 'parasitic.' Bearing many similarities with the secondary or 'parasitic' role of translation once we

acknowledge the authority of the original, one understands that a problem arises every time we set an origin, a definite starting point in a situation, a source, and this is exactly what Austin does. From the beginning, he neglects that the performative utterance, the act, is a citational form, already a re-enactment that performs a break with historicity and instead, he valorises linguistic acts dependent on the context of their appearance. This is the main problem that Derrida takes up in 'Signature, Event, Context' (1988) responding to Austin's theatrical exception. For Derrida all language is repeatable and citational, therefore all utterances exist within quotation marks. Not only does he diminish any possibility for a clear and definite beginning, but he undermines the intentionality of the speaker of the utterance too. As any sign in order to exist needs to be able to be cited and repeated (here he is using the sign of signature as an example) quite similarly, every performative is absolutely 'iterable' (repeatable).

> Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a "coded" or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula that I utter to open a meeting, launch a ship or a marriage were not identifiable as *conforming* with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a kind of "citation"? (Derrida, 1988, p.18)

Therefore, if all language is citational, taking on board the Derridean proposition, then all theatrical acts are no less of a quote than any other non-theatrical act. The only difference, however, in the theatrical paradigm is the paradoxical existence of the evident multiple quotation marks: the performers play a role on stage, and so they perform utterances or movements that, evidently, do not belong to them, but also these utterances are equally intertextual. Subsequently, Derrida posits that because every utterance is a quote, it undeniably entails traces of previous writers/speakers/users, a fact which undermines the intention of the present writer/speaker/user. The 'other' or 'iter' exists in every word that comes out of our mouth and therefore, in a way, one never fully owns

the words they speak. Seemingly, it is never possible to entirely say what we intend to say in terms of what meaning is being produced from the said.

> Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable. This does not imply that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center or absolute anchoring [*ancrage*](Derrida, 1998, p.12).

Of course, this is the regime under which theatre operates, or better this is the regime under which theatre is understood to operate. The performer/actor/dancer never owns the word/movement she performs; every word/movement is written/choreographed by someone else, another author/choreographer. The idea of citationality is fascinating and intriguing once applied to translation theory as it creates multiple effects, multiple movements and quite theatrical ones too. Translation, as already discussed above, is a derivative work, intertextual, insinuating and referencing a preceding text. This former text is citational too. Hence, the translator, quite similar to a performer, is dealing with words which are already in multiple quotation marks. Therefore, the act of translation becomes the stage where citationality performs. Translation provides the methodology and becomes the context in which one can witness this incredible dialogue or conversation amongst multiple voices of different subjectivities, temporalities that belong to disparate sites. Translation is mediation, a frame through which we have the opportunity to experience these multilayered, polyphonous performances. In translation, time is condensed and, although it is experienced as current present time yet, it potentially encloses all the signs of the past. Translation is the theatre of citation; the structure, frame and magnifying glass where citationality openly performs. Translation as a notion of profane intertextuality, where every text does not hide its derivative mode but celebrates its enrichment and growth. This is what Bermann suggests when she writes:

> By bringing within its scope this 'other text' with its clearly different
> language(s), conventions and historical context, translation dramatizes the en-
> counter with alterity that exists to a more limited extent in every instance of
> language use (2014, p.290).

However, this is what Austin mostly resented; the 'dramatised' and therefore the 'non-serious,' the 'parasitic' performative: Translation!

Translation as the score of the dance that the translator performs; translation as the site where words and movements perform their 'otherness'; translation as discourse or meta-text, commentary, generative and performative: 'Translation as Performance'.

Judith Butler takes in Austin's performative theory, Derrida's citational processes and Foucault's notion of discursive practices[32] to suggest that gender identity is perfor-mative and that it exists only in the doing of the subject. Hence, gender is not a matter of what 'I am' but rather a matter of what 'I do.' Furthermore, Butler states, that gen-der is not a property of the individual, and it is indifferent of the subject's will or choice. On the contrary, gender is already rehearsed; it pre-exists in the social matrix of conven-tions, and so its doing is a reiteration.

> Gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the par-
> ticular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order
> to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again (Butler, 1988, p.526).

And,

> importantly, however, there is no power, construed as a subject, that acts, but
> only, to repeat an earlier phrase, a reiterated acting that is power in its persis-
> tence and instability (Butler, 1993, p.225).

Largely denying the notion of the subject, performativity is a matter of repeating the norms by which one is constituted; hence, gender is social and not biological. Butler insists that we do not have a gender by birth but, instead, prescribed roles which consol-idate through repeated social practice. She stresses however that this repetition always

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[32]Discursive practices according to Foucault are historically and culturally specific set of rules which or-ganise and produce different forms of knowledge (Foucault, 2004).

entails the resignification of the conventions through gaps, slippages, and openings that may appear within the gender-forming process.

> To the extent that gender is an assignment, it is an assignment which is never quite carried out according to expectation, whose address never quite inhabits the ideal s/he is compelled to approximate (2013, p.23).

Therefore, because the subject never fully succeeds to reproduce an 'ideal' prescribed role, these inevitable failures within the performative repetitions of the normative discourses, allow the possibility to imagine the body differently. In other words 'the gap between redundancy and repetition is the space of agency.' (Butler, 1997, p.129). So Butler's performativity although relating to Austin's performative is yet, quite remote and distinct. Rather than describing individual 'felicitous and infelicitous' linguistic acts dependent on context, Butler discusses repeated 'social practices and historical norms' (Bermann, 2014, p.291) whose 'infelicitous-ness' invites the possibility for change.

Already, Lacan in his psychoanalytic theory, as noted by Jacqueline Rose in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole freudienne* (1982), had featured a series of failures in gender identification in relation to unconscious desire. Butler echoing Lacan in 'Critically Queer' (2013) posits that

> Psychoanalysis insists that the opacity of the unconscious sets limits to the exteriorization of the psyche. It also argues, rightly I think, that what is exteriorized or performed can only be understood through reference to what barred the signifier and from the domain of corporeal legibility (Butler, 2013, p.234).

Elaborating more on this idea, Butler makes a distinction between performance and performativity stressing that where performance is bound in the visibility of the repetitive, stylised actions, performativity is reinforced by whatever 'haunts' the body and so, prevents its identification or full 'presence'. What is interesting in this distinction is, therefore, this 'haunting' which limits the subject in its identifications during performance but also, the problem of 'visibility' that Butler identifies in performance. This

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distinction between performance and performativity is what Elin Diamond examines in *Unmaking Mimesis* (1997). She proposes that the Brechtian theatre through the process of estrangement refuses mimesis as a methodology and instead shows the actor for what she does, thus playing a role. Brecht's technique shows theatre for what it is: an apparatus of illusion and hence, the spectator can see what normally she would not: 'a sign system *as* a sign system.' Therefore, as Diamond notes:

> Performance, as I have written elsewhere, is the site in which performativity materializes in concentrated form, where the 'concealed or dissimulated conventions' of which acts are mere repetitions might be investigated and reimagined (Diamond, 1997, p.47).

In an attempt to compare the performative potential that arises in the theatrical paradigm with translation, one can recognise in the mode of translation the same kind of effect; translation as a mode is conscious of itself and its citational character. Translation does not pretend to be original, non-derivative and translation is not mimesis either. Instead, translation is a text which speaks of the work it translates, as much as about the fact that it is a translation. Therefore, realising translation's citational potential, we can recognise translation as a practice and model for questioning social and historical norms. 'Using the citational potential of its mode, it can exaggerate, highlight, displace and queer normative expectations across genders and cultures as well as languages' (Bermann, 2014, p.292). This is exactly where the potential of this particular study lies and what my translation exercises are trying to do. Instead of offering canonical interpretations of works that would fulfil the expectations of both the establishments that the works in translation belong to, as well as the audience's, I am seeking to trace the displaced texts and voices that would disavow, estrange and queer the works rendering them broken, invisible, incomprehensible but undeniably new. Hence, in my translational exercises, I pose questions interrogating the past and seeking answers both in the already answered and performed texts as well as in the newly invited texts which are for-

eign, unformed or unrecognised. These gaps, glitches and failures that are enacted in the conjunction of texts involved in *Exercise: Les Noces* allows the possibility and hopefully invites the potential to imagine the work differently, enriched and defined by 'other' or 'foreign' voices which do not belong to the work and its balletic history. Furthermore, this study hopes to insinuate a parallel change to the texts and languages used for translating *Les Noces*. This study is also a meta-practice and hence it does not just practice translation through choreography, but it is also proposed as a tool for analysis and critique of any art text in postproduction.

Proposing 'translation as performance' I hope to underline the performative character of translation and therefore, translatability as comparable to performativity. This tension between disappearance and full presence that all texts in translation potentially possess, is a tension and a state that all performances could be read in. This 'haunting' that restricts the subject from its 'full presence' is to believe in ghosts; is to be able to see the ghosts that haunt *Les Noces*, as well as, to be able to listen and invite other voices within its scope in order to make room for gaps, voids and misfires to take place which can then exaggerate, highlight and queer the normative expectations of postproduction. As I have already mentioned many times, this is not just a choreographing practice, but translation is proposed as a performing and attending practice. Hence, translation is about reading with a sense of openness whether that means choreographing, performing or attending a work of art. Translation is a choreographic process which persists throughout postproduction. What is more, this postproduction which is made possible through the invitation of the 'other' or the 'foreign' enacts the promise, according to Butler, of 'a radically democratising enrichment, that comes with new, more complex languages and ways of knowing' (Bermann, 2014, p.295).

1.3 Equivalence

Seeking 'equivalence' is taking the opposite route to the previous discussion. Instead of seeking the existence of any starting point, 'original' or 'source,' I am going to dispute, once more the unity or uniqueness of the text in afterlife in order to examine the notion of 'equivalence'. When we have a text or a movement which we want to translate we are always in search of an equivalent. So I ask: equivalent according to whom? There seems to be a pre-decided limit, a third party or language which standardises this decision. This chapter is dedicated to this standardiser, according to which we make 'equivalent', 'relevant' or 'adequate' translations.

The concept of 'equivalence' has varied within Translation Studies from being a definition and the ideal feature for translation to qualify as such, to becoming a redundant term and an outmoded view of the translational practice (Snell–Hornby, 1988). The purpose of my writing is not to take sides in this conceptual battle; neither do I seek to prove that the products of my practice are translations through theories of equivalence. Instead, this analysis of 'equivalence' proposes to shed some light on the process of the translator. Hence, it will become the conceptual tool through which I discuss the translational operation regarding whether or how it achieves or fulfils equivalence, and the implications or effects of this practice to both, source and target texts.

Through Derrida, I will examine how the impossibility for equivalence points to the gap or void that the non-equivalent terms produce but also shows how this void or gap functions as a promise and invitation for translation and consequently, change. Hence, Derrida's discussion on equivalence will lead to a method of reading texts while looking for the internal gaps and discrepancies in order to discover where the translatability of each text lies. Reading *Les Noces* and trying to focus on the internal contradic-

tions of its afterlife I raise the question of whether historical, balletic or contemporary dance reconstructions are able to discuss certain notions from Nijinska's work such as the relation to the Russian avant-garde or its agitprop purpose for feminist empowerment.

Through Paul Ricœur's discussion of 'equivalence' as a social construction in terms of social expectation and necessity, I will borrow the formula of 'constructing comparables' that Ricœur advances, in order to formulate my own translational choreographic methodology of 'constructing comparables.' Through this method, I will initiate a comparative discussion between choreography and visual artworks in order to present dance as in a live and enduring historical dialogue with visual art. This discussion will continue in the next Chapter where I will eventually present the history of *Les Noces*, as well as Nijinska's project: that is, the ideas and texts that she used to make *Les Noces* in relation to the Russian avant-garde and her current socio-political context. Subsequently, my own 2017 translation of *Les Noces*, as well as the texts that I have used to translate *Les Noces*, will resonate the already existing dialogue between the two mediums (dance and visual art) and hopefully, will succeed in expanding their means of production in order to offer not another dance historiographic choreography or a visual art installation, but an exercise of both; the otherwise proposed 'choreographic site'. Through this study, I also hope to provide a tool for comparative reading and making, performing and attending works that use citation whether that is historical or with reference to another medium.

Anthony Pym (2014), the translation scholar, posits that 'equivalence' has been a key concept in western translation theory but at the same time an obscure, problematic and difficult term to define. Before typography, equivalence was just not relevant: there was no concept of originality prior to printing and thus, no fixed source to which a

translation could be equivalent to. If we think of the 'oral tradition' songs which were briefly analysed above, one can imagine how translation was a perpetually changing mode, constantly causing the text to evolve in its reproductions. Much later and especially during the 1960s and 1970s, equivalence defined Translation Studies, and through this lens, theorists tried to determine its scope and purpose. Theories of equivalence mainly examined whether and how 'some aspect of a source-text unit' could 'equal some aspect of a target-text unit' (Pym, 2000). According to Pym's classification, equivalence could be 'natural,' pre-existent, as well as a mask to hide political and cultural changes or it could be 'directional,' performing as a creative force, something that the translators created rather than discovered. Nowadays, Pym states, equivalence is fundamentally a 'belief structure' in the sense that, 'all translations manifest equivalence simply because they are translations' and consequently has lost its central role in translation studies (2014, p.37).[33] Mary Snell-Hornby suggests that equivalence is a damaging, illusionistic and misleading concept to be regarded as central in Translation Studies: 'apart from being imprecise and ill-defined presents an illusion of symmetry between languages which hardly exists beyond the level of vague approximations and which distorts the basic problems of translation' (1988, p.22). However, it would be quite pertinent for this project to examine how the philosopher has dealt with this term.

Derrida's relevancy

Derrida talks about 'incalculable equivalence' as 'a required but impractical translation between the unique literalness of the proper body and the arbitrariness of a general, monetary or fiduciary sign' and he, therefore, questions notions of equivalency in

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[33]During recent years scholars have become more interested in translation's performative potential namely, the cultural and political acts and effects of translation. Translation studies has become increasingly interested in the 'doing' of translations and hence the doing of languages and texts, as well as the 'doing' of the translators, readers/audiences (Robinson, 2003, p.3-22).

terms of the status of 'original' versus translation (2001, p.184). Equivalence talks about

equal value between two different signs that belong to disparate systems of signification.

Derrida fails to put a measurable or calculable value to the unit/word in translation as

the word/unit is already too unstable. He draws astute parallelism between translation

and the ruthless exchange in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596); Derrida uses the difficult ex-

change between the amount of money owed and 'a pound of flesh' as a way to under-

score the impossibility of equivalence. Instead of equal value, Derrida is in search of

'relevance'.

According to Derrida, 'relevance' in translations, similarly to equivalence, is still

governed by principles of 'economy' (the term here is used in its etymological sense, de-

riving from the Greek words *οἶκος* [house] and *νόμος* [law]).

> oikonomia, the law-nomos of the oikos, of what is proper, appropriate to itself,
> at home-and translation is always an attempt at appropriation that aims to
> transport home, in its language, in the most appropriate way possible, in the
> most relevant way possible, the most proper meaning of the original text, even
> if this is the proper meaning of a figure, metaphor, metonymy, catachresis, or
> undecidable impropriety (2001, pp.178-179).

Thus, translation exists firstly under the law of the 'house' which is the source text,

and therefore, recognising and subscribing to an original. Secondly, 'economy' is under-

stood in its quantitative sense; hence a translation should have the same amount of

words/units to the source. 'On *compte et on rend compte*, one counts and accounts for. A rel-

evant translation is a translation whose economy, in these two senses, is the best possible,

the most appropriating and the most appropriate possible' (2001, p.179).

Relevancy in translation is what makes Derrida think of translation simultaneously

as a possible and impossible task. For example, adding a translator's note depicts a situa-

tion where sense and meaning have not escaped the translator's intention; however,

there is a break with the economic law of quantity because the translated text has more

words than the original. When we break with the law of quantity, Derrida says, we also

break with translation in its classical sense and the whole concept of translation must be reconsidered (p.181). Consequently, equivalence in translation is impossible not just because the content of the original text is shifting (texts do not have stable meanings to which we can find their equivalents), but also because a translation always bears the translator's traces and therefore, the two texts cannot be quantitatively equivalent. For Derrida nothing is stable or fixed; he sees translation as a transformation of the original text but also as a transformation of the translating language too.

So far it is clear that the notion of equivalence is a question of relevance for Derrida. Equivalence, however, speaks of a transfer of stable meaning between two languages. Deconstruction and Derrida have shown that this is not possible because signifier and signified are linked, meaning that we cannot change the former without affecting the latter.

In 'What is a "Relevant" Translation' (2001) and in an ultimate attempt[34] to achieve equivalence or relevance, Derrida practically suspends the signifiers between two languages: here he is using the word 'relevance' which he cannot decide whether the *relève* that the word 'contains' and which is originally Latin, belongs to French or English. The phonemic similarity highlights the mutual difference of these words. Through this oscillation or floating, the words are unable to signify in one or the other way and affiliate with any of the languages, and therefore, Derrida points to the constitution of lack that happens between the two. These signifiers are made to embody a gap without filling it, but they make it evident by becoming signifiers of this Benjamian promise of 'pure

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[34]Later, in the translational exercises of 'Mother's song' and 'On Floating' in *Exercise: Les Noces* I too, will adopt Derrida's method and practically try to demonstrate how by overloading or emptying meaning from a word/movement, we construct this void, we perform this lack of meaning which also acts as an invitation and a promise for change.

language',[35] of the reconciliation of languages, of total meaning, which functions through lack, between the gaps and voids that the never-equivalent terms produce. So this is where we can only glimpse 'pure language'; in this moment of translating languages, between languages, where we can clearly distinguish the disjunctions between supposedly equivalent terms; after all, perfect equivalence is only possible in 'pure language'.

We cannot change the form of the text without changing its meaning, and vice versa and thus, Derrida speaks about a contract between the original and the translating text which is a transforming process.

> Translation augments and modifies the original, which, insofar as it is living on, never ceases to be transformed and to grow. It modifies the original even as it also modifies the translating language. This process — transforming the original as well as the translation — is the translation contract between the original and the translating text (Derrida, 1985, p.122).

The contract, this translation that Derrida describes, should not be viewed as a dichotomy but rather as a contact that happens between the two texts, 'a continuation, a relationship of mutual transference, a symbiosis' as the Linguistics professor J.L Kruger suggests (2004, p.60). By claiming that the original 'calls for a complement' because the original is never 'complete, total, identical to itself' (2007, p.211) Derrida implies that translation is a supplementary act. In other words, Derrida blurs even further the boundaries between original and translation by saying that translation complements the original, and therefore becomes 'part' of the original text. This intertwining results in the categorical affiliation of original and translation as parts of the same continuum, as parts of the same text. Not only original and translation co-exist in one text, but Derrida

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[35]Benjamin describes 'pure language' as that language which encompasses all languages, all meaning and all intention and which is the ultimate aim for the translator: 'to turn the symbolising into the symbolized, to regain pure language fully formed in the linguistic flux, is the tremendous and only capacity of translation. In this pure language-which no longer means or expresses anything but is, as expressionless and creative Word, that which is meant in all languages-all information, all sense, and all intention finally encounter a stratum in which they are destined be extinguished'(1968, p.80).

adds that every text carries all of its previous formations as traces or memories in its body. 'Every word' Derrida says, 'carries in its body an ongoing process of translation, [...]; as a translative body, it endures or exhibits translation as the memory or stigmata of suffering [passion]or, hovering above it, as an aura or halo' (2001, p.177).

Following Derrida's course of thought, we understand every text as a carrier of changes; as a body that carries the traces of all of its previous formations. Every text for Derrida is singular (there is no distinction between original and translation) and at the same time multiple and incomplete (carrying its previous appearances and never being identical to itself). Hence, Derrida encourages us to look for these internal connections in the text in afterlife[36] stressing the text's internal *différance* as opposed to Benjamin's suggestion for reading the text as a constellation, forming connections between disparate texts (Chapman, p.36). Derrida describes a process where we should look for the internal contradictions within a text, the gaps, voids, and glitches that constitute a call for the supplementary act of translation which also enacts this promise of 'pure language,' of one whole meaning which however always remains a promise.

Looking into *Les Noces's* afterlife, most of the reconstructions, revivals, adaptations, reworkings we find, are works which are focused on its dancing premise and therefore, *Les Noces* has mainly been translated as a ballet work through 'dance,'[37] to ballet or to what we call, contemporary dance[38] with the only exception of Arturo Herrera's *Les Noces (The Wedding)* (2011). The work by Herrera is an installation which featured a two-

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[36]Derrida understands *fortleben* and *ubelleben* as living on as well as 'life after death'. Translation ensures these two 'survivals' by 'loosing flesh during the process of conversion' as well as 'by elevating the signifier to its meaning or value, all the while preserving the mournful and dept-laden memory of the singular body, the first body, the unique body that the translation thus elevates, preserves and negates' (2001, p. 199).

[37]Here I refer to the discipline of dance as the 'historical residues of movement and the human body'(Cvejic, 2015, p.11).

[38]"Contemporary dance' serves merely to distinguish the present-day production of dance from the coexisting historical or canonical forms and styles of theater dance (ballet, 'classical dance,' also referred to as 'academic dance'), or from other non-Western dance traditions as well as dance forms geared to non-art purposes (social, therapeutic, entertainment, etc.)' (Cvejic, 2015, p. 5).

channel video projection that reworked fragments gathered as leftovers from his own works in his studio. The fragments played in the video are organised by a chance-based programme and are set 'to invoked the mutable nature of performance' and thus its evanescence, in relation to 'the transformative power of collage' as well as manifesting 'the difficulty to make abstraction an intelligible process' (Americas Society, 2011). Although Herrera's translation revisits some of the 1923 themes and artistic explorations of both Nijinska and Stravinsky such as abstraction, body/machine and productivity[39] or fragmentation and productivity[40], yet Herrera's work does not, in my opinion, realise the performative force that lies within *Les Noces*. *Les Noces* was created with the ambition of making a Russian *Gesamtkunstwerk*[41] as an all-encompassing art-form, a 'total' art-work[42]. Hence, the way *Les Noces* was imagined evokes the Benjamian notion of 'pure language'; *Les Noces* was an attempt of 'pure language,' of totality, of the reconciliation of all art forms. The gaps and voids that one reads in *Les Noces's* afterlife (once we attempt Derrida's reading of the internal contradictions of the text in the afterlife) cannot be resolved by translations in the mediums of visual art, music, theatre or dance alone. Therefore the translatability of *Les Noces,* the potential that arises from the text's internal discrepancies, cannot be fulfilled by another dance or visual art translation alone; it has to be an exercise of all languages involved in *Les Noces* which furthermore restructures and re-signifies these languages with a view to expanding upon their project that is, the promise for their reconciliation into one work of art.

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[39]I am referring to Nijinska's explorations between bodily and machine movement evident in the choreography of the *corps de ballet*.

[40]Herrera references Stravinski in his composition of *Les Noces* from fragments of folk music. See also: van den Toorn, P., & McGinness, J. (2012). Stravinsky and the Russian Period: Sound and Legacy of a Musical Idiom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.53-73, 114-167.

[41]'The term 'total work of art' translates the German *Gesamtkunstwerk* coined by Richard Wagner in the wake of 1848 revolutions. If the total work of art is usually understood as the intention to reunite the arts into one integrated work, it is tied from the beginning to the desire to recover and renew the public function of art' (Roberts, 2011, p.1).

[42]Roberts, D. (2011). *The Total Work of Art in European Modernism*. New York: Cornel University Press, p.150

Constructing Comparables

Paul Ricœur in his short book *On Translation* (2006) advances the concept of 'linguistic hospitality' where both host and target languages welcome what is foreign and therefore both experience loss and gain. For Ricœur a good translation aims for 'adequate equivalence,' one 'not founded on a demonstrable identity of meaning' (p.23) Nevertheless, later in the same book, he expresses his suspicion towards the concept of equivalence in general. Ricœur describes the task of the translator in terms of the idea of meaning. Translation theory seems to presuppose a stable existing meaning that translation is supposed to render, to seek to be equivalent to.

> This absolute criterion would be the same meaning written somewhere, on top of and between the original text and the target text. This third text would be the bearer of the identical meaning supposed to move from the first to the second (p.34).

Challenging that presupposition, he invites us to consider the possibility that equivalence is produced by translation rather than affirmed by it. There is no specific criterion according to which a translation is good or equivalent. Ricœur adds that equivalence does not have an identity, however, it is presumed and this is the work of translation. 'This equivalence can only be sought, worked at, supposed' and he invites us to challenge this presumption (p.35).

Locating understanding of community identities as products of long-lasting exchanges between nations, cultures, and languages he describes an economy within which translational equivalence is the necessary monetary consensus for the translational exchange to happen. We have taken for granted the existence of comparables in the target languages yet, and most possibly, according to Ricœur, translators have constructed them. Thus, discussing the work of Marcel Detienne, a Hellenic scholar, Ricœur applies to translation the formula of 'constructing comparables' which he defines as the 'cre-

ative betrayal of the original,' and the 'equally creative appropriation by the reception language' (p.37).

> We could say that Luther not only constructed a comparable in translating the Bible into German, in 'german-izing' it, but created the German language, as comparable to Latin, to the Greek of the Septuagint, and to the Hebrew of the Bible (Ricœur, p.37).

Texts, in the course of time, have been appropriated into other contexts, and translators have taken the destiny of the words in their hands, constructing equivalent vocabularies and languages from scratch; equivalents whose meaning was infused by the meaning of other words, foreign, which belong to other systems of perception and signification and which formed and created alternative receptive systems.

The translational methodology of 'constructing comparables' can prove to be extremely useful in finding ways to present dance as part of a historical dialogue with visual art. The idea of translating artworks and other cultural objects in *Exercise: Les Noces* (eg. drawings, design products, sculptures, photographs) to scores and potential choreographies, expands the notion of choreography with a view to legitimising the pluralist practices of dance that would often fall outside the institutional mechanisms of theatre and/or art. On the other hand, translation transforms a stable artefact into a living entity whose performance unravels new ways of making meaning beyond its prescribed role. Hence, an expanded meaning of choreography, as well as artwork, could potentially engage audiences in different ways of spectatorship and enable the invention of alternative theatrical apparatuses.

A historical dialogue with visual art

Art and dance histories do not share narratives which could potentially translate into one another in terms of their projects. According to Bojana Cvejic this is due to the explorations and pursuits of the pre-war avant-garde in art (Dadaism, Constructivism,

Futurism, etc.) which are not attained by the sporadic artist-choreographer collaboration projects from the beginning of twentieth century such as *Parade* (1917), *Relâche* (1924), *Triadic Ballet* (1922) or the Bauhaus dances from 1927-29 (2015, p. 10).[43] Cvejic continues that the German Expressionist movement in dance (*Ausdruckstanz* or *Neuer Tanz*) and the American Modern dance developed at the beginning of the previous century do not share common concerns with the historical avant-garde in art and therefore, no comparison can stand.[44] On the other hand, Cvejic finds resonance between the neo-avant-garde scene of New York and the work of the 1960s Judson Dance Theater (1962-4) choreographers (Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Deborah Hay and Steve Paxton to name a few), in the procedures of happenings, neo-Dada readymades and collages in choreography as a critique of the trained and virtuosic body (p.10). I would like to propose that Cvejic's reading of history, especially her assessment of the influences and exchanges between the historical avant-garde and the early twentieth century choreography, is greatly influenced by the dance historian and critic, Sally Banes and her interpretation of the resonances between art and dance historical narratives as well as Banes's understanding of the historical avant-garde.[45] Although Sally Banes' writings[46] have been highly influential and have contributed immensely to discussions of dance drawing

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[43]This is Cvejic's selection of dance works which could be associated with the avant-garde as the most notable from that period. Cvejic here, I believe quite deliberately, states works that have been created by visual artists rather than choreographers such as Francis Picabia who created *Relâche* and Oscar Schlemmer who created *Triadic Ballet* and the bauhaus dances with the exception of *Parade* which was choreographed by Massine. However, the ballet *Parade* was mainly Cocteau's idea and Massine was responsible for designing the movement (under Cocteau's commandment) of the several characters in the ballet. (Goldberg,1988; Hargrove,1998; Homans, 2010)

[44]However this study is set to prove that such connections between historical avant-garde and dance did exist — *Les Noces* being one of them — and they were more than just a few, but possibly certain socio-political factors have excluded these works from being acknowledged as avant-garde.

[45]This is particularly evident when Cvejic examines the European dance movement of 'conceptual dance' in opposition to Banes's Greenbergian modernist conception of 'pure dance'(and therefore in relation to it)(p.6).

[46]*Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-modern Dance* (1987), *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962–1964* (1993), *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-garde Performance and the Effervescent Body* (1993),*Writing Dancing in the Age of Post-modernism* (1994),*Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (1998), *Before, Between, and Beyond: Three Decades of Dance Writing* (2007) to name some of her books.

on art theory yet, her grasp of the term 'post-modern' in art and as an extension in dance, evident in her early writing has been somewhat problematic.

> Post-modern dance came after modern dance (hence post-) and, like the post-modernism of the other arts, was anti-modern dance. Since 'modern' in dance did not mean modernist, to be anti-modern dance was not at all to be anti-modernist. In fact it was quite the opposite. The analytical postmodern dance of the seventies in particular displayed these modernist preoccupations and it aligned itself with that consummately modernist visual art, minimalist sculpture (Banes 1987: xv).

Ramsay Burt in his book *Judson Dance Theater: Performative Traces* (2006, pp. 5-13) commenting on this paragraph observes two confusing assumptions: First of all that modern dance is not modernist and secondly, Banes's historical and philosophical understanding of the term 'post-modern.' Modern dance in America[47] as well as the Expressionist movement in Germany[48] are in fact, modernist as they explored pure and abstract movement against the conventional forms of classical ballet and agreed with the pursuits of profound emotion, spontaneity, and spirituality of Abstract Expressionism movement in art which historically belongs to modernity (Martin, 1965; Manning, 1988). However, if we try to read dance history of the first half of the twentieth century as independent from the modernist movement, it would be rather difficult to acknowledge the avant-garde project of the dance artists of that era, and this is exactly what

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[47]Early Modern Dance in America arose around the beginning of the twentieth century, mainly as a rebellion against classical ballet. Isadora Duncan, Doris Humphrey, Ted Shawn, Martha Graham are a few of its representatives.

[48]Expressionist dance was a European movement that developed around 1900. It was developed as a protest to the superficiality of classical ballet and it promoted expression and emotion as opposed to virtuosity. Some representatives were Mary Wigman, Hilde Holger, Hertha Feist and Clotilde von Derp.

both Banes and Cvejic do.[49] Cvejic speaks of 'too few works' that demonstrate avant-garde concerns and Banes disassociates early twentieth-century choreography from modernism in an attempt to read and explore, in retrospect, the modernist aesthetic concerns in the American dance artists of the 1960s. Confusingly, Banes characterises the dance works from the 1960s as postmodern(?).

> In dance, the confusion that the term 'post-modern' creates is further complicated by the fact that historical modern dance was never really modernist. Often it has been precisely in the arena of post-modern dance that issues of modernism in the other arts have arisen: the acknowledgment of the medium's materials, the revealing of dance's essential qualities as an art form, the separation of external references as subjects. Thus in many respects it is post-modern dance that functions as modernist art (1987, pp. xiv–xv).

As Ramsay Burt notes, not only Banes does not discuss early postmodern dance of the 1960s in relation to poststructuralist theory but instead, she analyses postmodern dance with modernist terms (2006, p.8). Parallels can be drawn between Banes's notion of 'pure dance' in *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (1987) with which she described the Judson Theater Dance artists' aspirations for 'formal radicalism' and Clement Greenberg's ideas around modernist art as 'pure' (Burt, p.7).

> It quickly emerged that the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique in the nature of its medium. The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the effects of each art any and every

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[49]Bojana Cvejic claims that she doesn't wish to engage in the modernism / post-modernism debate in dance history as she is more interested in expanding the term 'choreography' against essentialist notions of 'pure dance' (a critique which is specific to the medium of dance) as well as through the works of the choreographers/authors who probe the conventions of theatre within the institution itself'(p.10). Therefore, she concludes that the 'choreographies,' she examines 'aren't enclosed within the composition of the body and/or movement exclusively, but instead expand to include whatever expression arises in their making. Thus, they are nominally aligned with the discipline "dance" through historical residues of movement and the human body, but factually they are indeterminate and heterogeneous: the bodies and/or movement can be composed with expressions from any other art or non-art' (p.11). My point is that Cvejic is able to acknowledge specific lineage of works as critiques as well as practices that expand notions of choreography within and outside the medium of dance without taking into consideration or dismissing certain works which, almost deliberately, have been canonised (for example belong to Ballet history) in order to be politically excluded from the avant-garde. Moreover, certain assertions such as 'postmodern dance was a largely United States phenomenon' (Banes 1987: xxxvi) have contributed in 'the separateness and exclusivity of postmodern dance in the United States (Burt, 2006, p.5) and hence, the European choreographic scene of 'conceptual dance' has been read as influenced mostly from the Judson Neo-avant-garde in the 1960s (Cvejic, 2015, p.10).

effect that other art. Thereby each art would be rendered 'pure', and in its 'purity' find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence (Greenberg, 1982, pp. 5–6).

Michael Fried, the art critic and historian who was very much influenced by Greenberg, in his seminal essay 'Art and Objecthood' (1969), argues that minimal art makes the viewer aware of the presence of the sculpture along with their own embodied, phenomenological relationship to it. This is what he called a 'theatrical situation' which, according to him, prevents the viewer from having a proper aesthetic appreciation of the artwork in question. Minimal art, according to Fried, demands from the viewer to be at first recognised as art, whereas 'true' art does not need that kind of appreciation or recognition as it is complete in itself. He also adds that the perception of visual art should not be a durational process but instantaneous (p. 144).

A number of historians and dance critics including Banes (1987), David Michael Levin (1973), Noël Carroll (1981, 2003), Marshall Cohen (1981), and Roger Copeland (1983) developed a framework for analysing dance by drawing on this modernist art theory, subscribing 'to the modernist paradigm of art's steady progress towards a goal of formally pure abstraction' (Burt, 2006, p.10). Greenberg's and Fried's ideas proved to be extremely influential throughout the '60s, and therefore, Banes reads the Judson Dance Theater works as attempts towards 'pure dance' and as reactionary to Expressionism, or generally to modernism and theatricality. Still, the fact that Fried wrote his essay opposing the art of the minimalist artist Robert Morris (who was associated with Judson Dance Theater) is rather ironic if we consider that Banes and her peers defined post-modern dance's minimalist aims[50] on the basis of Greenbergian 'purity'. Art historian, Meyer Schapiro, however, points out that, 'all art is representational; there is no 'pure art' unconditioned by experience' and thus, all art is influenced by its political and social

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[50]Including Judson Dance Theater's project which explored a minimalist sensibility through simple forms and concepts. Burt, R. (2006) *The Judson Dance Theatre: Performative Traces.* London: Taylor & Francis.

context (1978, p.196). Obviously, Shapiro's claims are in direct opposition to Greenberg's and Fried's modernist ideas on the artistic vocation and value, as independent of their socio-political surroundings.

To return to Banes, the belated concern of postmodern dance for modernist 'purity', only stresses Banes's views which are in agreement with Fried's beliefs about the importance of art's independence from its sociopolitical context but also speaks of this inconsistency between the dance and art historical narratives. I also believe that Banes's and Cvejic's historical reading derives from the negative connotations that Greenberg and Fried attributed to the theatre as non-pure form of art, and hence confesses the anxiety of the dance theoreticians to associate dance with art.[51] I want to object and partially challenge these beliefs by stressing the importance of Nijinska's project and her immense contribution to modern dance and the avant-garde in the early twentieth century as well as to the dialogue between the visual and dance arts.[52] My argument is based: firstly, on 'theatricality' and its negative connotation (as non-'true'-art) which forced dance historians to have mistakenly associated the neo-avant-garde scene in dance with the modernist project in art. Hence, at the outset, postmodernism and avantgarde in dance were misunderstood. Moreover, the history of modern dance had to exclude any association with ballet (regardless of the work's content or project) just because modernity in dance had to be, by definition, opposite to ballet.

I make these remarks in order to note that visual art and performing arts have not always shared a mutual appreciation as equivalent art forms that can coexist or share

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[51]According to Fried for a work to qualify as 'pure' art has to be non-theatrical,, therefore, if we follow his course of thought, theatre is somewhat of a 'dirty' or 'bastardised' art. 'Fried's decision to align Minimalism's "literalism" with "theatricality" came from his sense of its concern with the "actual circumstances" of encounter, "a situation" that "includes the beholder," even "the beholder's body." For Fried, "theatre" was the degraded term for an encroaching intermediality that needed to be avoided and evaded at all costs'(Jackson, 2011, p.54).

[52]Nijinska's contribution will be discussed in detail in the next chapter where I talk about her views in regard to ballet and dance education as well as her close relationship to the Russian avant-garde.

common goals and platforms. Modernity, on some occasions, and as we saw above, re-garded visual art and dance as antithetical or antagonistic, cancelling one another out. However, during the beginning of the 21st century, it has become common that choreo-graphers are invited to museums or galleries and therefore, dance works are presented as installations or durational performances. Although the conflict relating to 'pure art' has seemingly been resolved, its implications have provoked different discussions concerning the 'kind' of dance that is taking placing in the museum and whether that 'kind' of dance is institutionally and historically affiliated to theatrical dance (Cvejic, 2015, p.6).

Many different terms have occasionally appeared to connote the work of a certain generation of European choreographers[53] emerging in the 1990s who are frequently invited to show work in the museum, such as 'conceptual dance,' 'anti-dance,' or even, 'non-dance' which are used to designate a contemporary dance practice. Those terms were not created as a result of making and showing work in the gallery/museum envi-ronment but rather describes practices which contest the foundational characteristics of canonical dance, and for that reason, the gallery/museum environment often provides an appropriate platform.[54] These works are considered a 'meta' or 'post' practice that critiques theatrical representation, dismisses virtuosity and choreographic structure and, through various performance means, offers a reflective and sometimes ironic commen-tary on the conventions of dance practice. Several choreographers associated with 'con-ceptual dance,' 'anti-dance' or 'non-dance' question the nature and centrality of chore-

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[53]Jérôme Bel, Mårten Spångberg, Xavier Le Roy, Vera Mantero, La Ribot, Jonathan Burrows, Boris Charmatz, Tino Sehgal to name a few choreographer that belong to this generation.

[54]I am referring to certain projects of 'conceptual dance' that have been selected by museums or galleries to be shown there or to the site specific projects of 'conceptual dance' scene which have been commis-sioned by museums/galleries. Here are a few examples of works that have been programmed or commis-sioned and shown in museums: Xavier Le Roy *Product of Circumstances* (1999) and *"Retrospective"*, Xavier Le Roy and Mårten Spångberg *production* (2010), Jérôme Bel *Shirtology* (1997), *Gala* (2015), Boris Charmatz *Levée de Conflits* (2010), *Manger* (2014), La Ribot *13 Piezas distinguidas*, (1994), *Más distinguidas* (1997) *Still Dis-tinguished* (2000), Tino Sehgal *This is So Contemporary* (2005), *Kiss* (2007), *This Progress* (2010), *These associa-tions* (2012), Mårten Spångberg *The Internet* (2015), *NATTEN* (2016), Nicola Conibere *Assembly* (2013), *Do-Re-Me* (2014).

ography as product: they resist the objectification and commodification of labour, emphasise the procedural and evolving nature of choreography as opposed to a finished product (a stable entity as the focus of artistic appreciation). All of the above terms are contested, but, despite some choreographers' and theorists' resistance to them, continue to be in use. The desire of the museums and galleries to include the names of these choreographers in their programming does not remain uncriticised. Catherine Wood, the Tate curator who specialises in performance and dance, describes the effects of dance in the museum as 'the mirage-like end-point of radical non-object art,' (Wood, 2013, p. 118). Whereas art critic, Claire Bishop notes that dance 'is usually deployed by the museum as presentist spectacle—a way to enliven its mausolean atmosphere and play into the demands of an experience economy' (Bishop, 2014 p.72).

The binary 'pure art'/'theatrical' has produced certain lineages and narratives in the histories of dance and art, and therefore it appears to have been transformed, or it has produced another binary, that of 'conceptual dance'/'pure dance.' On the one hand, we have the 'pure dance' lineage which extends from American Modern dance[55], the European Expressionist movement of Wigman's 'absolute dance'[56] and the Judson Dance Theater (after Banes's reading) or what is colloquially referred to as 'dancy dance'[57]. On the other hand, we have 'conceptual dance' whose decedents are found in the historical avant-garde (Duchamp, Dada, Fluxus, Constructivism, and so on)(Cvejic,

[55]According to dance historian John Martin American Modern dance is defined in opposition to classical ballet and bears its ontological substance in movement (Martin, 1989, p.6).

[56]John Martin describes Mary Wigman's dance as pure emotive expression.'with Wigman, the dance stands for the first time fully revealed in its own sphere; it is not story telling or pantomime or moving sculpture or design in space or acrobatic virtuosity or musical illustration, but dance alone, an autonomous art exemplifying fully the ideals of modernism in its attainment of abstraction and in its utilization of the resources of its materials efficiently and with authority' (Martin, 1968, p.235).

[57]Cvejic refers to 'dancy dance' to evoke the generic and essentialist definition of dance as 'any patterned, rhythmic movement in space and time' (Copeland and Cohen, 1983, p.1).

2015, p.10), and in the neo-avant-garde of Judson Dance Theatre[58] (despite Banes's

reading) (Sontag, 1983; Burt, 2006; Cvejic, 2015). The reason I am highlighting this

'pure'/'conceptual' dance binary is that although we seem to have overcome the art/

theatre binary, in essence, the dividing lines that have been historically drawn continue

to define the ways in which dance works are read, signified and programmed by the mu-

seum/gallery or theatre institutions.[59] The historical affiliation of dance to the avant-

garde seems to define the 'kind' of work the enters the gallery/museum platform. Of

course, one could argue that the inclusion or exclusion of dance from the museum is not

a case of nepotism, but it is really where certain works can 'perform' what they promise

or where they become 'visible'. I believe that the truth lies somewhere in between: in-

deed, these works become 'visible' in the museum because of their affiliation to visual

art as well as because theatres do not programme them due to their 'non-dance' status.[60]

Similarly, other genres of dance such as ballet, which have been deprived of historical

visual art associations according to the dance historical narratives have become equally

invisible from the museum/gallery contexts. This is because the current 'trend'[61] where

dance is invited in the museum/gallery context happens mostly on the premises of en-

tertainment, profit, 'immaterial labor, knowledge society, experience culture,' as art insti-

tutions would not easily expand upon historically grounded definitions of art (Spång-

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[58]Susan Sontag called the artists involved with Judson Dance Theater 'neo-Duchampian' and 'Dadaistic' (Sontag, 1983, p.100, 108).

[59]An example of that would be the dual reading of Judson Dance Theater project as modernist and/or post-modernist.

[60]According to Cvejic *héâtre-élévision* (*h-ê*) by Boris Charmatz was initially designated for theatre, however there was difficulty in finding theatre venues to present it and consequently, it was presented in the context of museum exhibitions (2015, p.104).

[61]In the past decade it has become very common that dance works are invited in museum and gallery spaces in the form of thematic exhibitions or retrospectives. To name a few: *Move. Choreographing You* (2010) in Hayward Gallery, *Laurie Anderson, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark* (2011) in Barbican Art Gallery, *Table of Contents* (2014) at the ICA on the work and archive of Siobhan Davies, *Retrospective* (2012) by Xavier Le Roy which has already been presented in Barcelona, Paris, New York, Hamburg and Singapore and the most recent invitation of Boris Charmatz'z project *Musee de la danse* in Tate Modern in May 2015.

berg, 2012; 2014).[62] Similarly, choreographers still have to fight against 'esssentialist' notions of 'pure dance' that make assertions made by neo-avant-gardist performance practitioners of the1960s who claimed that any movement, any body, or any method whatsoever could be dance (Banes, 1987, p.6) seem utopian (Cvejic, 2015, p.9). Therefore, by insisting on questions about 'what dance is' we follow a historical course of thought through past definitions and exclusions that immediately negate any definition of dance or art that can potentially expand upon their scope.

Benjamin proposed a dynamic concept of history, and he recommended that we 'read' the connections between events, separating them from a place in 'homogenous empty time.' Therefore, rather than read individual texts within their 'historical' contexts, our reading should be informed by the connections drawn between texts — their similarities, or points of dialogue between texts. Making visual art comparable to dance, if anything, has proved to be a historically contested and a controversial project that although could force both sides to open up in order to reconfigure ontological assumptions, in fact, draws the lines between the two art forms even more distinctively. Following once more Benjamin, events are important for the way they link to other, seemingly different, events. As argued previously, rather than narratives of causality, historiography should radically separate events from their 'historical context,' and restore them within what Benjamin calls a 'constellation,' initiating a dialogue between different historical events (1968, p. 263). The constellation does not construct a unified form, a narrative; instead a constellation is a model for reading, demanding new connections being made

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[62]Shannon Jackson names ten 'occupational hazards' that should be considered when we are dealing with 'context-swap' between performance/theatre and art: '1. Disciplinary Barometers Affect Our Encounters with Interdisciplinary Art Forms, 2.Binaries That Produce Blindspots,, 3. The Deconstruction of One Form Involves the Reconstruction of Another , 4. Innovation to Some Can Look Like a Reinvented Wheel to Another,5. What Happens When Virtuosity as Technical/Physical Skill Meets Virtuosity as Conceptual/Cognitive Skill?,6. Hijacked De-Skilling,7. Suspiciously Over-Skilled,8. Provincialism of the Elite, 9. There Always Seems to Be More Power Elsewhere,10. Live Art and a Living W.A.G.E.' (2014, pp. 53-61).

between seemingly disparate parts. The proposed mode of reading history through constellations, foregrounds the relationship between the re-contextualised texts and allows for a greater understanding of the relationship between the past and the present, and thus of history itself. Events from the past and present that seem radically different or remote will, when brought together, reveal a different significance for themselves. Hence, this is the model I want to propose for reading *Les Noces,* as a text in the afterlife. Moreover, this is the model I want to propose for reading dance and art histories together as a constellation of events where causality and linear historical progress seem irrelevant. The model of reading history proposed by Benjamin would, therefore, highlight different links between art and dance and possibly allow a different understanding of the significance of the past art/dance projects made but also allow different thinking to imbue foreclosed definitions of both art and dance languages and institutions.

In the following Chapter, I intend to apply this model of reading to *Les Noces,* and I hope to discuss and expand upon its close relation to the Russian avant-garde and the ways these links can inform *Exercise: Les Noces* as well as the performance and reception of my project. Subsequently, this allows for the work to remain ambiguous in terms of consolidating in one art form (visual art, theatre, dance) enabling different aspects of definitions to co-exist and hence, form a constellation of different languages that cannot be reduced to a singular form but instead become an exercise of all.

Choreographic readymades

The term 'readymade'[63] was introduced by Marcel Duchamp who was the first artist to recontextualise a serially produced commodity into the institutional context of a gallery in order to reintroduce it as a work of art. His first readymade was the *Fountain*

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[63]The term that Duchamp chose was already a readymade and had been used in the ninetieth century to describe objects that were manufactured as opposed to objects that were handcrafted (Tate, n.d.)

(1917), a men's urinal which Duchamp signed with a fake name and submitted for the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists. Since then the term has been widely used by many artists to describe works that have been made from manufactured objects (Tate, n.d.).

> Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, and placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object (as cited in Jones, 2008).

Therefore, according to Duchamp, in order to make a readymade the artist firstly has to choose it, secondly has to cancel its function and thirdly has to give it a title or needs to rename it. Additionally, as art historian and critic Martha Buskirk notes:

> The readymade derives from a multiple gesture involving the act of selection (choosing an object from among many), designation (as a work of art as well as designation of authorship), and recontextualization (2003, p.10).

With a simple gesture, Duchamp redefined the artwork which, he suggested, was inextricably linked to its context in order to be recognised as art. During the 1950s and 1960s the attention to Duchamp was renewed, as an attempt to reject the Greenbergian modernism and, it is 'articulated in the fascination with the layering of references as well as the incorporation of objects, images, and methods drawn from the realm of mass production—that eventually gained the label of postmodernism' (Buskirk, 2003, p.66).

In the 1950s the Situationists used plagiarism as a political tool, as a language of anti-ideology: 'staying close to an author's phrasing, plagiarism exploits his expression, erases false ideas, replaces them with correct ideas' (Debord, 1995, p.145). They developed the method of *détournement*, which consisted of hijacking words, fragments, utterances and images from popular media to be re-composed in order to create rebellious, counter messages. From the 1950s onwards, appropriation was associated and used as a

method in many art movements such as Fluxus and Pop Art. It became the primary means with which to critique traditions of modernism such as Expressionism, notions of high art and authorship. Appropriation and notions of the readymade were also the core of Andy Warhol's project where he tried to remove any sense of artistic 'touch' from his work:

> Everybody looks alike and acts alike, and we are getting more and more that way. I think everybody should be a machine. [...] do the same thing every time. [...] over and over again. [and I approve of it] because it is all fantasy. [...] How many painters are there? Millions of painters are all pretty good. How can you say one style is better than another? You ought to be able to be an Abstract Expressionist next week, or a Pop artist, or a realist, without feeling you've given up something. I think the artists who aren't very good should become like everybody else so that people would like things that aren't very good (as cited in Evans, 2009, p. 41).

Artists from various art forms were fascinated with the idea of the everyday object and became preoccupied with the examination, appropriation and 'recreation' of readymades and the effects of this practice on the reception of the work as art. The notion of readymade did not escape the American dance/performance avant-garde scene either. Several dance artists including Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti, Anna Halprin, Robert Morris[64] translated the idea of readymade in dance and performance by incorporating the everyday, mundane movement or repetition in their work (Franko & Richards, 2000; Burt 2006; Cvejic 2015). The incorporation of a readymade as a critique of the context and hence, as a critique of the theatrical conventions (acknowledging some heritage of the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s) is also evident in the work of the European choreographers of the past two decades (Cvejic, 2015, p.10). For example: Jerome Bel in *The Last Performance* (1998) incorporated Susanne Linke's solo *Wandlung* (1978); Xavier Le Roy in his work *Le Sacre du Printemps* (2007) appropriated

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[64]Certain works from that period have used more implicitly Duchamp's notion of readymade (eg. *Site* (1964), *Parades and Changes* (1965),*Room Service (*1965), *Project-Altered Daily (*1970)), and others quite explicitly have been an homage to Duchamp's work (eg.*Walkaround Time* (1973)) .

movement material from Sir Simon Rattle's conducting performance of Stravinsky's work; Boris Charmatz (through his project *Musée de la Danse*) directed *20 Dancers for the XX Century* (2012) where 20 'acclaimed and forgotten' solos were recontextualised and performed in sites outside of the theatre and in 'daring proximity' with the audience creating a living archive of dance (Tate, 2015). These choreographic gestures are not reconstructions per se; they are not dealing with notions of fidelity, or dance technique, or dance history, and they are not trying to reconstruct a past event, but rather to represent a notion of choreography or dance outside its canonical means of production (technique, context , etc.).

Mårten Spångberg in 'Post-dance, An Advocacy' (2017), states that, 'choreography […] is a set of tools […]that […] are generic and hence can be applied more or less successfully to anything, both in respect of production and analyses'(p. 362). He adds that we should be thinking of choreography as a technology, 'not as the art of making dances'; Choreography should loose its causal relations and be understood as an approach, 'an approach to dance as much as to writing, to city planning or to life' (p.366). Taking on board Spångberg's definition of choreography we begin to comprehend the readymade as described by Duchamp: not as an art object but as an approach to making art and thus, as a choreography. In the light of choreography, the readymade is not an object anymore but Duchamp's triple gesture of choosing, cancelling a function and naming in order to make art. Following Spångberg, this choreography of the readymade is not producing objects but becomes generic and a tool for production, analysis, and critique. Through the proposed three-fold choreographic gesture of selection, recontextualisation, and designation, the artist is indeed a choreographer who is not making objects but rather produces a discourse or a critique of the mediums she is using, as well as opening up the possibility to expand her medium beyond its means of production.

Duchamp selects objects for being mundane and banal; however, by signing them and placing them on a plinth in a gallery, he transposes them from the realm of mass production to a fine art context. Thus, through the choreography of the readymade, he tests the definitions and limits of art. The choreographer, on the other hand, questions from within dance tradition, using choreography and trained bodies in an attempt to 'disguise'[65] her found object as dance, in order to represent something outside dance tradition which is the idea of the readymade: the idea of making dance through selection, recontextualisation, and designation. Through this process the artist can study the readymade's translatability; that is, its ability to change, and its performativity as in its productivity in the newly acquired context.

My practice can be traced back to the second phase of postmodernism predominant in the 1980s and 90s which resulted in works drawing from multiple sources, forms, and movements. However, the starting point of my choreographic practice in *Exercise: Les Noces*, where I utilise cultural products (from music videos to works of art) as materials through which I compose choreography, was the book *Postproduction* (2002) by Nicolas Bourriaud, in particular, Bourriaud's understanding of 'postproduction' as a communal sharing of forms where the creative process is an ongoing circulation, transfiguration and remixing of signs.

> More and more artists interpret, reproduce, re-exhibit, or use works made by others or available cultural products. This art of postproduction seems to respond to the proliferating chaos of global culture in the information age, which is characterized by an increase in the supply of works and the art world's annexation of forms ignored or disdained until now. These artists who insert their own work into that of others contribute to the eradication of the traditional distinction between production and consumption, creation and copy, readymade and original work (p. 3).

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[65]This is Martha Buskirk's term for when she speaks about Jasper John's and Sherrie Levine's remade readymades as 'disguised readymades'.'What Levine's *Fountain* and Johns's *Painted Bronze* have in common is the remake of the readymade using fine-arts materials and methods, thus inverting, perhaps even subverting, the transgressive power of Duchamp's simple act of selecting a mass-produced object' (p.67).

My decision to make a work out of other works, fragments, is not really my decision but an inevitable consequence after realising, through poststructuralist theory, that there is no escape from using pre-existent material. Initially, I thought of the practice of appropriation as a practice in freedom, as a practice where 'anything goes,' since I could source material from both my dance and visual art backgrounds. Soon though, my decisions became self-conscious and of particular significance. Because of dealing with works/objects that assumed other contexts (other than the theatre) as their habitat (sometimes antithetical to dance), appropriation became a political stance where, through recontextualisation, I was actively contributing to the redefinition of the works I was using. This process is very accurately described by Buskirk when she writes

> The freedom to draw from multiple sources can also be seen as a form of pressure, however, since under these circumstances no artist can escape the obligation of having to make a series of self-conscious decisions about issues that include format, medium, context, content, appearance, duration, and relationship to precedents, with each read as a conscious choice and no decision that can be taken as assumed or given. The complexity of such positioning becomes even more evident when one considers the shifting status of apparent opposites running through many forms of contemporary art. These linked pairs include original/copy, performance/document, object/context, high/low, representation/ abstraction, or permanence/transience, with each subject to subtle combinations and overlays as well as a continuing process of redefinition (2003, p. 12).

It was again the notion of the readymade, which had already been central in the historical relation between dance and art, that opened the door for me to find new ways to approach the complicated past of *Les Noces* which, in my opinion, cannot be exhausted in its balletic representations. The readymade became the basis of this choreographic practice of translation in which I could potentially subtly incorporate multilayered references from the history of art and dance without relying on dance or art as mediums respectively.[66] The readymade as a choreographic approach allowed this Derridean read-

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[66]For example I did not rely on my drawing skills to 'make' a drawing or on the ballet technique of the performers to approach a ballet (*Les Noces*).

ing of *Les Noces*: existing between this tension of being all text and non-text. Thus, I started posing questions about whether other artworks could translate *Les Noces* and if so, which artworks would be more suitable? As a consequence, I started considering notions of equivalency from Translation Studies as well as constructing my own comparables after Ricœur. Later, assuming a different kind of authorship through the readymade as a choreographer I was posing questions such as: How would such translations alter *Les Noces* and the works chosen to translate *Les Noces*? Alternatively, what is *Les Noces*? Is it a ballet work, is it a music score, is it an agitprop project, is it a study of modernism or a Russian avant-garde painting? Of course, this study is not claiming to have found answers to all these questions but promises to exercise them all.

The works which are chosen to translate *Exercise: Les Noces* are 'remade' or 'disguised' readymades, or 'choreographic readymades' made in order to fit the context of theatre. Similarly to Jasper Johns and Sherrie Levine, I have used dance technique to transform a pre-existent cultural object to become choreography, and thus, through the readymade choreography (selection, designation, recontextualisation) I made choreography: the 'choreographic readymades.' Hence, Ron Arad's *Concrete Stereo* (1983) is remade, as theatrical set, to represent the muted subject the Bride; the music video *Nothing Compares 2U* (1990) is being re-performed 'live' to become the choreography for the *corps de ballet* of Scene I; Andy Warhol's *Invisible Sculpture* (1985) is a re-performed gesture of Warhol[67] and represents the Groom; Robert Longo's drawings, *Men in the Cities* (1979), are copied by the performers and provide the choreography of the *corps de ballet* for Scene II (*The Bridegroom's House*).[68]

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[67]To stand next to a plinth for a few minutes and then leave the white plinth next to his 'aura of celebrity'.

[68]There is however, one last readymade, that of the self-defence class which is presented as an alternative approach to *Les Noces*. The self-defence class, which I consider as the B-side of *Les Noces* is not a 'remade readymade' and thus, I consider it to have the most transgressive potential as it completely transforms the theatrical context, asks questions about the potential of the work as well as of the theatre as a practice of democracy.

Through consideration of the schema 'performance as translation,' performance isolates and frames the context within which the readymade can be designated 'original' status. Hence, it is through performance that the readymade performs anew but also assumes an author who abandons or removes the previous purpose and function from the readymade and, her performance becomes a comment of that previous function, status, and form.[69] Though this practice we can assume a different kind of authorship which is that of performance. The readymade can potentially become an original if it is translated and thus, performed and so the schema 'performance as translation' can potentially speak of an alternative, fluid kind of author who is a performer (translator, performer, and attendant). This kind of authorship is always co-authorship always incomplete, almost unconscious of its power, but powerful enough to make the change visible and author any text. Through the readymade, we can also understand translation as a choreographic practice which persists in the performing of the work.

The use of an object that has history addresses that history and activates that history of references (it can be seen as a text-in-afterlife) in a 'dramatised' dialogue between the previous authors of the work. Hence, to call a work a readymade is to insist on the multiplicity of the work[70] and its authors. It is to have already declared these works as non-originals. Thus, although my choreographic readymades are not produced under the principles of mass production, they are, in fact, standartised, institutionally objectified and canonised as works of art that participate in the art market and moreover, they are, in certain ways, produced by the mass which is the multiplicity of authors that have undeniably left their traces. To call a work a readymade is also to insist on the per-

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[69]For example when I use the music video *Nothing Compares 2U* as a readymade I am not responding just to the work itself but to a whole history related to the work's choreography and its popularisation as the cultural gesture of copying, lip-synching and so on.

[70]Understanding the works as multiple is to be able to read these videos, sculptures, objects as texts in translation. Therefore to seek its afterlife and hence the texts that precede, comprise and follow that text.

former's agency as they co-author the performance on stage too. Lastly, to call a work a readymade is to believe in the attendant's authority and authorship.

The processes of 'remaking' a readymade invites alternative thinking of the project of readymade altogether, in terms of how concepts travel in time and how they can subvert norms and forms in and in-between mediums. Hence, the inclusion of readymades in *Exercise: Les Noces* derives from a Benjamian reading of history as a constellation of separate events which if read together reveal a different significance of the relationship between the past and the present. The inclusion of readymades in *Exercise: Les Noces* insinuates the works allegiance to an alternate historical trajectory other than this of ballet, leading not to modernist 'purity' but to the Russian avant-garde with reference and quotation to a range of art as well as non-art sources. Also the use of readymades in *Exercise: Les Noces* does not respond to the high/low art or high/non-art binaries that seemed to preoccupy much of the discussion in art. Rather, I chose specific visual artworks to translate *Les Noces* in order to contribute to the historical dialogue between the two art forms and possibly disturb the remains of the old visual art/dance binary[71] discussion. Therefore it is not the juxtaposition of everyday movement with a dance technique which is of importance here but the act of 'remaking' of the choreographic readymades which involves the dance/art dialogue and/or distinction and hence, the expansion of their definitions.

The performed changes which involve explicit shifts from one medium to another reveal the tremendous power of this process of translation. Layers of images, voices, forms, and movement subjected to multiple processes of translation extend throughout the afterlives of these texts and are invited to perform anew, to coexist, to discuss and possibly change. These translations from one medium to another which are made possi-

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[71] Which according to the Greenbergian analysis was an art/non-art binary. Please refer to the previous discussion in pp. 75-85.

ble through the choreography of the 'readymade' subsequently function like a wedge, contributing to the fracturing of the idea of the medium altogether. Thus, there is no drawing, or sculpture, or dance anymore, just their choreography, which is, according to Spångberg, just a structure, a knowledge or a semiotic system which negotiates along with the performers and the attendants its translatability and afterlife (2017, p.367).

Chapter Two: *Les Noces*

2.1 *Les Noces* (1923)

Les Noces premiered at the *Theatre de la Gaite-Lyrique* in Paris on June 13, 1923, for *Ballet Russes*. The choreography was created by Bronislava Nijinska, the music was composed by Igor Stravinsky, and Natalia Goncharova made the scenography and costumes. The ballet's theme was a peasant wedding portraying the folkways and rituals of the Russian countryside prior to the Russian Revolution. It was a highly symbolic, semi-abstract, modernist work depicting certain social, artistic and political currents of its time. Nijinska's dancing tableaux described contemporary morals and traditions and emphasised the restrictive and oppressive nature of a woman's duty towards marriage (Brendan, 2003).

Towards a 'new dancer'

The work premiered six years after the Revolution of 1917 when Russian society had undergone dramatic changes. It was a time not only of particular political and cultural transformation but also when Russian history and the past was being reconstructed (Banes, 1998, p.108). The Revolution of October 1917, presented a unique opportunity to transform the political, economic and social aspects of Russian and to establish an unprecedented culture that would be as powerful, universal and monumental as the international proletariat.[1] As a consequence, the role of women both in the family as well as in their social manifestations was being drastically reconsidered for example, with the establishment of new marriage laws and the growth of a liberal feminist movement. As

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[1]Between 1917-22, which was the time of social disruption, disastrous emigration, economic ruin, Western blockade, and Civil War, the new Russians did not underestimated the force of art and literature. Lenin founded his Commissariat of Enlightenment (Ministry of Culture) almost immediately, art schools were reformed, art historical think tanks were established, private collection were nationalised and, to the slogan 'Art belongs to people', the avant-garde, for a dazzling moment, formed a leftist dictatorship in the cultural arena.

Banes argues, although the Bolshevik Party re-imagined a significant shift in the peasant class (most of the contemporary Russian population was rural), the peasants showed resistance and hostility towards any state authority, having organised their own internal moral, religious and cultural laws (1998, p.110). Therefore, peasant women did not experience any sense of female liberation.

The Revolution's transformative ideologies[2] sat easily with the kind of art Nijinska was interested in making. This is the transitional socio-political context within which *Les Noces* was created, and why Sally Banes reads it as 'an agitprop theatre piece designed to be taken by *Zhenotdel*' (the Women's Department of the Bolshevik Party) 'to the villages in order to educate peasant women about the social injustices they had long endured'(1998, p.110). During that period a woman entering into the family of her husband, through marriage, was more or less considered to join a business. Marriage was in part an economical deal which multiplied the working hands in the families. Not only did women marry to be taken as workers, but many times they endured both physical and sexual abuse within the marriage (Garafola, 1987, p.86). This is how Nijinska envisioned her Bride and Groom: through her appreciation and empathy towards their emotions. In her own words,

> I saw a dramatic quality in such wedding ceremonies of those times in the fate of the bride and groom since the choice is made by parents to whom they owe complete obedience — there is no question of mutuality of feelings. The young girl knows nothing at all about her future family nor what lies in store for her. Not only will she be subject to her husband, but also to his parents. It is possible that after being loved and cherished by her own kin, she may be nothing more, in her new, rough family, than a useful extra worker, just another pair of hands. The soul of the innocent is in disarray – she is bidding good-bye to her carefree youth and to her loving mother. For his part, the

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[2]Of course certain elements in the following years played a role in the return to a more conservative approach to art and these were certain demands of the masses for a simple and accessible style, party directives who insisted on a didactic art form, the association of abstract art with bourgeois decadence, and the continued support of many moderate artists of traditional portraits, nudes and landscapes against the avant-garde discoveries. Therefore the ranks of the avant-garde had been depleted by emigration or premature death.

young groom cannot imagine what life will bring close to his young girl, whom he scarcely knows, if at all....From this understanding of the peasant wedding, and this interpretation of the feelings of the bride and groom, my choreography was born. From the very beginning I had this vision of *Les Noces* (as cited in Johnson, 1987, pp. 154-155).

Nijinska creates *Les Noces* out of her own intense life experience in Revolutionary Russia. She states 'I was still breathing the air of Russia, a Russia throbbing with excitement and intense feeling. All the vivid images of the harsh realities of the Revolution were still part of me and filled my whole being' (as cited in Johnson, 1987, p.154). Also, Nijinska creates *Les Noces* after her formative period as an artist in Kiev where she developed her ideology about a new kind of dancer and movement art. She wanted to distance herself from the old ballet masters of the past like Marius Petipa whom she believed romanticised ballet. She resented anything that had to do with a virtuosity which made dance not an art but an 'acrobatism in various forms' (Garafola, 2011, p.120).

Her criticism of the existing dance establishment was not just centred on Petipa's[3] mainstream style which she believed was based on 'the virtuoso technique […] that had transformed ballet into a display of female bravura dancing' (p.120). She was equally critically standing against the pioneer of 'new style,' and her mentor Mikhail Fokine[4] whom she thought, similarly to Duncan, was uncritically copying the past:

> They understood that something was… wrong in choreography… So they looked to history,… and everything turned out to be very clear. The tutus were wrong. If it's Greece, there should be chitons. As for high legs and turn on point: the bas-reliefs show something very different. So one should take this and combine it with the chitons, and then it's all logical. […] Everybody is so blinded, so astonished by this 'otherness' that [they] take it for something genuine; […] And so… we are trying to replicate the 'real' Egypt and Greece, the 1840s, and Romantism in the new 'choreographic dramas' and 'choreographic pic-

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[3]Marius Petipa was considered at the time the absolute ballet master and choreographer. His choreographies include: *Don Quixote* (1869), *La Bayadère* (1877), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *The Nutcracker* (1892). He also revived many ballets and his versions have become definitive such as: *Le Corsaire, Giselle, Coppélia, La Fille Mal Gardée, Swan Lake* and many others.

[4]Fokine's works include: *The Dying Swan* (1907), *Les Sylphides* (1909), *The Firebird* (1910), *Spectre de la Rose* (1911), *Petrushka* (1912).

tures.' And the better they imitate the old art… the more they delight, because they are nuanced absolutely dissimilar from the old classical dance. Poor choreographers, how weak you must have been to allow this short-sighted Duncan to capture you (as cited in Garafola, 2012, p.121).

Newness for Nijinska, which was in agreement with the views of the Bolshevik party, represented a solely economic term that was transforming ballet into a market place and bodies into commodities: 'We go around in circles trying to invent something new and different… We turn into salesmen who want to sell their goods profitably and please their customers… Novelty of form deceives and intoxicates us' (cited in Garafola, 2011, p.123).

Nijinska instead, took her inspiration from artists like Malevich, Tatlin, Exter and the contemporary art movements of Constructivism and Suprematism. Her work was also in line with the Blue Blouse movement, the influential agitprop theatre collective of the early Soviet Union (1922-1991).[5] Nijinska's new art was exemplified by contemporary Constructivism paintings and the Suprematist manifesto of Kazimir Malevich which embraced anti-materialism and the primacy of pure feeling. In what follows I aim to demonstrate how Nijinska translated several ideas, concepts and images from the Russian avant-garde which in respect altered, enriched, reformulated and revised the mode of her choreography and her views on dance. I will examine the exploits of the Russian avant-garde through the prism of the 'new body' as imagined by the Russian artists of that period; for I would like to argue that much of the aesthetic energy latent in *Les Noces* has something to do with a broader, and more visionary search in the Russian avant-garde for a new physiology, for a revolution of the perpetual senses, and, ultimately, for a new human body.

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[5]Lyn Garafola (2010) points out that Nijinska initially wanted the costumes in *Les Noces* to resemble the blue uniforms worn by the Blue Blouse troupe and which were exemplary of the proletarian uniform. However, she was convinced by Goncharova that the brown costumes which were stressing the relation of the peasant community to earth were more appropriate (p.126).

According to John E. Bowlt, who specialises in the Russian avant-garde, many key painting and designs of the Russian avant-garde such as Goncharova's *Gathering Grapes* (1913), Malevich's *Red Square* (1915), Tatlin's *Tower or Monument to the III International* (1920), Lissitzky's *New Man* (1923) and Rodchenko's photographs of gymnasts (1936) are united by a common reassessment and reconstruction of the physical body. According to Bowlt, these works appear as blueprints of some vast project of genetic engineering, for a new human race (2002a, p.143).[6] The Russian avant-garde, which Nijinska seemed to be very much part of was, ultimately, an extremely complex philosophical and transcendental movement. The 'new man' was linked closely with particular perceptions and reception of the human body and reflected how the visual and performing arts artists envisioned the ideal inhabitant of their avant-garde landscapes.

During the 1910s and 1920s, Bowlt distinguishes three basic tendencies within the general artistic conception of the body: firstly, an obsession with the inside of the body and the representation of its inner organs; secondly, a concern with the sensual display and attraction of the outer body; and thirdly, an interpretation of the body as an automaton that extended the machine aesthetic, especially as influenced by the Constructivists (2002a, p.143). To a considerable extent, this aspiration to redesign the human body and create a perfect physique is a primary, recurrent theme of perhaps the greatest of the avant-garde painters such as Kazimir Malevich but also as we will see of Nijinska as well. The first tendency seems irrelevant to this study and the second one seems entirely antithetical to the aesthetics of Nijinska and *Les Noces*, yet it would shed some light on the general context within which Nijinska developed her project.

The second bodily conception which emphasises the external physique as a sensual facade is related to Leon Bakst, the great designer for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Eu-

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[6]There are many fields that still need to be explored and discussed which yet, I chose not to in this thesis such as the coincidences between Stalin's celebratory Socialist Realism and Hitler's Fascist Realism.

rope and America. Art historian Charles Spencer argues that Bakst bears the primary responsibility for this association, thanks to his costumes which emitted his obsessive eroticism and his interest in sex and violence (1973, p.69, 165). His heady mixtures of gold and red veils and mascara, express the transgressions of *Scheherazade* (1910) and *Narcisse* (1911) in order to allure Parisian audiences to the *Ballet Russes* spectacles just before the First World War. Bowlt says that Bakst's role in this second bodily orientation is vital because he was the first professional Russian designer on the public stage to expose the body deliberately and unashamedly for its 'erotogenous appeal' (2002a, p.145). Of course, in the idealised world of ballet, Bakst was dealing with 'perfect' physics and 'ideal' measurements, and the effects of the exposure of these bodies on the public were similar, as Bowlt adds, to the effect of Hollywood movies on the American and European audience.[7]

For more radical artists like Natalia Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, and Mikhail Mashkov an avant-garde conception of the body is of a primal source energy and strength rejecting the Bakstian emphasis on seduction in favour of 'puritanical health that transcended the wicked passions of the flesh'; therefore, the wrestlers, the boxers or the weightlifters become central images to their artistic endeavours (2002a, p.146). However, even for them, the representation of the body is considered, at times, superficial. Other artists and writers think in terms of actual reconstruction of the human body, supporting that the body had to be perfected or thoroughly transformed before a new art could be born. Hence, these artists were practising 'theosophy, vegetarianism and eurhythmical dancing' in order to obtain a new corporeal nobility (2002a, p.147). Kazimir Malevich is an emblematic figure in the quest for the restructuring of the hu-

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[7]'Even the perpetrators of this mania for physical presentability such a Bakst and Diaghilev were the victims of the same fashion, for as colleagues liked to comment with irony, the incremental disasters of Bakst's tempestuous love affairs were matched only by the increasing size of his toupee, while Diaghilev never ceased to charm his slender teenagers with the artificial silver on his carefully permed forelock' (Bowlt, 2002a, p.145).

man body. For Malevich this new person was to be immortal, of higher intellect, techno-logically efficient and transcendent, unaffected by crude emotions and thus, in his paint-ings is depicted deprived of facial features (2002a, p.148). The prototype of this new individual, for Malevich was situated at the Russian or Ukranian countryside, as his paintings are portraying peasants tilling the fields, reaping and harvesting, hauling water and hewing wood. It is easy to think of Nijinska's project when looking at those paint-ings, to think of her attempt to wash off the traditional ballet aesthetic as well as to take inspiration from peasant life and peasant bodies. I can even see Nijinska's project when I read Malevich's statement: 'I transformed myself in the zero of form and emerged from nothing to creation, that is to Suprematism, to the new realism in creation — to non-objective creation' (as cited in Bowlt, 2002a, p.156).

These general observations on the artistic interpretations of the human body dur-ing the Russian modernist period provide the relevant context for understanding Ni-jiska's research and principles of her School of Movement in Kiev. On 10 February 1919, she opened the School of Movement, (*Shkola dvizheniia* in Russian). Dance histori-an Lyn Garafola posits that the name of Nijinska's school was significant because of the curriculum which was mainly about 'movement,' not 'ballet' or even 'dance'.[8] Nijinska's school did not offer advanced or professional ballet classes in *pointe*, repertoire, or *pas de deux*. Instead, Nijinska's aim was to develop a well-rounded, contemporary dancer, who would be 'interested in creating dances as well as developing corporeal skill'[9] rather than

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[8]'Myroslava M. Mudrak, in a study of artistic modernism in the Ukraine, identified Nijinska's studio with the 'synthetic principles of the Dalcroze system' – thereby linking her work to that of local 'free' dancers, such as Adolfina Pashkovskaia, who taught dance and expressive movement at Kiev's Lysenko School; A. A. Romanovskii, who taught 'plastique' at A. M. Talnovskii's Opera Studio; or the Kharkov ballet teacher E. I. Vulf, whose classes at the Arts Guild incorporated 'much from the Dalcroze system'(Garafola, 2011, p. 130).

[9]In 1919 there were eleven students each in the beginning, intermediate, and advanced classes; by 1920 the number had jumped to twenty in each group, including eight boys. Classes began at 9 in the morning and lasted until 11 at night, with all three groups meeting together in the evening. In addition, the School offered movement classes for actors and opera singers (Garafola, 2011, p.131).

producing ballet professionals (2011, p.131). Nijinska's curriculum in the School of

Movement included: Classical and character dance, mime, and expression, as well as

free movement. The theoretical subjects included music and theory of music, aesthetics,

history of art and theatre, ethics, drawing, and painting. Her goal was to educate artists

both physically and intellectually, promoting their creativity instead of produing profes-

sional dancers who would serve the established ballet masters and companies (Garafola,

2011, p.120).

Nijinska's thoughts about dance were mostly exemplified through contemporary

painting. Her thoughts echo Kazimir Malevich, who argued in his Suprematism mani-

festo for 'the supremacy of pure feeling in creative art' and for the need to abandon the

objective world. 'Pictorial art,' says Nijinska,

> must cast aside the naturalism that enchains it. . . In an artist's canvas we
> should feel…the power of his idea and...the mood he seeks to convey....We
> don't need images of a human body or flowers, [n]o matter how they are
> painted....If we value an artist's creativity and expression, then these are the
> only things I want to see in a picture. I want to approach a picture and see only
> a symphony of colors' (as cited in Garafola, 2012, p.121).

The strangely inconspicuous but close, intimate and long collaboration with

Alexandra Exter, a leading artist of the Russian avant-garde was manifested in Nijinska's

research in drawing, colours, and lines as the basic blocks for building on abstract

movement. Nijinska thought of colour as something living, and painting as a model for

the new dance: 'Every dab should breathe; we should almost feel its movement, breath,

flow. . . .When we approach a picture, we should contemplate only the artist's spirit;

nothing should obstruct our perception of creativity (2012, p.121). She rejected natural-

ism and realism; she wanted to create abstract art forms, examining movement as op-

posed to ballet steps or ballet positions. She also, similarly to Benjamin, rejected histori-

cism, and thus as another Benjamian historian who draws constellations to study history,

she wanted to transform period material by treating it creatively rather than naturalisti-

cally (Garafola, 2012, p.130). We are indeed reminded of Benjamin and the task of his translator who is bound 'in finding the intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original' (1968, p.76)? For Nijinska, recreating history is really to be able to 'capture' a 'core plastic idea,' or the 'intended effect' after Benjamin, so that these fragments blast 'life out of a specific work,' for her translation to become a transformed work with new 'unexpected' meaning (1968, p.263).

Figure 1: *The Suprematist Mirror* (1923), Kasimir Malevich

Kazimir Malevich

The Suprematist Mirror

Amongst all the changing phenomena the essence of nature is invariable.

A. 1

The World as human distinctions
$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{God} \\ \text{The Soul} \\ \text{The Spirit} \\ \text{Life} \\ \text{Religion} \\ \text{Technology} \\ \text{Art} \\ \text{Science} \\ \text{The Intellect} \\ \text{Weltanschauung} \\ \text{Labour} \\ \text{Movement} \\ \text{Space} \\ \text{Time} \end{array} \right\} = 0$$

1. Science and art have no boundaries because what is comprehended infinitely is innumerable and infinity and innumerability are equal to nothing.
2. If the world's creations are God's paths and if "His ways are inscrutable", then both He and His path are equal to nothing.
3. If the world is the creation of science, knowledge and labour, and if their creation is infinite then it is equal to nothing.
4. If religion has comprehended God, it has comprehended nothing.
5. If science has comprehended nature, it has comprehended nothing.
6. If art has comprehended harmony, rhythm and beauty, it has comprehended nothing.
7. If anyone has comprehended the absolute he has comprehended nothing.
8. There is no existence either within or outside me; nothing can change anything, since nothing exists that could change itself or that could be changed.

A. 2

The essence of distinctions.
The world as non-objectivity.

Note: Retrieved from http://mathematicalpoetry.blogspot.com

Nijinska like Malevich speaks of 'creativity' and 'spirit,' aborting 'all reminiscences of the material world' and speaking 'in a cosmic language.'[10] 'The future,' she says, 'is

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[10]Benjamin's idea of 'pure language' as the language of all languages, as the language of total meaning is very similar to this idea of art as a cosmic language. Malevich's *Suprematist Mirror* (1923) as a study on absolute knowledge is exemplary of this idea.

the triumph of the spirit. In art the spirit alone must shine in everything. In pictorial art everything must be illuminated, down to the nail in the picture frame. No forms should obscure the expression of spirit' (2012, p.122). She speaks about the spirit as an attribute of the 'new human' who has the potential to transform society at large. Moreover, Nijinska describes the artist's project as that which awakens the individual to a realisation of his own spiritual potential 'to create a new man and a revolution of the cultural order as dramatic as the political changes taking place around her' (p.122).

The female artist

Bojana Cvejic in *Choreographing problems* (2015), as already noted in the previous chapter, claims that, 'the history of dance in the twentieth century can't be congruently translated by the art historical narrative' and she continues 'there are too few works of dance, in collaborations with artist from that period, that come close to the aesthetics of Dadaism, Futurism, Constructivism, etc.' (p.10). It is indeed hard to believe that the lack of parallelism between dance and art in history is solely a matter of quantity, of 'too few works' that manifest such a relationship. I believe that the problem is mainly certain cultural definitions of dance, art, and history and in fact, the lack of 'other' art or dance historical narratives.

A blatant example is the case of Bronislava Nijinska whose overall body of work lists more than 70 projects; nevertheless, widely known remain no more than four. To make things worse, these four choreographies have been reviewed as follows: 'her choreography never realised the potential suggested by *Les Noces*' (2014, Scholl, p.ix). One might ask: How is the potential of 'her' choreography different to *Les Noces*? If that critique implies that her other choreographies did not have the same potential, then one would also need to ask: Why? And most importantly: Who is the judge of her potential

or better, her choreography's potential? Ultimately, was it only up to Nijinska to realise her work's potential? Her contemporaries, colleagues, and critics had very convenient and rather blatant explanations to some of the questions above. The critic André Levinson, in his 1923 review on *Les Noces*, declared that 'her 'Marxist' creation had 'debased' the art of the dancer' (Garafola 2008, p78). Jean Cocteau, a fellow colleague, who was the librettist to a number of her works including *Les Biches* (1924), *Les Facheux* (1924) and *Le Train Bleu* (1924), suggested that the 'real' choreographer of *The Train Blue* was actually, George Braque (the designer) instead of Nijinska. The most 'amusing' of all comments came from her employer at the time, Sergei Diaghilev, the founder and director of Ballets Russes, who appears to have said: 'What a great choreographer Bronia would have been if only she was a man' (as cited in Sutton, 2013, p.154). Lynn Garafola, the dance historian who has dedicated a large part of her research to Bronislava Nijinska's work and legacy asserts that, these short references are exceptions, to the absolute ignorance that prevailed in terms of her name and work from critics, historians and colleagues (Arnold Haskel, Richard Buckle, Natalia Gontcharova to name a few). Although one can blame the Cold War for the oblivion of western dance history, as part of her story rested in the Soviet archives, we cannot undermine the fact that she was sister to Nijinsky; the brightest male ballet star of the twentieth century, thus 'the myth of his uniqueness demanded her erasure' (Garafola, 2008, p.78) as well as the fact that she was a woman doing a man's job.

Hence, most probably the problem is not the number of experimental/avant-garde choreographies that invite dialogue between dance and visual art at the beginning of the previous century as Cvejic claims, but the specific lineage of modern choreographers suggested by western dance history from which Nijinska is excluded. Although not wholly erased, she has always played a rather insignificant role in canonical dance histo-

ry either as a ballet artist, ballet choreographer, assistant choreographer, or Nijinsky's sister. However, she was never acknowledged as a leading figure of the avant-garde scene of modern dance and as a female choreographer who criticised ballet both as a system of representation and education and shook the established dance norms.[11]

Although she never identified herself as a feminist her ideas about the female dancer took a strong stance against existing representations that wanted the ballerina to be the symbol of femininity and its ethereality or mystique. During the years in Kiev, Nijinska changed not just her repertoire but her conception of dance altogether. She abandoned any ballerina aspirations[12] she might have had, and she worked towards this idea of the new dancer of the modern age. In 1921 writes to Diaghilev: 'I am not a. . . ballerina,' not even a 'second-rate ballerina.' And, she adds, speaking about herself in the third person, 'Nijinska is an exceptional talent, something special' (2011, p.138). Nijinska, taking the cue from Malevich's new human imagined the new dancer whose movement is not gender-specific. The female dancer she envisioned was freed from the pre-Revolutionary ballet aesthetic; instead she was powerful, strong and independent:

> If I somersault like a clown, and it expresses. . . the state of my soul, then it's the right thing to do. . . .I don't want the conventions of 'proper' and 'improper' to exist for the female dancer. Every movement, if it's new, is a find. So we should. do somersaults, headstands, climb trees, jump, clown. Every movement is a sound in our future symphony (as cited in Garafola, 2012, p.138).

Sally Banes traces an evolution in the representation of woman in the Ballets Russes works 'from the supernatural 'other' of *The Firebird*, to the sacrificial victim of *Sacre*, to the woman in the context of *Les Noces'*. For both *Firebird* and *Sacre* Sally Banes

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[11]However in 2015 BBC presented the documentary *Dance Rebels: A Story of Modern Dance* where Bronislava Nijinska is portrayed as a leading figure of the early 20th century avant-garde in dance (O'Brien, 2015).

[12]During the nineteenth-century, the ballerina was a symbol of femininity and its mystique. Nijinska as a student tried hard to master ballet's behavioural codes and technical demands that would create the impression of a graceful and beautiful dancer. Yet she seemed unable to grasp the gender role she was meant to play.

notes that 'where woman represents a political metaphor: monarchy or the nation, in *Les Noces*, she represents herself and her class' (1998, p.120).

Both as a dancer and choreographer, Nijinska, more than often, failed to identify with the gender roles as prescribed by her contemporary dance world and society. She confronted notions of 'proper' feminine behaviour as a choreographer in Ballet Russes, and she dismissed notions that movement and creativity were gender-specific. Nijinska was the female alterity within a male-dominated ballet world; and although many times she was forced to change her ideas, choreography or manners in order to survive professionally and artistically, there were instances when 'freedom from dominant definitions of gendered behaviour covered' her roles as performer and dance creator (Burt, 1998, p. 27). One can see in Nijinska, the alterity within the norm that defines the limits of the canon. Regardless of the compromises that she needed to make in order to survive professionally and socially, there are highly experimental moments in her work, that have been ignored or forgotten by the dance historical consensus. These are instances of brilliance which tested the limits of choreography, ballet, and dance in 1923 and which also have the power to reconfigure what we consider ballet, dance and choreography today.

Judith Butler in 'Universality in Culture' (2002) forms an idea of universals as defined by what they exclude. Universality for her is articulated 'In response to its own excluded outside'.

> If standards of universality are historically articulated, then it would seem that exposing the parochial and exclusionary character of a given historical articulation of universality is part of the project of extending and rendering substantive the notion of universality itself (p.47).

She adds that, what initially seems contradictory or impossible through cultural translation, is what eventually exposes the limits of current notions of universality. By bringing 'otherness' within its scope, translation constitutes a challenge to the existing standards to revise them more expansively and inclusively. Being 'undone' by cultural

otherness means subverting dominant universalising claims, allowing new openings for previously foreclosed subjectivities and forging new languages that belong to no single group (p. 168-69). 'The process by which the excluded within the universality is readmitted into the term is what Butler calls 'cultural translation' — as a 'return of the excluded' — which is also the only promoter of today's democracy' (Buden, 2006). Therefore what I want to propose in relation to Butler's assertion is: if western modern dance history does not recognise Nijinska as a radical choreographer of modernity could it be that we need to reconsider, if not revise, a more inclusive or expansive definition of modern dance history? Thus, I believe, in many ways, the translation of Nijinska's *Les Noces* has the potential to invite the 'return of the excluded.'

Les Noces, from the Byzantine icon to Suprematism

Les Noces has a strong reference to the icons of Byzantine painting 'thus invoking the church, the cult of the Virgin Mary and the saints' in order to create an aesthetic result that complements the emotional development of her characters as martyrs of the marital drama (Banes, 1998, p.112).

The choreography is following the rules of 'reverse perspective' of Byzantine iconography in which, the most important rather than the closest forms to the spectator are larger. Nijinska delegates the leading roles of the Bride and Groom considering the performers' height rather than their technique, which she underscores by choosing their positioning carefully in the choreography too. There is a tendency towards a schematic, without depth, representation of the body which also reveals her anti-realistic, abstract annihilation trends. She elongates the figures of the female dancers by putting them *en pointe*, once more referencing the Orthodox iconography. Nijinska succeeds in stressing flatness and the frontal effect of her choreography by asking her dancers to turn out the

palms of their hands or moving mainly sideways and not turning away from the audi-
ence (Johnson, 1987, p.158). She often arranges the performers in blocks or masses
omitting the naturalistic details allowing the abstraction and rhythmic repetition pat-
terns to reveal what is considered essential for a performance of symbolic content. The
geometric shapes of triangles are predominant within the choreography symbolising the
ultimate destiny of the human which is that of spirituality.

Eliciting parallels between *Les Noces* and Malevich's Suprematist paintings are evi-
dent once we compare the suspension of time in the slow movement of the Bride and
the Groom in the ballet to the lack of shadow or cross-bearing of Malevich's figures as a
notion of the transcendental. We can also compare the eerie silence of Malevich's face-
less, armless peasants to the lack of facial or bodily expression in all of the performers in
Les Noces.

Figure 2: Photograph of *Les Noces*, Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires, 1923


Note: From the Library of Congress, Music Division Retrieved from https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.
200156343/.

However, *Les Noces* alludes to the icon not just in terms of its content; Natalia Gon-
charova's set design seems very much in synch with the Byzantine paintings. The icon is

a two-dimensional painting, yet the specific spatial organisation, of 'reverse perspective,' suggests, as art critic Noemi Smolik posits, different spatial domination with a theological justification (2001, p.211). In order to accentuate the singularity of what is portrayed and not surrender to the space in which each Scene is displayed, as it happens within the system of central perspective, 'reverse perspective' records the event from several viewpoints, all of which direct the viewer's gaze to the central event (Smolik, 2001; Pavlopoulos, 2016).[13]

Figure 3: Design for Scene IV of the ballet *Les Noces* by Natalia Goncharova; 1923.
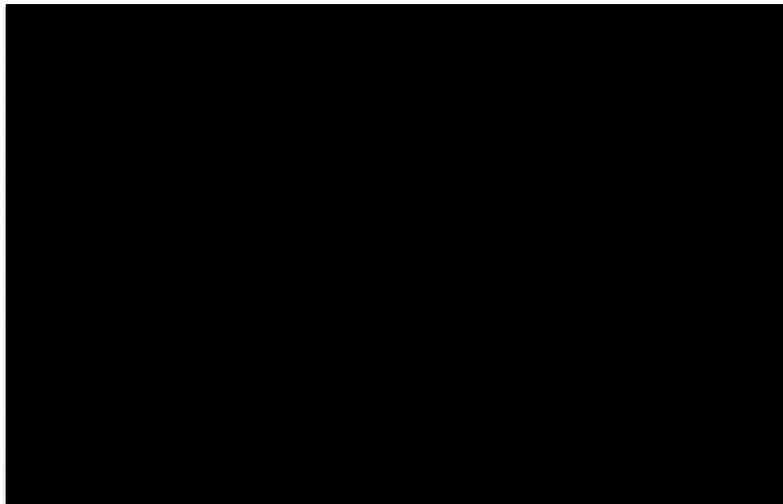
Note: From V&A Prints, Drawings & Paintings Collection. Retrieved from https://collections.vam.ac.uk/

Let us look at the stage design of Scene IV (*The Wedding Feast*) of *Les Noces*. While the individual viewpoints are constructed according to the laws of classical perspective which is especially evident from the architectonic elements (upper stage and lower stage), the organisation of the stage as a whole is not subordinated to a unified perspective. On the contrary, the stage is constructed from two or three viewpoints (e.g.. lower stage-outdoors, upper stage-indoors, open door-further indoors), giving the viewer the impression of walking in space and each time looking at it anew. Therefore, in contrast to the central perspective view, the stage design by Natalia Goncharova for *Les Noces* is neither uni-

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[13]Gabo, the Russian artist, stated that the reason for French Cubism being accepted so quickly in Russia was because of Russian art being traditionally influenced by the Orthodox icon i.e. Mikhail Vrubel, engaged with 'reverse perspective' which prepared the ground for the deconstruction of the conventional space based on central perspective (Read & Martin, 1961, p.158).

fied nor static.[14] The realistic natural or architectural landscape of depth has given way to the uniform monochrome brown for the land, which not only removes from every single scene any reference to the place and time of earthly reality but also, allows the emergence of the human form from the flat, two-dimensional monochrome background.

Figure 4: View of the *0,10* exhibition, 1915, Petrogad
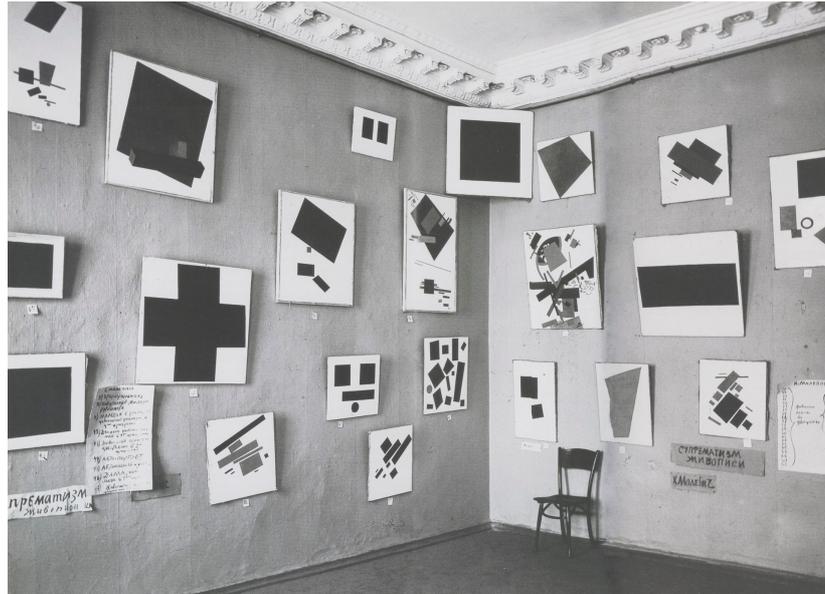
Note: From Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/0,10_Exhibition

Looking at a photograph showing Malevich's group of Suprematist painting for the exhibition *0,10* (1915-1916) we can observe that the artist places his emblematic *Black Square* (1915)[15] painting diagonally in the upper corner of the exhibition room; thus, he sets up a direct connection with the symbolic space of the icon common in Orthodox households. As Byzantine art professor Christine Stephan-Kaissis observes Malevich regarded his painting as an icon (2002, p.233). Looking at the set design of *Les Noces,* one notices a similar placing of the couple and their family in Scene IV of the

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[14]This interpretation of space also informs the choreographic choices in *Exercise: Les Noces*, as I deliberately showcase the work as an installation and therefore, the choices of viewpoint and duration of the work multiply to become as many as the attendants of the work.

[15]*Black Square* is frequently invoked by critics, historians, curators, and artists as the 'zero point of painting', referring to the painting's historical significance in modernism and the avant-garde paraphrasing Malevich (Bowlt, 2002b, p.193).

work; quite off centre, the upper stage presents a diagonal view of a room, populated by the newly married couple and their parents. Similarly to Malevich's *Black Square,* the upper stage seems to occupy the symbolic space of an Orthodox icon thus representing the martyrs of the marital drama (Stephan-Kaissis, p.234).

Furthermore, the theme of *Les Noces* which is the ritual of the wedding, and the Byzantine iconography from which Nijinska took her inspiration seems to be a current, and common influence for the Suprematists and more specifically for Kazimir Malevich. Malevich simulates the artistic task to the original task of the Byzantine artist in the field of religious imagery which is to reveal a hidden world of invisible forms. The sole goal of Byzantine art throughout the Middle Ages had been to depict the intelligible. Byzantine art was based on the ideas that the ordinary image which is conveyed to our eyes (in a physical sense) could under special conditions initiate a process, through which the spectator (through her mental eye) would be able to contemplate a higher spiritual reality. Consequently, the artist's task was to evoke this hidden but intelligible world (Stephan-Kaissis, 2002, p.231).[16] It seems to me that this was precisely the point that was taken up by some Russian avant-garde artists, and therefore by Malevich, and as an extension by Bronislava Nijinska. Suprematist art unveiled a world of ideas hidden in the former Byzantine work of intelligible reality; a world, however, that in the art of Bronislava Nijinska was to become unequivocally modern. As she was taking the step to non-objective/abstract choreography, Nijinska was confronted with the problem of representing her own personal invisible images. Throughout her choreography one can recognise a constant attempt to choreograph the invisible, the hidden, the concealed the unfathomable, the sacred: the sacred bondage of marriage, the violence within the marriage, the place and status of the woman in rural Russia, but also her aspiration for a

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[16]Such an idea of the intelligible is obvious in the dramaturgy of *Les Noces.* The actual wedding is never represented in *Les Noces*- representation of any church Mystery would be considered blasphemy to the Orthodox tradition. Hence, all we see in *Les Noces* is the before and after of the wedding.

new machine-like body, new dance and ultimately a new society. The way to materialise

the artistic visions or ideas was to make an imprint of them on stage, while the act of

dancing had to be reduced to 'pure' movement, movement signs as opposed to ballet

steps which had the potential to carry the intelligible, the fewest possible elements[17],

hence 'abstraction through reduction'(Banes, 1989, p.111).

> Although in certain cases real human actions are meant to be represented in
> the choreography of *Les Noces*, such as the braiding of the Bride's tresses, the
> Bride's journey in a cart at the end of the Third Tableau, and the "sobbing" of
> the Bride and her attendants maidens in the First Tableau, these acts are not
> represented literally. Instead, they are portrayed in an abstract yet suggestive
> fashion that is a function of pure plastique (Johnson, 1987, p.163).

Les Noces as a Constructivist relief

Another reading of *Les Noces* that highlights Nijinska's aesthetic choices, through

the lens of the social context within which the work was created but also, the leading

role that current visual art played in the making of *Les Noces,*[18] is provided by the terms,

'painting relief'[19] or ' three dimensional painting'[20] which were advanced by Tatlin and

Malevich, in an attempt to define Constructivist sculptures (Smolik, 2001, p.214). The

main reason for the existence of these terms is the tradition of Russia whose genuine

expression was the icon, and which did not recognise three-dimensional works. Three-

dimensional sculptures[21] were forbidden for theological reasons, because of the danger

that they might resemble reality too closely. This fact is also reflected in the Russian lan-

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[17]Thus the sequence of stabbing *couru en pointe* which simulates the violence on the marital bed. Another example would be the leaps of the *corps de ballet* with which the Bride is escorted off stage that represent the rough road of the countryside that the Bride takes to go to the church.

[18]And perhaps one of the reasons that allowed me to think and realise the translation of *Les Noces* through other works of visual art.

[19]As Tatlin described and characterised his reliefs.

[20]Malevich too, in his retrospective reflections on Constructivism speaks of three 'dimensional paintings' referring to reliefs (Smolik, p.214).

[21]Russian artists, as Gabo remembers from his childhood, were unfamiliar with three-dimensional art works, with one exception of minted coins (Smolik, p.214).

guage, which possesses no native word for three-dimensional artworks. Whereas there is a distinctive expression for 'painting' (that of *zivopis* as Smolik notes), which is made up of the words 'living' and 'writing' and means, more or less, 'written by life',[22] for three-dimensional works the Latin-derived term 'sculpture' was adopted in the way used in Western Europe (Smolik, p.214). Consequently, for Nijinska to propose a ballet (a three-dimensional work) inspired by the two-dimensional Byzantine icons must have been a radical break with tradition.

It is interesting to read *Les Noces* as a series of 'painting reliefs.' There is a tendency towards the schematic, without depth, representation of the body which also reveals her anti-realistic, abstract annihilation trends. This idea of the two-dimensional sketch which is deeply rooted in the concept and realisation of *Les Noces* demonstrates the co-operation of the visual art and choreography if not their interdependence.[23] Translation theory only underlines this relation as both languages, the visual and dance, are expanded and enriched with new concepts and forms. The movement ceases to be descriptive and virtuosic and becomes internal, simple, geometric, almost a choreography of the absolutely necessary movement, just like a sketch or a drawing which is deprived of the illusions of space, volume or colour. In a way, Nijinska de-links the movement from the bodies. The dancing movement like the movement of the machine animates the bodies. The movement is not coming from within the body as an expression of feelings (as in modernism), or as a stylistic representation of the body (as in ballet) instead, it is what makes the bodies of the performers human. The movement grounds the bodies and shows them for what they are as opposed to the ethereal movement of the supernatural

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[22]*Zivopis,* or 'written by life', seems a perfect analogy for Nijinska's notion of choreography. As I will examine later, Nijinska's choreography was written through abstract movement. It was the abstraction of movement that constructed the choreography and not the dance steps which followed a narrative.

[23]Although first impulses to nonhuman movement are already envisioned in historical avant-garde (the few works in which these ideas pierce through include Oscar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* (1927) and Edward Gordon Craig's thesis on *Übermarionette* (1908)), they have been explicitly foregrounded in dance in Europe only over the past two decades (Cvejic, 2015, p.22).

creatures in classical ballet (fairies, sylphides, swans and so on). At the same time, as the movement is associated with the machine, these animated bodies are also 'superhuman,' like Malevich's Suprematist beings — larger than life, streamlined, immortal, descendants of the robust, vigorous peasants. Nijinska's project through movement is threefold: firstly, she is able to realise the Constructivist project which is all about imagining an immediate future of technological efficiency and mechanical marvel; secondly, she manages to describe the post-revolutionary Soviet ideology which aspires to organise the whole of society in accordance to the image of the machine;[24] thirdly, Nijinska embraces the principles of Suprematist art choreographing the secret, 'non-representational' inner rhythm of life; Nijinska's art derives from the Suprematist understanding of time and space as a whole and therefore, understands art as non-hierarchical which is accessible to everyone.[25]

The concept of time, as well as the idea of movement in space, seems to give a whole new grasp to *Les Noces* as a three-dimensional installation. *Les Noces* seems to be composed of a sequence of two-dimensional images which come to life through the constant movement of the bodies. In other words, the bodies through movement, bring the work to life, almost like the mechanical and circular movement of the movie projector.[26] Making images spatial constructions with traces of an enigmatic fusion of science, technology and aesthetic and as an extension making three-dimensional art[27] constituted the essence of Constructivism but also spoke at the heart of Nijinska's project; it ex-

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[24]Hence the views about *Les Noces* being an agitprop work.

[25]From this reading of *Les Noces* critique to Nijinska is derived debasing the art of ballet to a Marxist project, accessible to everyone by André Levinson.

[26]Here I am thinking that the choreography of Nijinska could almost be perceived as a film, composed of a sequence of images that are animated through the movement of the bodies of the performers. Hence there is a parallel between the projection machine and the body. This is idea is partly explored through the similar alteration of images or tableaux in *Exercise: Les Noces*.

[27]This expansion of originally two-dimensional forms constitutes the essence of Constructivism, which is to be distinguished from traditional sculpture, formed from mass and volume and standing statically in space.

pands the language of dance to be perceived as schematic and two-dimensional, as a procession of images that extend in time and space; and moreover, proposes movement as the animating force that puts everything and everyone in motion.

Nijinska is the first choreographer who chooses to underline the role of the *corps de ballet.* The leading roles of the Bride and Groom are anonymous and exist symbolically within her tableaux, but their movement is minimal in comparison to a well-operating machine of bodies that comprise the *corps de ballet.* Nijinska, also influenced by Futurism, laid the foundations for a new dancing language which had internalised the spirit of the machine age. Collective movement is privileged against individuality recalling the movement of machines and casting the escape of participants from their destiny hopeless. She arranges the performers in blocks or masses omitting the naturalistic details allowing the abstraction and rhythmic repetition patterns to reveal what is considered essential for a performance of symbolic content. The geometric shapes of triangles are predominant within the choreography symbolising the ultimate destiny of human which is that of spirituality after Suprematism. Movement is not decorative or an exhibition of virtuosity or an expression of feelings or serving a narrative. Movement is de-linked from the body, as it is not personal, but it is independent, powerful, simple and abstract. Nijinska's choreography is the movement of the masses as well as a sign of the intelligible that speaks to the heart and soul of her audiences.

The linguist Roman Jakobson at the time a young poet and a friend of Malevich, translated *stroenie* with the word 'structure' and spoke of 'structural' instead of constructive art. Jakobson, who participated actively in the discussion between 1913 and 1915 did not choose by chance the Latin-derived 'structure'. From it he then derived in 1929 the designation of his concept of scholarship, which shifted the emphasis from a static, historical examination of a sequence of processes to an investigation a totality, made up

by many structures, and its inner laws. He called this concept 'structuralism', thus coining the keyword for one of the most far-reaching, interdisciplinary academic upheavals of the twentieth century. Jakobson was the one of the great catalysts of intellectual life; Claude Levi-Strauss, one of his students, carried on expanding his ideas. Whenever Jakobson was asked about the origin of his ideas, he mentioned avant-garde art in Russia before 1917. In fact, his theory arose from an opposition to the absolute claim of western thinking, and contains clear parallels with the artistic developments of the time. The starting point of his method is a critique of pure reason and of the idea of the subject as a figure, which can objectively recognise what it encounters. His scepticism of a purely western orientation of the concept of history in permanent progression also opened up an approach, in various academic disciplines, cultures and epochs, which of course included Orthodox culture and its icons. Hence, the possibility to arrive at new knowledge through an alternative route had already been demonstrated by the Russian artists some years before Jakobson's structuralist method (Smolik, pp. 216-218). Considering the Russian avant-garde as a point of departure for Structuralism paintings, words, movements are not just reproductions of thoughts, ideas or philosophical theories to Constructivism; they are something more, because they are actively involved 'constructively' in their formation. This is the aim of Nijinska's art too, which no longer creates any likenesses, but participates 'constructively' in the production of a new concept of dance which is ultimately, a new representation of society.

The concept of the machine is reflected in Nijinska's choreography both as a perception of the movement of the individual body as well as in the movement of the mass. These representations of the machine-body and machine-society which deprives movement of virtuosity and thus, the work's 'function' as ballet or 'high art' confesses Nijinska's aspirations for a new concept of movement and art altogether which first of all per-

forms a break with tradition. Nijinska's choreography attests to her interest in the industrial machine as the generator of repetitive movement and the provider of communal products. The non-functional machine was of interest for some of the Constructivists artists and can be compared to Tatlin's *Letatlin* (1932) project which was a flying (non-flying) machine. The Constructivist machine was an industrial machine but also an archaic, magical instrument like the body which identified with an archaic stratum of Russian life, Russian folk art, and language. In my opinion, this interpretation of *Les Noces* acquires that humanist dimension that derives from the Russian tradition as a symbol not of the 'new man' but of the 'little man' who cannot escape his destiny as Boris Groys observes (2001, pp.165-166).[28] From this point of view, Nijinska's work may as well be interpreted as inappropriate, magical, wild, even an amateurish example of choreography which should not be called ballet.[29] Therefore, in light of the machine, I am able to read an idea of progress in Nijinska's project which first of all sustains a kind of defeat in order to gain artistic value. Hence, this defeat which in *Les Noces* is the lack of virtuosity and individuality becomes the common denominator between Nijinska's choreography and Duchamp's concept of readymades. It is thus translation that allows this reading, so that parallels can be drawn in the artistic concerns between Nijinska and Duchamp, and which also allows a historical reading of art that does not distinguish dance from visual art pursuits.

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[28]Nijinska refers to the 'fate' of the Bride and the Groom and their obedience to the laws of the family. But also could this be a description of the Communist utopia? 'the social-industrial Communist machine appeared more honest and truthful than the 'idealism' of traditional society and its art, so they accepted this 'machine honesty' without unreservedly sharing in the related hopes for a bright future' (Groys, 2001, p.166).

[29]This is meant both as reminiscent of her contemporaries' critique as well as a critique of canonical modern dance history narratives. In this light Nijinska's work functions as an untranslatable: it should be called ballet and it shouldn't be called ballet.

Stravinsky's *Les Noces*

Stravinsky's music score for *Les Noces* is in agreement with Nijinska's aspirations towards abstraction and spirituality. However, according to Stravinsky, the 'perfectly homogenous, perfectly impersonal and perfectly mechanical' result was not achieved until few weeks before *Les Noces* premiered (as cited in van den Toorn & McGinness, 2013, p.55). Initially, both Stravinsky and Goncharova envisioned the music score and costumes as a narration of a festive wedding celebration. It was, therefore, Nijinska's input that changed Stravinsky's initial idea towards a simplified and minimal production. The initial idea for the theme of the wedding was Stravinsky's altogether; his intention was 'not … the dramatisation of a wedding or a staged wedding spectacle' but as Banes puts it, 'an abstract selection and distillation of the rich-socio-religious folk material connected to the Russian peasant wedding' (1989, p.108). Moreover, the influence of Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk*[30] of a 'total work of art' where all elements of the spectacle (dance, music, and poetry) contribute equally in the making of the work, is very present in Stravinsky's writings when he describes how he envisioned the dancers and the musicians side by side on stage.

> According to my idea, the spectacle should have been a *divertissement*…. I wanted all my instrumental apparatus to be visible side by side with the actors or dancers, making it, so to speak, a participant in the whole theatrical action. . . . The fact that the artists in the scene would uniformly wear costumes of a Russian character while the musicians would be in evening dress not only did not embarrass me, but, on the contrary, was perfectly in keeping with my idea of a *divertissement* of the masquerade type (as cited in Johnson, 1987, p.152).

The idea for a community, where everyone is working towards a common goal finds its ideal realisation in the making of *Les Noces*. The construction of *Les Noces*'s *libretto* does not have prescribed character roles. For example, the singing parts of the Bride or Groom are sung not by one, but by different members of the choir. One could argue

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[30]Please go to *Exercise 5* in p.151 for a more detailed examination of *Les Noces* as a Russian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

that Stravinsky's *libretto* bears many similarities with the practices of oral tradition which I believe was in Stravinsky's intentions: to achieve, at least in effect, through the many voices of the choir, a communal, multi-authored work that reflects the social and political realities of the time.

> Individual roles do not exist in Les Noces, but only solo voices that impersonate now one type of character and now another. Thus the soprano in the first scene in not the bride, but merely a bride's voice;… The fiancé's words are sung by a tenor in the grooming scene, but by a bass at the end… (as cited in Johnson, 1987, p.149).

As a collection of clichés and quotations of typical wedding sayings, *Les Noces* might be compared to the scenes in *Ulysses* (1922) in which the reader seems to be overhearing scraps of conversation without the connecting thread of discourse. But *Les Noces* might also be compared to *Ulysses* in the broader sense that both works are trying to perform rather than describe citationality (cited in Van den Toorn & McGinness, 2012, p. 62).

According to the music professors Pieter van den Toorn and John McGinness, Stravinsky composes *Les Noces* as a result of the symbiosis of the composer folk sources and his imagination (2012, p.131). Stravinsky came to view the Russian folk tradition as a natural resource, 'a vein of inspiration that could be mined and processed at will' (p. 63). Therefore, Stravinsky creates a score as 'a form of improvisation *a la maniere de*,' where, during the compositional process and with the assistance from 'the composer's 'unconscious folk memory,'' along 'with the ways and means of his own stylistic devices,' bits and pieces of folk music become part of the work (2012, p.122). As a result, Stravinsky does not quote directly folk music and songs but manipulates small musical structures which belong to traditional music but are digested and performed through a rather personal repertoire of short music quotes.

> For Stravinsky's 'folk' music is based not so much on the direct quotation preexisting melodies as on the manipulation of small musical structures, (…) his

melodies are built from small melodic units.[…]These small melodic units are sustained through 'repetition, juxtaposition and of course, patterns of accentuation. Fundamentally rhythmic in design, this latter type of invention underlies the mosaic-like character of melody in Les Noces, the cutting and pasting of small segments, motives, and sub motives (2012, p.68).

Stravinsky's final orchestration for the 1923 performance settled on an opposition between instruments with and without definite pitch. The piched instruments are four pianos (nonmechanical), a xylophone and timpani, two crotales and a bell while the other group contains two side drums, two regular drums, a tambourine, bass drum, cymbals and a triangle (Johnson, 1987, p.150). This is the third and final version of *Les Noces's* orchestration that Stravinsky decided just a few weeks before the work's premiere. The opposition between instruments with and without pitch represent, according to Johnson, the two states of mind: the rational and the unconscious, or the everyday experience of time (χρόνος ,<chronos>) and the immutable, atemporal, ritual time (καιρός <kairos>) (pp.150-151). The inexactitude of pitch is characteristic of early Russian music history,[31] but it is prohibited from the Orthodox Russian Church. Hence, 'the Sacred and the Profane time' are represented in opposition, attesting to *Les Noces's* spirituality and 'debate each other until the end, when the Sacred emerges victorious' through the depiction of the 'spiritual transcendence' in which the Bride and the Groom 'become one with each other and with nature'(Johnson, p. 151).

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[31]Exact pitch was not recorded until around AD1700 (Johnson, 1987, p.151).

2.2 *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017)[32]

Sunday 29 January 2017, 16.00 pm

Caroline Gardens Chapel, Asylum Road,

SE15 2SQ

Credits:

Concept/Choreography: Elena Koukoli

Performers / Choreography: Irene Fiordilino, Hattie Harding, Eve Hopkinson,

  Lewis Sharp, Robert Suchy, Jay Yule, Nicole Lomas (Tai Chi instructor)

Composer: Andreas Papapetrou

Dramaturgy: Martin Hargreaves, Elena Koukoli

Set design and realisation: Elena Koukoli, Simos Veis

Costume: Pagona Koukoli

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[32] Please see Appendices 1(A) and 1(B) for video documentation. Additionally, please see Appendices 3, 4, 5, 6 for music, scores and other elements from the installation

A Description

Exercise: Les Noces pushes the limits of performance by interweaving music, dance and visual art. The work translates Bronislava Nijinska's iconic ballet *Les Noces* to an installation of 'choreographic readymades'; the main characters of the ballet (the Bride and the Groom) are substituted with iconic sculptures/design objects, performances, music videos such as Ron Arad's *Concrete Stereo* (1983), Andy Warhol's *Invisible Sculpture* (1985), Sinead O'Connor's *Nothing Compares 2 U* (1990). All works are replicas/copies of the originals; however, the set does not intend to become an environment that supports and surrounds the performers but to be a performer; to be set in motion, dancing.

Throughout the four-hour live-installation, the audience is encouraged to move around, come and go as they please, fade out and rejoin or even attend a self-defence class. *Exercise: Les Noces* expands the conventional verges of dance performance, introducing a durational installation that challenges the frames of both theatre and gallery. Eras and styles are eclectically chosen and juxtaposed creating a curious fusion and an ambiguous durational work. Bodies and set create a series of tableaux that draw upon and depart from the dark, disturbing qualities of the original ballet and occasionally evoke joyfully heroic collectivity and the possibility of feminist empowerment. My intention is to promote critical thinking within choreography; a chance to examine our human potential beyond individualised, self-interested paths and to better understand existing performance and theatre structures in order to translate, perform and thus, reimagine them.

Exercise: Les Noces was premiered in London, at the Asylum, on 29 January 2017. It was presented as part of the Trinity Laban performance series Parallax.

Exercise 1: On Crying (The Bride)

The designer, Ron Arad at the beginning of his career, used appropriation as his essential design process utilising, remixing and, eventually, transforming and adapting pre-existing elements. For his famous *Concrete Stereo* (1983) where he cast the components of a hi-fi stereo in concrete, Arad borrowed material from construction sites playing around with destruction aesthetics and the spirit of 'rugged individualism' and 'post-punk nihilism'(National Museums Liverpool, 2013). His objects also subscribe to the notion of producing several copies of objects that nonetheless can be regarded as unique or original. As the art critic Raymond Guidot states:

Similar from one group to another, the objects, thanks to the subtle use of mastered defects, are nonetheless different. In fact, […] it's the material in the way it's implemented freely that calls the shots. It does so by refusing to fit the mould. Soon this will be in his skin spasms reacting to impacts and the action of fire (Guidot and Boissière, 1997, pp. 12-13).

Figure 6: Concreted Bride from *Exercise: Les Noces* (2014)

Note. Copyright 2014 by L. Cognes.

Using concrete to fill his moulds Arad creates something less than perfect copies. The mould for Arad which is nothing but his 'copier machine,' is, by default, a broken machine, unable to achieve sameness. Nevertheless, this is exactly the reason why Arad uses this 'machine'. His copying action produces originals because it relies on the art/design market which 'casts' them as originals. Ron Arad's material choice produces bad copies which, in retrospect, are read as originals by the art market in order to gain design or art status of 'unique' aesthetic value. Moreover, moulding a stereo in concrete produced something less than high-quality sound, which additionally challenged ideas about the consumer ethos. Therefore, Arad's cheap, low-quality, inappropriate or ineffective use of the material is a rather effective comment on the art market economy

which is desperate to acknowledge originals in order to create surplus value. Only a few *Concrete Stereos* were made, but the idea was stolen, and many replicas appeared on the market since then, including my own in *Exercise: Les Noces*.

In this Exercise, utilising *Concrete Stereo* as a score, I was able to examine my own choreographic practice as 'comparable' to the practice of a designer tracing the histories of the objects and the performances of the bodies involved. If, as stated before, translation is the performance of the 'choreographic readymade', then the term needs to be addressed as a process rather than a result. The performance/translation is the never-ending process of accumulation of the texts that, in this case, *Concrete Stereo* has performed. The replica of Arad's *Concrete Stereo* was made out of polystyrene foam sheets. The dimensions of the speakers were slightly exaggerated anticipating the circumstances under which the object would be on display in order to be visible from afar. *Concrete Stereo* was 'cast' by me to play the role of the Bride in *Exercise: Les Noces* because of its verticality and the aesthetics of a demolition site, as a reminder of Nijinska's thoughts on the female subjectivity and on the role of woman in marriage in the pre-revolutionary Russia.[33] *Concrete Stereo* and the Bride are 'remade' readymades — replicated texts or texts in translation — and so they invite us to read with a focus on the connection between them and the texts they 'translate'; just as with the relationship between Benjamin's ideas and their development by Derrida. *Concrete Stereo* comes with the prescribed role of a replicator rather than a performer and becomes the perfect equivalent to the role of the woman in the beginning of the previous century: a woman who is supposed to replicate the canon of the muted, submissive, lawful wedded wife who also multiples the working

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[33] Also relevant is Andreas Huyssen's argument in his book *After the Great Divide* where he states that the high/low art dichotomy or else the modern/mass culture dichotomy has been gendered as masculine/feminine. He therefore discusses the exclusion of women writers from high culture as a consequence of the feminisation and thus devaluation of mass culture (Harrison & Peterson, 1997, p. ix). The decision to portray the Bride through a mass produced object which, however, due to the status of its designer, became unique and valuable, could also offer another reading of the elevated status of the woman after marriage. Huyssen's argument could also be applied to Nijinska and her exclusion as a choreographer of the avant-garde.

hands of the 'family business' through reproduction. *Concrete stereo* which is also echoing the ability to repeat and produce a poor quality copy matches my own choreographic practice which consists in making non-functional copies of cultural products. *Concrete Stereo*, however, regains its originality through its performance as the dancing body of the Bride. This notion of originality through performance is entirely different from that of the art market. *Exercise: Les Noces* makes them comparable and invites a rethinking of the value of the art object. *Exercise: Les Noces* invites an idea of value which does not derive from a designation of uniqueness; instead the value of the object is performative and relational, and it is gained through the becoming of the dancing body of the Bride and in relation to the performers and the attendants of the work.

Nijinska places Scene I (*The Tresses)* in the Bride's home where the Bride is being prepared for the wedding. The preparation is not a happy occasion but describes a terrified woman who is being groomed by her female friends while knowing that she cannot escape her fate which is the arranged marriage. A wedding according to Stravinsky 'really meant the women all weep and the men all get drunk' (as cited in Johnson, 1987, p. 152). The weeping in the action of braiding has been translated by Nijinska into parallel *pas de bourrée en pointe* which rhythmically resemble the action of braiding by the bridesmaids, or the violence of the marital bed as Lynn Garafola suggests (McCarthy, 2003). The action of braiding and therefore, the separation of the one ponytail/braid into two, had another significance in the Russian society of the early 20th century, which is that of the loss of innocence. One braid is divided into two in the same way that one body becomes two with marriage suggesting that the woman is not understood as an individual after marriage but part of another formation which is the married couple. In *Exercise: Les Noces* the Bride's weeping has been substituted by an iconic crying figure from pop culture: Sinead O'Connor singing in the music video *Nothing Compares 2 U* (1990). The

framing of Sinead O'Connor's face, as well as her famous tear[34] in the video, is referencing Maria Falconetti's frame shots in the 1928 silent film in *La passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) where she plays the leading role and where she is also in tears. This particular framing of O'Connor's face along with the action of crying was one of the few reasons that this particular video became famous in the 1990s, won an MTV award, and it is inherently iconic today.[35]

Hence, it is impossible to decide the source to which the crying figure of the Bride answers. In *Exercise: Les Noces* the Bride (who is also a martyr according to Nijinska) is translated into the martyr/heroine Joan of Arc as well as a mute/martyr/heroine/pop star: Sinead O'Connor. The central figure, the Bride in this sequence, as I have already

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[34]"Sinead O'Connor:The close-up of me singing *Nothing Compares 2 U* was supposed to be only one part of the video. But the song reminded me of my mother, who had died three years previously. Everyone thinks it's about some bloke, but if you notice where I start crying, it's at the lines, "All the flowers that you planted, mama, in the backyard / All died when you went away." I made an emotional connection, which I was not expecting—it didn't hit me when I was recording the song. It only kicked in when I was being filmed. So I was sitting there, thinking about me mother, and trying hard not to bawl my eyes out. I had one little tear. That became the whole video. But it wasn't supposed to be. The video was massive, and it changed my career. What was funny, when the video won an award, John Maybury said, 'Thank you to the plate of onions,' saying it was onions that made me cry'(as cited in Tannenbaum & Marks, 2012, p. 551).

[35]In 2013 Miley Cyrus states that both her performance and the direction in the music video *Wrecking Ball* took inspiration from the iconic music video and O'Connor's performance in Prince's 1990s anthem *Nothing Compares 2 U*. Sinead O'Connor in the past has declared her performance 'authentic' and the tear she spares as spontaneous: 'It wasn't what we planned for the video.' 'We had a whole other plan. It happened accidentally and we decided to keep it.' (Songfacts,n.d.). Miley Cyrus in a similar manner characterises her emotions and crying in the video clip as genuine (Gower, 2013). Miley Cyrus recreates the iconic tear and she declares her crying in the video authentic through her performance. However those tears meant to be just the beginning of a public argument. In 2013 O'Connor responds to Cyrus with a patronising open letter in which she warns her not to be exploited by the music business. O'Connor writes: 'you will obscure your talent by allowing yourself to be pimped, whether its the music business or yourself doing the pimping'(Brinkhurst-Cuff, 2017). The row escalated with Cyrus dismissing O'Connors comments by comparing O'Connor to a former child actress Amanda Bynes, who was currently undergoing psychiatric treatment. Hence a public debate between the two singers over the 'authenticity' of their emotions (whatever that may be) and the way they were expressed (implying their ethos as artists) resulted in public discussions about the 'authenticity' of the singers' feminisms. For some feminists, O'Connor's letter was a 'refreshingly frank and piercingly on the money' revealing 'parasitic nature of the music industry' (Williams, 2013), and a reminder that, 'sexualisation does not equal empowerment' (Murphy 2013). Moreover, part of the press dismisses the whole conversation and public profile of Cyrus as staged, and her forays into gender-queerness fake, and thus Cyrus should be forever condemned as 'she's now plonked Liam Hemsworth's engagement ring back on her finger' (Brinkhurst-Cuff, 2017). For others, however, O'Connor's letter 'strayed into slutshaming' (Penny, 2013) with its repeated references to Cyrus prostituting herself. O'Connor's letter denies Cyrus's agency or control over her sexuality and re-inscribes problematic narratives around sex work while simultaneously making Cyrus responsible for her alleged objectification by men' (as cited in Brandy, 2016). Since Andy Warhol the whole point of being a pop star is that you don't need to be authentic or individual; you can be everyone and no one that however does not mean that you are not in charge of your body or sexuality.

mentioned, is a replica of Ron Arad's *Concrete Stereo* which is 'playing' *Nothing Compares 2 U*. Headphones connected to the stereo disseminate O'Connor's voice which is however never heard by the audience. All the performers, simultaneously listen *Nothing compares 2 U* and re-perform O'Connor's performance from the iconic music video.

Figure 7: Robert preparing to lip-synch *Nothing Compares 2 U* in *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017)

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

This 'readymade crying' is muted, silenced, concreted and concealed from the audience. This is an actual translation of Nijiska's stage direction to her dancers who should not move their facial muscles or express emotion. Emotion, for Nijinska, should be the result of collective movement rather than an interpretation of an individual role in the ballet. Nijinska's dancers are expressionless and anonymous: 'There would be no soloists; rather, all would be moulded in one throughout the movement. The betrothed girl and her friends would be bound together in common expression; similarly the Groom and his friends' (McCarthy, 2003). In *Exercise: Les Noces* the facial muscles of the performers are used, but they remain expressionless since their facial expressions are the

result of copying and learning certain micro-movements which appear to express sorrow and distress.

In *Exercise: Les Noces* lip-synching takes place in an awkward, and somewhat disturbing silence. When the dancers lip-synch, the crying becomes a 'twice behaved behaviour,'[36] a tear that is rehearsed and learned; their tears are never present but choreographically assumed by the audience. The crying which sometimes looks more like a muted scream or a twisted mocking expression but could also be a teenager's rehearsal before the mirror, is an unresolved moment which is obviously rehearsed, amplified and synchronised in the work. It not an expression of emotion and at the same time, it is an expression of something. The crying does not belong to the performers, but through performance, the crying becomes a collective choreography of crying as well as a collective choreography about crying. The muted expressions on the faces of Nijinska's dancers are translated in the inaudible sound of the lip-synching and all the parallel *pas de bourrée* or *bourée en pointe* which 'evoke the match-maker unmerciful' become a choreography of lament, a copy of O'Connor's so-called, genuine performance of crying (Brendan, 2003).

There is no 'true' reason for this choreography of crying here. All the above reasoning hangs unanswered and unrealised for the performance attendants to join the performers in their quest for a 'faithful' translation. Is it a tear for Sinead's mum, for lost innocence, is it a cultural expression of a 'genuine' feeling, a staged manifestation of 'originality' or is it just a make-belief rehearsal in front of the mirror? I can only be sure of one thing: Nijinska's Bride can never be the bride she was and, her mourning can never be understood in the same way as in 1923, or Falconetti's in 1928, or O'Connor's

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[36]Performances – of art, rituals, or ordinary life – are 'restored behaviours', 'twice-behaved behaviour', performed actions that people train for and rehearse…But everyday life also involves years of training and practice, of adjusting and performing one's life roles in relation to social and personal circumstances (Schechner, 2002, p.29).

in 1990. Translating these texts is impossible. It is impossible to leap in time, or to trans-
fer the performers and audience in 1923 or 1928 or 1990; however, it is possible to try to
read these texts together, to form this 'constellation'. Uniting then in one text through
Exercise: Les Noces we can concentrate on the connections of the texts and start realising
the gaps from Benjamin's vessel or lack and discontinuity in meaning after Derrida.
However, the very impossibility to read these texts as a unified image, this 'lack' is what
makes translation happen and therefore, possible. The loss of semantic transference, this
mourning experience per se, is what makes crying on stage possible and/or meaningful.

Let us follow this course of thought in order to see what happens when I try to
translate Nijinska's Scene I with *Nothing Compares 2 U.* I asked the performers to learn/
mirror and copy all the micro-expressions of Sinead O'Connor. My instruction to them
is to try to be as precise as possible to the performance of the singer in the music video.
They are additionally asked to take into consideration certain technical parameters like
the camera frame, the film montage, and the video timing. All decisions are formally
made: the performers should never bring their own interpretation to their performance,
but instead, they are instructed to replicate as meticulously as possible what they see in
the video. My instruction is this: 'try to resemble a video recorder or a mirror.' Yet, I
don't want this to be unconscious copying either. The performers need to be able to
move the same facial muscles as O'Connor, make the same facial expressions and, at the
same time, they are asked not to express anything. It is not their expression of sadness I
am looking for. I asked them to train, if necessary, different facial muscles so as to be
able to replicate O'Connor's crying action. Not to forget that this is a performance of
Nijinska/O'Connor/Falconetti/the Bride performances and therefore a performance
about these performances. It is a repetition but also a doing and an undoing of the
singer's performance through the other texts including the performers' which act as dis-

ruptions in the performance of *Nothing Compares 2 U* and as well as in the translation of *Les Noce*s as a single, whole text.

According to the dancers, learning the micro-movements from a video was one of the most challenging tasks they had ever faced both in terms of being precise as well as memorising it. The difficulties or impossibility lie in the overwriting or unlearning their own mannerisms in the micro-scale of facial expression. The difficulty of the task brought many inaccuracies as well as quite distinctive performances. Therefore, by introducing and practicing alternative methods and techniques which counter dominant knowledge (such as the elevation of crying to choreography) the deeply felt processes of unlearning, and undoing inherited, open up the potential for a critical, self-reflective performance about copying in dance and performance.

Walter Benjamin[37] in his book *Recent Writings by Walter Benjamin* (2014) suggests that a copy contains both the idea of its model as well as its own idea. He proposes that the idea of a copy paradoxically results in the copy being multi-layered and more complex text (p.17). This is a very similar idea to the double quotations translation generates that I will analyse later. Thus, the copy of the crying performance is a crying performance too. Of course, this is not suggested in terms of its effect (its own performance and translation) but only its intention. In other words, what we perform could be an action or a learned behaviour that does not come from an inner need to be expressed, but it signifies as such because it has previously signified as crying. So the performance of crying as it is replicated in *Exercise: Les Noces* is about crying as much as it is about the history of crying in performance.

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[37]This is not the 'original' or same Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) but someone who performs a reappearance of the philosopher as Walter Benjamin. Please see: Collner, A. L. (2014, September 12). An Investigation Into the Reappearance of Walter Benjamin. Retrieved March 22, 2016, from https://hazlitt.net/longreads/investigation-reappearance-walter-benjamin.

There are three sets or temporalities of translations that are taking place at the same time — three distinctive and simultaneous planes of performances that are producing different texts. Firstly, there are my own translations, my own autobiographical connections to the choreography of crying of Nijinska with that of Sinead O'Connor from my teenage years.[38] The proposed translation/choreography is the mediated performance that has been learned and rehearsed by myself in the past, in front of the TV set many, many times. The second translational plane is the one on stage realised by the performers; the performance of their learned technique of crying against mannerisms, habits, and their own corporeality. The third, is the one that takes place during and after the performance which the attendants initiate through their own experience of the work combined with their own flashbacks or memory. The text that is produced by the attendant in effect is a very different performance altogether: this is what one reads, what one desires and what one experiences while attending. These chains of reaction, these texts and performances produced in all these different planes of consciousness are indeed translations which do not aspire to enter *Les Noces* official archive as material residue. However, in their existence resides the possibility of a glimpse of afterlife, which could bring together different temporalities, and propose alternative genealogies. Thinking about *Les Noces,* I come to the conclusion that it is not about how much the work has 'changed' throughout the years, neither about a multiple and thus, unrecoverable 'original' *Les Noces*; but it is, instead, about always encountering *Les Noces* differently, no matter how many times we return to it. Every single performance of *Les Noces* has the potential to reveal something else about the work, and as such, *Les Noces* can never be the same. Therefore, *Les Noces* is constantly becoming multiple other texts: *Nothing Compares 2 U, Concrete Stereo*, a copying action, a contemplation on value and originality, a performance

[38]MTV was first broadcast in 1990 in Greece and specifically in my hometown Thessaloniki. I am a teenager stuck in front of the TV set and *Nothing Compare 2 U* is one of the first songs that I am obsessed with and therefore copy and learn to lip-synch and perform.

in an old church; simultaneously changing in various ways in afterlife, as changes occur on top of changes. Thus, we translators of desire, we learn how to read between texts and the multiple intentions of past authors and gaps and misinterpretations; and we translators of desire, makers, doers we learn how to bring texts together and how to make sense; and then we realise that our doing is a writing which is not about the past; this writing is instead, a choreography, which however, can potentially determine the future.

Exercise 2: On Jumping (The Groom)

Nijinska's choreography in *Les Noces*[39] for the *corps de ballet*, especially after the Scene II seems to become, progressively, a frantic combination of *jetes*, leaps, and jumps that leaves no room for the dancers to catch their breath or to stretch their muscles. Both men and women in geometric formations are sweeping up the stage in kinetic crescendos. As the piece progresses towards Scene IV (*The Wedding Feast),* sequences of leaps grow increasingly intoxicating; not once the steps seem uncontrolled, nor the dancers lose their patterning and group formations. The choreography and the dancing seem to function like a well-oiled machine. What I have tried to do in this Exercise is to translate the action of jumping. This translation is more like a meditation on the act of jumping.

Turning to some artworks that, 'perform jumping' I supplement this new comparable texts as objects with a broader and more elusive sense in which these translations are the means for re-inventing the relation between image/text and reader/attendant through their performance. However, making spectators actively read works and appreciate them from particular, embodied points of view is not a new idea, as has been wide-

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[39]Here I am referring to the Royal Ballet version of *Les Noces.*

ly explored in the past, particularly with the *Judson Dance Theatre* (Burt, 2006, p.14).[40]

The idea of translating a visual work into a choreographic score allows experimentation with other temporalities and narratives that go beyond a specific historical progression or relation. What I want to propose though, is that the encounter with texts that is mediated by the corporeality of bodies incentivises a choreographic mode which is that of the 'translation as performance.'

Figure 8: Andy Warhol, *Invisible Sculpture*, 1985
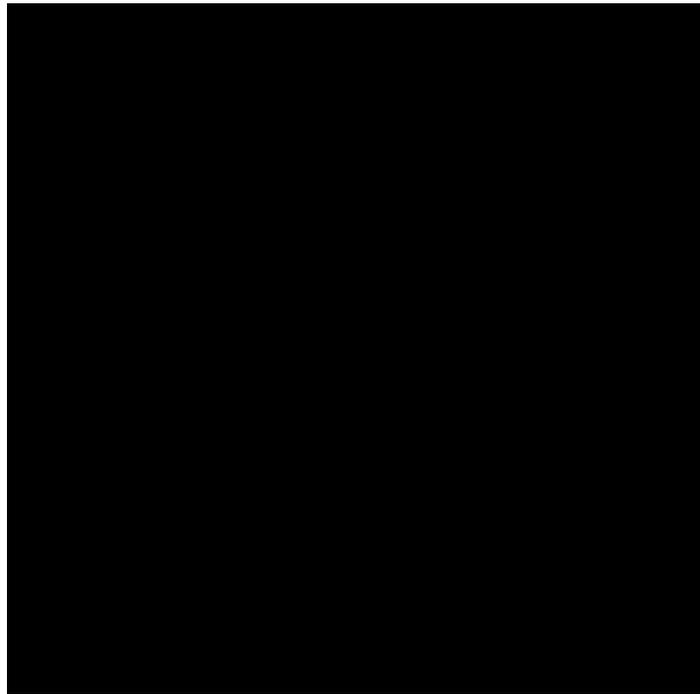
Note: Retrieved from https://www.dazeddigital.com. Copyright 1985 by E. & J. Goode

What is a jump if we take out jumping? What will happen if I remove from jumping the actual act of jumping? Does it immediately become an image, a word, a representation, an idea or a choreography? What is jumping about anyhow? Is it about elevation, falling, dancing, suspending, flying, committing suicide? What are the performances of jumping?

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[40] '*Site* was a performance by Robert Morris with Carolee Schneemann premiered at Stage 73, Surplus Dance Theater, New York, in 1964. *Site* was shown twice, on March 2 and 9, 1964. Later it was performed again, but without Carolee Schneemann (Olga Adorno Klüver replaced her) at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia on April 24, 1964. The last performance of *Site* was on April 29 of the same year, this time with Carolee Schneemann reprising her role, at the Judson Memorial Church as part of the *Judson Dance Theatre*'s series *Concert #16*. *Site* was portraying Manet's Olympia, translating the famous painting into a performance. Morris's idea for this event can easily be read as paying homage to Duchamp's readymades' (Burt, 2006, p.65).

Invisible sculpture was created by Andy Warhol and put on display in the New York *Area* club on Wednesday, May 8, in 1985. Warhol stood next to a white vertical plinth for half an hour while near a wall a label read: 'ANDY WARHOL, USA / INVISIBLE SCULPTURE / MIXED MEDIA'. After he had his photo taken he left his post leaving behind what he called an 'aura of celebrity' (Martin & Rugoff, 2012, p.47).

I encountered the sculpture in 2012 in the Hayward Gallery as part of the exhibition *Art about the Unseen* that showcased seemingly 'blank' works that involved the invisible, the unseen and hidden. What I saw was not, of course, Warhol's aura but, a white plinth which reminded me more of a minimalist Robert Morris or Donald Judd sculpture. Yet, as soon as I read the label next to the plinth, the white vertical object in front of me transformed into a performance, a gesture or a choreography if you like, of the presence/absence of Andy Warhol. I realised that the only reason that a random white plinth was part of an exhibition was because Warhol had stood next to it; and similarly, the only reason I was standing in front of that plinth contemplating, was because of Warhol having stood there. A white vertical object was present just to signify what was absent, or even better, to mark a void: Warhol's blank spot that was to be filled with whatever I reckoned appropriate as a viewer. Initially, I thought of the work as a provocation and a joke: Warhol's way to expose art as a belief structure and the artist as its priest. Peggy Phelan calls it 'a collective and personal hallucination of celebrity,' which means that every time I am confronted with the *Invisible sculpture* I am set to recognise a 'life' or Warhol's aura, which is 'necessarily a phantasm, a creation.' According to Phelan, this was Warhol's project and the purpose of his art: to keep 'alive the dead,' 'the dead who do not actually die but through death become recognized as the always already living' (1999, p.225).

Usually, sculptures are placed on plinths; the fact that Warhol stood next to it, made him comparable to an object, made him an object: a black vertical figure next to a white one. By posing for a photograph, he also became a product that could sell the void that his body left behind, embodying every public figure as 'the prostheses of our own mutant desirability' (Foster 1996, p.56). According to the exhibition's catalogue, this work is said to prefigure Warhol's own death (Martin & Rugoff, 2012, p. 47). However, in my opinion, his gesture is about death as much as it is an exercise on excess, on living

Figure 9: Robert posing as Andy Warhol in *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017)

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

on. Warhol left behind his gesture, in the same way, the sculptor leaves behind manipulated material from her gesture. Only this time the material is not prefigured by Warhol, but it is more like what Butler calls 'sedimentation.'[41] Over time Warhol's sculpture per-

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[41]'My suggestion is that the body become its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time. From a feminist point of view, one might try to reconceive the gendered body as the legacy of sedimented acts rather than a predetermined of foreclosed structure, essence or fact, whether natural, cultural, or linguistic'(Butler, 1988, p. 523)

forms its materiality through the accumulation of his/our re-appearance, reenacting the performative constitution of his/our performing body.

The readymade as an idea exists in Warhol's work as the removal of the hand of the artist 'in favor of the power of designation' (Buskirk, 2003, p.74). Warhol too 're-made' readymades such as the 'Brillo boxes and other cartons (Heinz ketchup, Kellogg's corn flakes, Del Monte peach halves, Campbell's tomato juice) for which he duplicated the appearance of the prototypes' (p.78). Summoning *Invisible Sculpture* in the translational machine of *Les Noces* I am hoping to announce and celebrate these afterlives, these 'over-livings', these 'living-ons' as the performative encounters with the voids that both the bodies of Warhol and Nijinska leave behind. After all, what would be a better representation of jumping/death/suicide than Warhol himself and his *Invisible sculpture*? This Exercise is a performance of his *Invisible Sculpture*, of Warhol's disappearing act, his own choreography. Warhol appears 'a-live' on stage to become his aura or else an excess, a living-on: a performative machine. Bringing the *Invisible Sculpture* in my installation I explore Warhol's performance as a choreography of disappearance, a choreography of death, annihilation, and afterlife. Hence, this exercise asks: how is this performance 'warholizing' *Les Noces* and vice versa? Does Warhol's auratic choreography re-inscribe in Nijinska's project a 'traumatic' occurrence, and what might that be?

One performer is standing next to a white plinth for a few seconds. She/he then takes out of her/his pocket talc-powder spray (dry shampoo), and she/he diffuses a white mist in the air around her/him. All action pauses until the white cloud dissolves and white dust sets on the floor.

Exercise 2 is exploring, through translation, notions of the death of the artist as an author and the re-performance of the work as an 'original' and the afterlives of images as auratic presences created from the performances of artists and audiences.

Figure 10: Invisible Groom, *Exercise: Les Noces* (2014)

Note: Copyright 2014 by L. Cognes.

Hal Foster (1996) notes that there are usually two readings of Warhol's work: the post-structuralist approach or simulacral where the image has no prescribed meaning, and it does not transfer the author's intention (Foucault, Deleuze, Baudrillard) and the referential (or autobiographical according to Phelan(1999)) where fashion, celebrity, gay culture, the Factory etc., become the themes and reason of his work. Foster asks if it is possible to see Warhol's work as both 'referential and simulacral, connected and discon-nected, affective and affectless, critical and complacent' and for that purpose, he ad-vances 'traumatic realism' as his methodology that combines both readings (pp. 38-39). The artist becomes a machine not because of his intended blank subjectivity but be-cause he is shocked. Foster proposes that Warhol 'takes on the nature of what shocks him and repeats it in defense against his shock' (pp. 39-41). Warhol wants to be a ma-chine and renounce the effect of images, becoming an image and a product himself. His

intention immediately connects him to Nijinska's modernist choreography of machines of *Les Noces* and the social purpose of constructivist art. Here constructivism and consumerism co-exist as two comparable temporalities and historical moments that both cast the artist as a production machine. Therefore, what is being made possible here is the comparison of the two authorial subjectivities and their mutual evaporation. The nihilist, capitalist consumerist subjectivity next to the idealistic communist machine which manages to annihilate the subject and the author because of excessive individualism (everyone can become a celebrity) as well as, because of notions of collectivity (everyone is an artist). Warhol, through his disappearing act offers a messianic reading

Figure 11: Overlapping portraits of Bronislava Nijinska and Andy Warhol, still from the video shown as part of *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017)
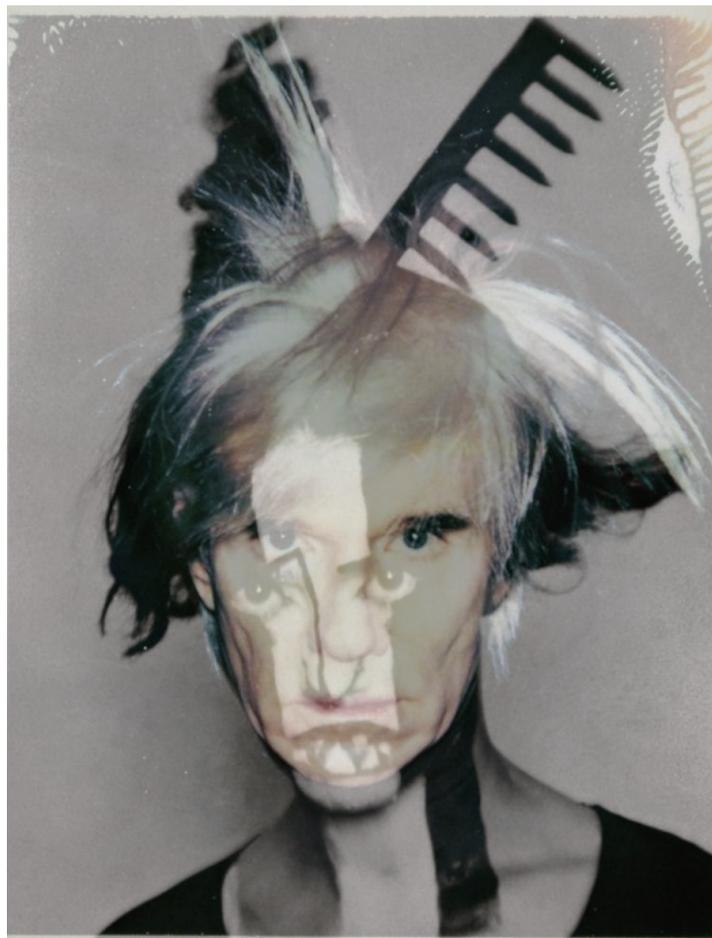
Note: Copyright 2017

of this performance as he appears almost like a messiah who (like another martyr) 'dies' in order to 'save us' (spectators/performers/translators) enabling a double materialisation: through their own 'hallucination of celebrity' in Warhol's place or through the emergence of a collective body of the performers/attendants. Foster through his Lacanian definition of the 'traumatic' as that which is not represented but only repeated, reads in Warhol's repetition a production of 'trauma'.

Translating Warhol's *Invisible Sculpture* into a score, and therefore, into a performance that can be repeated, I want to insist on the repetition of his disappearing act and possibly invite the 'trauma' (or 'punctum' after Barthes[42]) into the void that the artists' bodies leave behind. This trauma, the purpose of this Exercise is, as Peggy Phelan beautifully describes, 'to silk-screen, massage or treat an image that records deaths' insisting 'on the image's after life of the one to whom the record is addressed' (1999, p. 226). Moreover, allowing in the place of the author, a hole, void, or a rupture, I want to distance myself if not renounce a manichaeistic approach to translation between original and copy, source and target texts. This void is a performative space which has the potential to be filled by the attendants' agency but it is also imperative that this space is somehow filled for the work to exist. Warhol was confident, and now I am too that this space will never be empty just because 'the sedimentation,' the material with which Warhol has sculpted his *Invisible Sculpture* is accumulating and it is endless; Warhol's performative machine never seizes to work through him, through us, through our desire to perform and translate and make meaning.

While Warhol created his *Death and Disaster* series (1962 -1964) portraying harsh newspaper tabloids including, suicides, freak accidents, car wrecks, criminal mug shots, underscoring the apathy towards such themes as capital punishment, Robert Longo

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[42]'It is acute yet muffled, it cries out in silence. Odd contradiction: a floating flash'[…]'It is what I add to the photograph and what is nonetheless already there' (Barthes, 2000, pp. 53-55).

heightened his subjects, utilising advertising techniques to hype death. While Warhol created utterly banal images, Longo on the other hand, invited glamour, violence, and the hard sell of giant billboards and slick magazine ads aesthetic to infuse his drawings. Longo in a video interview states that Cindy Sherman, one of his oldest artist friends and former partner describes all of his work as 'orgasms' (Black, 2017, p.26). In his words, his drawings are efforts to 'isolate the act of believing' and to show 'how images think,' how, ultimately art participates in the power struggles of the present day (Hobbs, 1985, p.23). In his early series *Men in the Cities* (1979), he uses the ambiguity of abstract imagery to create figures poised between dancing, falling and dying. He was influenced by a still from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The American Soldier* (1970) which pictures an assassin's victim reaching to the bullet wound in his violently arching back. *Men in the Cities,* are full-length figure studies, based on photographs in which men and women wearing suits were captured in the throes of strange contortions. Were they dancing? Had they been shot at close range (by a gun, as well as a camera)? It is impossible to know. Longo took pictures of his friends in their attempt to catch objects he threw at them and used these shots as subjects for his life-sized drawings. In *Men in the Cities* the violence is strategically transferred from the image to viewers who metaphorically 'take' or 'shoot' the drawings each time they look at them as photographic images; hence, the term 'exposure' in Longo acquires a new meaning. If the image is the victim, then the viewer is placed in the role of a shooter. Longo's twisting, falling business-suit figures became an uncannily accurate portrayal of precarity and human suffering given the memories of corporate employees jumping from the Twin Towers windows on 09/11.

In *Exercise: Les Noces* the indeterminate existence of Longo's figures are appropriated into a choreography of balancing poses. 'Strike a pose until you fall' was my instruction to the performers. Of course, it doesn't take them long to stumble as these postures

are impossible to hold. The trembling and falling actions from the poses gradually develop their own rhythm. Initially, movement becomes pulsing to grow into a frantic, free-style dancing. Similarly to Longo's figures, the sequence manifests the condition of the translating body as well as of the postmodern work, text, subject which exists in a blank space floating, unable to find secure or stable ground to translate. This brief comparison between Nijinska's human dancing machine and Longo's dancing figures brings forth the idea of the 'new-human' of the Russian avant-garde (immortal, of higher intellect, technologically efficient and transcendent, unaffected of crude emotions) in relation to the 'post-human' condition that Longo's figures live in (plastic surgery, breast implants, steroids, crash diets, mood drugs, genetic engineering etc.); hence, I am thinking of choreographies of manufactured identities, subjected to control and manipulation, as another form of consumption. The well-oiled machines of modernism have been transformed into the nihilistic postmodern society which is doomed to fall and die unless it learns how to adapt and live on, dancing.

Figure 13: Exercise on Jumping, *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017)

Exercise 3: On Purity (The Mother)

The reference to Sappho earlier in Chapter One becomes somewhat of an exercise in this text when one of her poems/fragments, or better several translations of her poem are offered as a translation of the Bride's Mother mournful song in *Les Noces*. In this Exercise, translation is not examined as the performative agent of the soul, as an expression of the inner self, but instead, as an ongoing machine of production of meaning that performance/translation has the potential to disrupt because of particular minor, parasitic, infectious misfires and gaps. This Exercise proposes to use and perform as a score part of the afterlife of one of Sappho's fragmented poems and thus to make possible a gathering of as many authorial voices as possible. This gathering is a nuanced attempt to make the afterlife an experience for the performer and the attendant. It is all

about making the gaps between the texts in Sappho's poem and consequently to *Exercise: Les Noces* visible, inviting even more authorial voices to co-exist though performance.

Figure 14: Elizabeth McGorian as the Bride's Mother in the 2012 Royal Ballet's production of *Les Noces*.

Note: Retrieved from https://dancetabs.com/2012/07/royal-ballet-birthday-offering-a-month-in-the-country-les-noces-london/. Copyright 2012 by D. Morgan

In Scene III (The Departure of the Bride) of *Les Noces*, as performed by The Royal Ballet[43], the Bride's mother appears to have a very particular and distinctive role. Nijinska herself suggested that the Mother's part was given to an actress, rather than a dancer, due to the emotionally complex demands. In a brief encounter that the audience has with that the Bride's Mother, for about two minutes on stage at the end of Scene III (and while her daughter departs for the church), she performs slow and dramatic gestures mainly using her arms. Her emotional state is that of desperation and grief; for the first and last time, the audience witnesses emotion on stage as a facial and bodily expression.

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[43]The Royal Ballet's version holds special claim to authenticity: Nijinska was the mentor and friend of Frederick Ashton – The Royal Ballet's founder choreographer. As a way of paying tribute to her, he invited Nijinska to stage *Les Noces* at Covent Garden in 1966. The production uses stark sets and costumes taken from Russian peasant dress, designed by Natalia Goncharova for the original. http://www.roh.org.uk/productions/les-noces-by-bronislava-nijinska.

Caroline Bergvall's performance poem *Via* (2000, 2003)[44] is composed of forty-eight English language translations of the opening lines from Dante's *Inferno: 'Nel mezzo del camin di nostra vita, mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, che la dirrita via era smarrita'* (as cited in Bermann, 2014, p.286). It exists both as a literary text and in audio format that immerses translator, performer and reader/listener proposing translation as a perpetual act, as a continuous unfolding path. Bergvall's attempt to bring together all these translations underscores the multiplicity of responses and interpretations to one single line from Dante's seminal poem. *Via* is a metaphor for the differences making visible and audible the ruptures in text and performance in an apparent continuity. Bergvall weaves a polysemous textual fabric, interlacing one and a half centuries of intertextual conversations amongst the chorus of the translating voices. Bergvall's performance of *Via* resembles the ancient singer 'in flux' for whom any sense for singular or original meaning becomes moot and dissolves.

Replicating Bergvall's gesture, I gathered eighteen translations of Saphho's fragment: '*οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἐν μοισοπόλων †οἰκίαι† θρῆνον ἔμμεν· οὔ κ᾽ ἄμμι τάδε πρέποι*' (Lobel-Page 150 /109D)[45] in the English language.[46] These translations were all published after 1923 (when *Les Noces* premiered), and I chose only these, because I wanted to emphasise the continuity between the voices of Saphho and Nijinska to today. The English language was chosen because of the country that the work is performed in. The Exercise's task is for the performers to sing all eighteen translations to Igor Stravinsky's music for the Mother's part. The performers are free to choose to sing different parts of the text; to

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[44]The poem was created in 2000 and it can be accessed here: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/56211.The work was performed by Bergvall herself in 2003 and an audio version you can find here:https://media.sas.upenn.edu/pennsound/authors/Bergvall/Bergvall-Caroline-Via-2004.mp3.

[45]Retrieved from https://www.loebclassics.com/view/sappho-fragments/1982/pb_LCL142.55.xml?result=1&rskey=k9w9mA.

[46]Please see Appendix 4 for the whole text.

begin and stop whenever they wish; however, the whole text must be heard at least once from each performer in the duration of the performance.

Figure 15: Irene, Jay and Lewis as the Singing Mother in Exercise: Les Noces (2017)

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

The fragment's relevancy to the Mother's song is twofold. First, contemplating Nijinska and her ideas on art, choreography and gender, it was important for me to compare her work to the words of another woman who also performs a negation to grief for loss; that of Sappho. In *Exercise: Les Noces* the role of the Mother is given by me to Bronislava Nijinska. Although Nijinska/the Mother is meant to grief for their 'original' *Les Noces/*the Bride (daughter) yet, her song is translated through another controversial female voice of a mother who refuses to grieve: Sappho's, whose work in its vast majority has been lost in time, possibly because of her life/gendered choices.[47]

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[47]Rumour has it that the work was burned by the early Church because of her supposedly low morals and sexuality (Mendelsohn, 2015).

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

Secondly, I wanted to bring in and allow the different temporal and authorial voices of the texts and music to co-exist to create an anachronic choir of archival representations, and present voices — a glimpse of the poems' afterlife. This hyper-hybrid translation forces any sense for a single 'original' meaning to evaporate; it is through the voices of the performers that the potential for reconfiguring the present can emerge. Every word from the poem is repeated and altered producing internal gaps, misinterpretations, inconsistencies to Sappho's fragment. These translations while heard all together, along with the performance of the performers, do not allow the meaning of the poem to settle in one specific configuration, voice or performance. Instead, they hang unresolved and in excess or lack, showing us a glimpse of this promise where all meaning can be attained. This is a moment when we can, as attendants, perform our own translations, contributing or enacting as co-authors this over-living which is not about exclusion but only about expansion. The life of the text is already an over-living, a better and richer

life. This is also why I call this an exercise in purity: this is an attempt to retrieve, gather, and condense as much past as possible into one overloaded moment. This is a desperate attempt to approach the promise of 'pure language' through an afterlife; the failed attempt to bring about something unique which however allows us to imagine the possibility of something unique.

What one hears is not harmonious, universal and pure but a combination of glitches, riffs, and discontinuity. Maybe this is the sound of the afterlife when experienced; these are the sounds that we, the choreographers, the performers, and attendants need to decipher or better, get lost in, in order to find our way out into the future.

Exercise 4: On Floating (The Feast)

Before space blankets were human first-aid essentials, they were fundamentally interstellar ponchos, designed by NASA to shield Earth-built machines from the harsh environment of space. They were first used in Skylab space station, and yet they're now deployed and custom-cut to fit everything from the Hubble Space Telescope to hikers, from the Mars rovers to marathon runners, from computers to campers, from satellites to immigrants. It is one of the simplest, yet most versatile by-products that NASA has ever created. Mylar space blankets were invented in 1964 after a scientist at the National Research Corporation (USA) discovered that a metalised film used in satellites could also keep people warm. The shiny aluminum-based sheets work by reflecting heat back to the body (NASA, 2006).

> The insulating material, a strong, plastic, vacuum-metalized film with a highly-efficient, infrared-reflective, vapor-deposited coating of aluminum, was created to be very lightweight in order to minimize weight impact on vehicle payload while also protecting spacecraft, equipment, and personnel from the extreme temperature fluctuations of space (NASA, 2006).

It has been employed on virtually all manned and unmanned NASA missions, and it is still one of the most enduring materials coming to the rescue in space and on Earth.

Figure 17: On Floating

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

In this Exercise, the Mylar blankets are used metaphorically as body/archive shields, as the high-endurance material that prevents them from damage, leakage or loss. They also reference Warhol's *Silver Clouds* (1966) which also inspired Merce Cunningham's work *Rain Forest* (1968). When Warhol made *Silver Clouds* he wanted to retire from painting, and made this installation as his last floating canvas. He wanted to make a work which was light and joyful, against conceptions of serious and 'heavy' art. His installation informed my work *Out of Thin Air* (2016)[48] which was then incorporated into *Exercise: Les Noces.* The idea was to make large, air-filled costumes that would deflate throughout the duration of the piece. Both the material and imagery of the performer's costumes seek to explore notions of nothingness, emptiness, void, excess, endurance and

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[48]*Out of Thin Air* was created in collaboration with the composer Andreas Papapetrou and it was presented at Finchley Town Hall in April 2016. The work was also part of HAZARD 2016 festival, in July in Manchester. Video excerpts of this work can be found here: https://vimeo.com/175202798.

floating. Taking my cue from Derrida and his floating lacking signs which suspend inde-

cisively between languages, rendering the decision between the languages impossible, I

am to explore choreographically this idea of floating.

Figure 18: On Floating

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

The performers[49] approach the large silver triangle and take their silver costumes.

After the costumes are inflated one by one by a leaf-blower, the performers take their

place lying on the floor wearing the large, air-filled costume. Initially, movement is min-

imal: the bodies, half-hid or buried under the enormous volume of the inflated silver

cushions become unrecognisable; they appear to be abstract sculptures rather than bod-

ies; random limbs, heads, and backs pop out of the silver-gold mass; everything is partial

and fragmented, both bodies and movement.

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[49]'The performer enters the vacuum where all meaning is distorted. Words are suspended in the air and if she catches them, moves them, speaks them their meaning becomes confused and blurred. And because she is not alone she has to communicate to everyone that she is confused. After a while she is still catching words but this time she has a strategy: the words are coming to her one by one. When a word touches her, it penetrates her skin and travels down to her body until it becomes her material, until it becomes move-ment, until it is exhausted and washed away. 'Come' she says: joggler, eve, pop, hand, eye, triangle, duet, running, leg, twist, heel, up-down, sleep, chin, cry, punch, jump 'come and I will dance with/for/to/as you' (rehearsal notes).

My first choreographic strategy is that of emptying. This strategy acknowledges John Cage's work *Empty Words* (1977), in which he reads aloud what sounds like a non-sensical language, after having omitted, sentences, phrases, words and syllables from a text.[50]

To produce this choreographic flotation, my strategy was to 'empty' movement, by trying to make 'non-objective' or recognisable movement. A dancing phrase was taken out of Scene IV in *Les Noces*. The performers in rehearsal had learned the sequence as accurately as possible, and then the phrase was cut, folded and distorted so as to become a glitch or an echo of the initial structure. For example, two of my instructions were: 'reduce the movement to an intention to move,' or even, 'just jump to the middle part of a movement imagining that there is no causality, no beginning or conclusion.' There-fore, the dancers were asked to create gaps and holes in their embodied, pre-existing, learned movement from the ballet of *Les Noces* and their personal formed movement repertoires. The dancing in this Exercise 'On Floating' is imagined to happen in a vacu-um, where bodies are constantly transforming in movement and where steps are re-duced to their intention, striving towards meaninglessness. The movement loses any sense of causality and sequentiality, and floats amidst the inflated abstract forms of all sorts of shapes. The detachment is apparent and forces any recourse to a previous state of entirety or completeness impossible. Although returning to a different body, text or

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[50]John Cage took to the stage at Milan's *Teatro Lirico* on 2 December 1977 to read a portion from the Journals of Henry David Thoreau. As Cage reads aloud in what sounds like a nonsensical language the Italian audience (many of whom did not really know who Cage was or what to expect from the perfor-mance) begins to grow increasingly unruly, eventually yelling for Cage to get off the stage! Cage, however, simply ignores them and keeps right on reading for over 2 full hours. The whole work can be accessed here: http://www.ubu.com/sound/cage_empty.html. The primary idea for the project *Out of This Air* (2016) however came after reading about Malevich's *Suprematist Mirror* (1923) and his ideas about non-ob-jective creation. Later I also researched his contemporary artists who in a similar fashion departed from analogous ideas. Such as: the avant-garde poet Gnedov who, in 1913, gave a public declamation of his so called Poem of the End — a black page — for which he put on a tuxedo, walked out on to the stage, placed a page in front of him on the lectern, adjusted his spectacles, dusted the lapels of his jacket - and remained silent for several minutes, before he exited without saying anything; or another poet, the clair-voyant Khlebnikov who came on stage, begun to recite and then broke down into "and so on and so forth" and then run off; or the painter Filonov who, in the cold and destitute Petrograd of 1921, once delivered a lecture on modern art that dragged on for three days (Bowlt, 2002b, p.193).

choreography is not an option, yet, these fragmented glitches have the potential to form different combinations, and to bring different bodies to life, new-old. Displaced from their original context, these fragments of 'les nocic' movement form new sequences of movement and new-old dancing bodies which are different in each performance and with each group of performers.

The second strategy I used to 'empty' movement was through repetition. The aim was to create a vocabulary of steps that are the product of appropriation or of 'drifting' within the group. The method I used in rehearsal resembled the game of Chinese whispers: every movement that a performer would propose was learned and passed amongst the rest of the group and therefore filtered by bodies. Each movement would go through numerous micro-adjustments, alterations, and adaptations; a kind of process that happens when bodies, objects and spaces–textual and architectural–are hollowed and in distress. Once the movement was found it was repeated numerous times until it was further transformed to become embodied, digested and ultimately mechanical.

Notions of emptiness and excess, constriction and release, memory and meaninglessness were explored through the medium of air. Air comes and goes, inflates and deflates, fills and empties, gives and takes life, passes through bodies, objects, and space and leaves its mark, invisibly, as a memory or echo. The dancers' costumes were made of foil which created a layer of sound that was constantly almost disturbingly present during the performance. This was an exploration in tension and crisis, an exploration of survival and endurance, forcing the bodies of the performers to react, adjust, rethink and relearn. As the piece progressed, the costumes lost air. The dancers moved frantically in a desperate attempt to become hollow and cast away any inherited meanings. Consequently, the form of the body appeared through the process of emptying acquiring a

new-old form, and new-old sense and meaning which was the product of the perfor-

mance which took place between the performers and attendants.

Exercise 5: *Mise-en-scène* (or how to translate a *Gesamtkunst-werk)*

Les Noces is often described as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, as a 'total work of art (Banes, p.94).

Indeed German Studies professor David Roberts talks about the Russian *Gesamtkunstwerk:*

a 'vision of ballet as the union of music, choreography and design […] shaped by the

contribution of painters' rather than the Wagnerian version which was based on opera

(2011, pp.150-151). In his early years Stravinsky who was responsible for the initial idea

of *Les Noces*, was an admirer of Wagner's music as it was regarded highly experimental

in the beginning of the previous century (Stegmann,1995, p.120).[51] Stravinsky's avant-

garde music scores along with Diaghilev's genius to bring artists together in a common

endeavour transformed Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* into a 'visible and aggressive embodi-

ment of the avant-garde' (Read, 1962, p.8).

Wagner coined the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* in1848 to develop the idea of an art form

which combined the three 'sister-arts': music, poetry and dance (Roberts, 2011, p.150).

As Thomas Hines writes in his book *Collaborative Form*, a *Gesamtkunstwerk* can refer to a

collaboration of art forms which results in their 'combinative integration' rather than

the collaborative processes between the artists involved in a project (Hines, 1991, p.4;

Kolb, 2017, p. 52). Wagner stated that 'each separate art can only bare its utmost secret

to their common public through a mutual parleying with the other arts' (Wagner 2012,

65). Hence, the interaction with different forms of art could result in the enrichment, to

the full fruition of each of the individual art forms achieved only in relation to another

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[51]However, as Alexandra Kolb posits, Wagner is frequently discussed in relation to his association with fascism and anti-Semitism and consequently, 'his early pro-democratic political aspirations and affinity with revolutionary, progressive causes are easily overlooked' (2017, p.54).

form. A 'total work of art,' a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, according to Wagner, could potentially

reach a totality which would be greater than the sum of the constituent art forms.

Moreover, Wagner acknowledged the relation and impact that art had on society; the

idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* was, as dance academic Alexandra Kolb states, founded on a

new model of art and society; in other words, it was also a plea for democracy which

traced its aspiration to the Athenian State (2017, p.55).

> Hand-in-hand with the dissolution of the Athenian State marched the downfall
> of Tragedy. As the spirit of community split itself along a thousand lines of
> egoistic cleavage, so was the great united work of Tragedy disintegrated into its
> individual factors (Wagner, 2012, p.16).

Wagner's utopian *Gesamtkunstwerk* was thus combined with 'a new idea of humani-

ty rooted in the common people'(2017, p.55). The society for Wagner, Kolb adds, is a

society that abandons individualistic aspirations and works towards a common cause;

through *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the spectators in the theatre could potentially form a model of

community where nevertheless, the identities of both the citizens or the spectators are

not surrendered (p.55).

Wagner's ideas of *Gesamtkunstwerk* seem to echo the Benjamian 'pure language'.

Benjamin in 1923 writes that 'translatability' of a work is essential because it assures the

potential, the manifestation of specific signification of the original and immanent as it is

based on the assumption of kinship and mutual reconciliation between different lan-

guages (1968, p.71). Benjamin argues that if there is a language of truth, which beholds

all meaning in the history of thought, then this is 'pure language'. In other words, trans-

lation is the practice which works towards the growth, the purification, the messianic

promise of reconciliation of all languages, of the potential of seeing language as a

whole, as 'pure language'(p.74). Benjamin adds that the task of the translator is to re-

deem in the translator's own language that 'pure language' which is exiled to a foreign

one, to release in the translational recreation the language which is captive within the

work. For Benjamin, the arrival of 'pure language' is, however, unthinkable and impossible, but it is translating that allows us to imagine the potential for this messianic arrival. The realisation of pure language is the ultimate aim of translation which however is beyond the bounds of possibility (pp. 75-77).

If we think of the *Gesamtkunstwerk,* as an attempt for 'pure language' after Benjamin, then artworks enact this promise of reconciliation of all the art forms involved in the work. Hence, how do we translate the *Gesamtkunstwerk - Les Noces* so that the process of choreographing which takes place works towards the growth of the art forms involved? But also, how do we translate *Les Noces (*through the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk)* so that the making/choreographing involves the loci of the choreographer, the performer and the attendant so that their definitions are questioned, expanded and become interchangeable? - Would such a translation propose a model of choreography which would potentially have a political significance?

If *Les Noces* is translated as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* then dance, visual arts, theatre, and music have the potential to reveal a special significance in relation to Nijinska's work as well as to each other which would not be possible if practised on their own. This continuous overlapping of texts allows different voices, forms and ideas to play with different textures, embodiments, and forms allowing all sorts of experimentations across mediums and eras to take place. Yet the question remains: How do we translate a *Gesamtkunstwerk?* Is a historical reconstruction of *Les Noces* still a *Gesamtkunstwerk?* This thesis is particularly interested in the relation between visual art and dance and the potential revealed in translating one art form through the other. The special significance inherent in *Les Noces* can be found in the historical relationship between the Russian avant-garde and Nijinska's choreographic mode and artistic forms. This particular relationship is important not just as a historical note or a lens through which we read *Les*

Noces. This relationship is vital because it can reveal the potential of the work immanent within this connection, and thus, reveal a work which is both a three-dimensional painting and dance, and as such, this translation can practise the expansion of both art forms without melting one into the other. The idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* as pure language enacts this promise of wholeness which, however, does not intend to formulate *Les Noces* as a whole, as a unified image (form, text etc.). Instead, translating *Les Noces* as *Gesamtkunstwerk,* is allowing us to imagine visual art or dance existing in this tension of connectedness and singularity and thus, allows us to read *Exercise: Les Noces* as visual art and dance at the same time.

Even if we attempt a 'total work of art' approach to the translation of *Les Noces*, there is still a question of the translation of *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a current concept. Therefore, why is it currently relevant to approach *Les Noces* as a total work of art?

As we have seen above Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is expressed through the artwork as well in an idea of a society which is united under a certain cause: the practice of democracy. Wagner rejects self-interest in favour of a collective cause — claiming that the *Gesamtkunstwerk* involves the 'passing over of egoism into communism' (as cited in Kolb, 2017, p.56). Wagner wants to express the 'cultural identity and aspirations of the majority' rather than of an aristocracy.

> If, however, we were to ask the Artist whether the great majority of art's amateurs are able to understand him in his best endeavours, he could only answer with a deep-drawn sigh. But if he ponders on the infinitely greater mass of those who are perforce shut out on every side by the evils of your present social system from both the understanding and the tasting of the sweets of modern art, then must the artist of to-day grow conscious that his whole art-doings are, at bottom, but an egoistic, self-concerning business; that his art, in the light of public life, is nothing else than luxury and superfluity, a self- amusing pastime (Wagner, 2012, p.64).

Kolb writes that regardless of Wagner's early aspirations[52] and his project[53], twentieth-century authors, writing in the light of 1930s events understood *Gesamtkunstwerk* as affecting 'a transformation of all spectators into a unified mass'; thus,'his vision to unite art forms and spectators' might sound today as suppressing 'the voices of dissenting minorities and failing to account for the specific interests of different ethnic, religious or cultural groups' (2017, p.58).

The way *Exercise: Les Noces* approaches the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk* is not through the integration of all art forms into one spectacle but instead, through translation, which works towards the expansion of the art mediums and forms involved. Such an approach, which does not exclude performance and spectatorship from being choreographic modes, contributes to the polyglotism of the work. Such an attempt also forms the *mise-en-scène* of my work and organises *Exercise: Les Noces* into a 'choreographic site,' proposing the act of performing and attending as the choreographic modes that take place in the performance of the work.

My initial attempt to translate *Les Noces* was showcased as a 'work in progress' at Laban Studio theatre in June 2014 and it was a performance which was made for the theatrical 'black box'. It followed the structure of Nijinka's ballet of four Scenes (although I had made just three) which would be shown consecutively.[54] Following the structure of Nijinska's choreography, I was able to make direct and immediate connections between my work and Nijinska's dramaturgy, producing analogies, coherence, and correspondence between *Les Noces* and the 'choreographic readymades'. However, this

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[52]His vision fused 'communitarian ideas of justice, an ideal of fraternalism which pays homage to a seemingly democratic, primordial Christianity, hatred against sovereigns, Luddite anti-capitalist tendencies, and a diffuse discomfort with modernity' (as cited in Kolb, p.87).

[53]Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerks* were greatly criticised by his contemporaries as well as historians as superficial attempts to engage with numerous art forms or to truly engage in collaborations with other artists, accusing him to be 'jack of all trades, master of none' (Adorno ,1991, p.111; Mann, 1999, p.96).

[54]Please see Appendix 2 for the documentation of this performance.

particular structure limited me, the performers as well as the audience in our interpreta-

tions. In this first version of *Exercise: Les Noces* I had created the following comparables:[55]
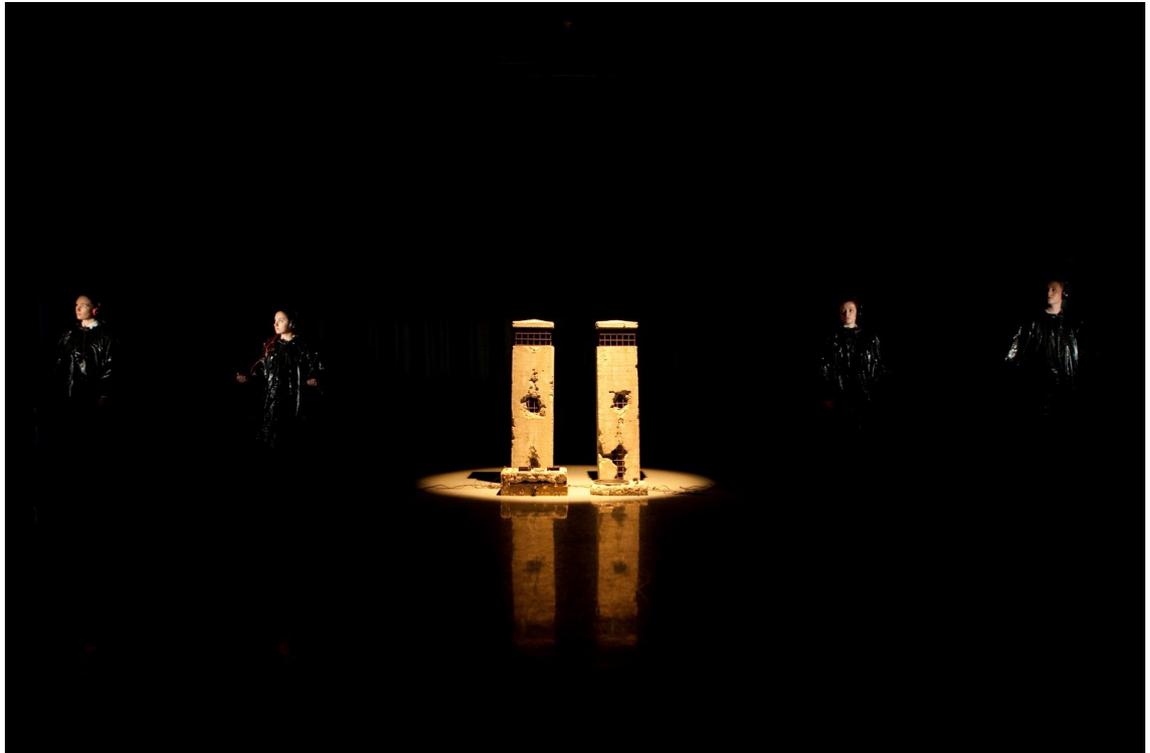
Note: Copyright 2014 by L. Cognes.

- Ron Arad's *Concrete Stereo* (1983) was the Bride from *Les Noces*.

- The video clip of the song *Nothing Compares 2 U* (1990) with Sinead O'Connor provided the choreography for the First Act.

- The Groom was Andy Warhol's works *Invisible Sculpture* (1985), and *Suicide* (1963).

- Robert Longo's drawings *Men in the Cities* (1979) provided the choreography for the Second Act.

- The Bride's mother from the Third Act was Tracey Emin's neon work *Its not me Thats Crying Its my Soul* (2011).

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[55]For a more detailed description of the performance please see the score/instructions that I have included in Appendix 7.

- Tracey Emin's photograph *I've Got It All* (2000) contributed to the choreography of the third Act.

Note: Copyright 2014 by L. Cognes.

Exercise: Les Noces (2014), as a work made for the theatre, was a sequence of rather visually interesting images. Although the audience could potentially recognise correlations between Nijinska's and mine tableaux yet, the work provided no further access points in order for texts to become exercises in translation and thus, a 'choreographic site' for both the performers and the attendants. Firstly, the references seemed quite arbitrary unless the audience happened to know *Les Noces* and the works that had been used as readymades. Secondly, as I was trying to keep the original timing of the ballet, the sequences felt quite rushed with no opportunity for the performers to develop them further, or to develop a special relationship with the audience. As for the audience, they were not given opportunities to experience the work other than to watch beautiful, poetic, yet, disconnected images. The sequential character of the work (approximately 20

minutes for all the three scenes) along with the lack of sound or music, created some awkward moments in-between the changes of scenes which seemed long and unnecessary as they were not 'doing' anything in relation to the work. For example, there was no consideration of the performance mode in between the scenes and thus, the awkward moments of dressing and undressing, or of carrying set between the acts were taking too long without performing anything other than taking the work back to the rehearsal studio. Therefore, certain questions were raised such as: Why do I translate a theatre piece for theatre? Why do I want to keep Nijinska's structure? Why is the frontality of the work important, what is the use? How do the performers perform/translate? How does the audience perform/translate? Where or what is this space between the stage and auditorium? Alternatively, where or what is backstage? How is the set performing like another performer? What is the duration of the work? Eventually, how is visual art dance, or how is dance visual art and where does this performance/exhibition/translation take place (physically/mentally and spatially)?

Because of all the problems stated above, I proposed instead that the final performance of *Exercise: Les Noces* take the form of what I call a 'choreographic site'. I decided to coin this term because I did not want to use terms from a visual art or dance vocabulary, and thus, I did not want to make an installation or a theatrical dance piece and propose a form that would sit comfortably in either of the two mediums in translation. What I wanted instead, was to create this ideal platform in time and space where translation/choreography could take place as a practice of making, performing and attending for the performers and the attendants of the work. My interpretation of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is not a definition of what a 'total work of art' should be, but another process, a becoming of a promise, of a totality which is dependent on the maker (chore-

ographer) as much as it depends on the performer and attendant of the work. Thus, I proposed 'choreographic sites' as places where choreography takes place as a mode.

A 'choreographic site' can be anything (not just a theatre or a rehearsal studio) because choreography as translation can happen anywhere and by anyone, and does not necessarily produce dance. A 'choreographic site' is also different from an installation because it is not a place of 'inanimate stuff that awaits the attendant to activate them and produce meaning' (Spångberg, 2012). Instead, a 'choreographic site' can be full of stuff and have no stuff; it can be anywhere and anything as long as it remains an open invitation for translation to take place. A 'choreographic site' is the site where choreography takes place, and it can produce from dances to visual artworks to interdisciplinary works and communities. The prerequisite for a 'choreographic site' is, therefore, translation to take place which is an open invitation to the 'foreign,' the 'other' than the 'self'. However, like every system, the 'choreographic site,' has to have certain rules in order to be functional. In the 'choreographic site,' I facilitated I used the rules as described below.

Exercise: Les Noces (2017) unraveled within the duration of three hours and the attendants were free to come and go as they pleased. Within three hours there were nine given tasks[56] which the performers were free to choose amongst them in order to compose the work, live, as the performance progressed.[57] Similarly, the attendants of the performance were free to choose and create their own version (duration and content) of *Exercise: Les Noces* by choosing what and when to attend the performance and when to participate in it. The nine tasks delegated to the performers were open to interpretation and functioned like the building blocks which structured the final performance. The performers including the musician could initiate tasks, yet they had to quickly negotiate

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[56]The dancing performers had seven tasks. The musician had one task. And there was also the 'task' of the self-defence class which anyone could follow.

[57]For a detailed record of the tasks please refer to Appendix 4 for the score and instructions.

with the rest of the group if their chosen task would take place. Unless the task was a solo, it had to be performed with a certain amount of performers. Some of the tasks were solos, and other tasks demanded a minimum or a set number of performers. Some tasks had specific duration whereas others had their duration determined by the performers. Therefore, the performance of *Exercise: Les Noces* was, to a great extent, constructed live, from the performers. The structure was quite open since the work had the potential to repeat but never to be the same. Additionally, the attendants' performance was mirroring the open-ended character of the work: the audience was free to come and go as they pleased and therefore, they determined their own version of the work by choosing what to see or the duration of their stay in the 'choreographic site.' In other words, everyone could come and go whenever they wished which determined the duration of the work (their version) as well and the form of the work (their version) and the meaning produced.

Although the 'choreographic site' proposed a solution in relation to the structure of the piece the question about the performance space remained unanswered. Where was the best place to showcase *Exercise: Les Noces* as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*? What additional apparatuses did I have to put to work? How could space recall the different sites and temporalities of *Les Noces*? Could I thus propose a site where the theatrical, exhibitional and ritualistic modes and temporalities co-exist? Showcasing *Exercise: Les Noces* outside of a theatre but in an old chapel[58] invited many opportunities for rethinking the context of the 'choreographic site,' formally and historically, socially and politically. In the case of *Exercise: Les Noces* I chose the work to take place in an old chapel adding, and at the same time removing extra layers of representation as this was *Les Noces (The Wedding)* taking place in a 'chapel'. Many questions, therefore, arose in relation to the performative

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[58]*Exercise: Les Noces* premiered at the Asylum, in Peckham. The Asylum is an artist-led space which was a former chapel. I was delighted to be able to find a chapel for the translation of *Les Noces* (The Wedding) which I thought was very appropriate.

agency of the texts in translation. For example, how performative is the 'I do' that the 'choreographic readymades' utter to their comparables? When is the theatrical apparatus at work? Where is 'the wedding' taking place? Or even, how many weddings are taking place at the same time and on how many different planes of consciousness, across eras and mediums?

The multiplicity of texts that form these exercises, performances, tasks, and versions of the work were stripped down to become signs that through performance balanced and floated between their existence and in-existence, recognisability, relevance or disappearance which nevertheless, required the labour of all participant artists and attendants to come into being. Hopefully, there was an endless terrain of recombinations created by me, the choreographer (translator), the performers (translators) and the attendants (translators) that allowed a production which was hopefully, not exhausted at the point of consumption as an exercise of recognition of established knowledge (as it is often, in a canonical dance reproduction). Additionally, by providing multiple physical spaces of engagement and therefore sites of choreographing, this 'choreographic site' attempted to temporarily create sites of 'becoming' that enabled both performers and attendants to actively engage with radical forms of knowledge dissemination throughout the performance of the work. Hence, the premise of the 'choreographic site' which derived from a need to think of *Gesamtkunstwek* as a current term, was to reintroduce the culture of making, not in the task of the choreographer but instead, in the textual encounters made possible in the conjunction of history and performance, archive and memory, performer and attendant, performance and visual art, people and discourses. Hopefully, these relationships that took place in the 'choreographic site' allowed translation to happen. As we have seen, translation does not alter the texts; it is the relationships between the texts that the 'choreographic site' foregrounds and makes possible (as

a gathering of different eras, mediums, and subjectivities) which therefore allows for the changes to show and perform. Again, this draws attention to the relationship between texts, not individual texts.

Butler in 'Competing Universalities,' places translation in the scope of political theory suggesting that translation manages to connect competing social movements. 'Through their contact with otherness, translational encounters subvert dominant, universalizing claims, allow new openings for a range of previously foreclosed subjectivities, and forge new languages that belong to no single group' (as cited in Bermann, p.1). Such politics of translation which echo Derrida[59] and Benjamin, rely on specific 'foreignising' strategies defined by the translator and academic Lawrence Venuti as 'aiming to revise the dominant by drawing on the marginal, restoring foreign texts excluded by domestic canons, recovering residual values such as archaic texts and translation methods, and cultivating emergent ones (for example, new cultural forms)'(Venuti, 2001, p.240). Butler states, 'the dominant discourse will have to alter by virtue of admitting the 'foreign' vocabulary into its lexicon" (2000, p.168). Understood as a constant process of negotiation, Judith Butler proposes cultural translation as the subversive practice that can bring about political change, opening up new spaces of emancipation and revising everyday social relations. So Butler, gesturing toward her own structuring of ethics, describes translation as an 'interruption of selfhood':

> Indeed, ethics comes to signify the act by which place is established for those who are 'not-me', comporting me beyond a sovereign claim in the direction of a challenge to selfhood that I receive from elsewhere (2012, p.9).

Hence the 'choreographic site' as proposed through the translation of *Les Noces* as *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a model site which could potentially if exercised, cause a powerful break in our everyday understanding of the world and its narratives. *Exercise: Les Noces*

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[59]'Ethics' is conceived by Derrida, following Emmanuel Levinas, as the relationship with the other. In his first major essay on Levinas, Derrida describes "the ethical relationship" as "a nonviolent relationship to the infinite as infinitely other, to the Other."

has the ambition to become through performance an 'ethical project' and the site where every moment (of both the performers and the attendants) will not be experienced as an illusion or even more so as a moment of uncertainty, disillusionment and loss where indecisiveness or exclusion prevails. *Exercise: Les Noces* is proposed instead as the 'choreographic site' where the politics of the 'interruption of selfhood' are at work inviting the previously unheard, invisible, unrecognised human traces and voices to come to being so that we translators, choreographers, performers, citizens can open up and potentially start questioning or even changing our perception of the world as we know it.

Exercise 6: B-side (A self-defence class)

As soon as the dancers start gathering their costumes from the floor to put them back into the fluorescent yellow triangle, Nicole Lomas, a Tai Chi instructor, stands up and places herself in the middle of the space. The self-defence class begins. As this is yet another Scene to follow, the audience does not applaud. However, there is a subtle but definite shift in the performance mode: the music stops, and Nicole asks everyone to join her for the self-defence class. Gradually, people start to stand up from their seats and more than half of the audience leaves the Asylum.

This Exercise is the last one, and one that remains a question and perhaps proposes an idea for the future development of this project on translation and *Les Noces*. Hence, this section will pose more questions than it can answer (if it can answer any) and my writing will also concentrate on formulating questions rather than seeking answers. This Exercise is, at the moment, peripheral to the realisation of this project which however can pose vital questions for the future of choreography and dance, with initial subquestions such as: How can translation as a mode of choreography involve alternative modes of knowledge? What is the potential of *Les Noces* as a pedagogic art project?

From May 8 to May 24, 1977, Suzanne Lacy created *Three Weeks in May: Speaking Out on Rape, A Political Art Piece*. It took place in Los Angeles, California and was designed in collaboration with the artists Leslie Labowitz, Jill Soderholm, Melissa Hoffman, and Barbara Cohen. *Three Weeks in May* exposed the extent of reported rapes in Los Angeles, and it was the first of a series of large-scale performances by Lacy on violence against women (Lacy, n.d.). *Three Weeks in May* is a seminal performance-art piece, and it took place during the period of what is now considered second-wave feminism.[60] It is also one of Lacy's signature pieces that defined the strategies and processes of her practice for her *New Genre Public Art* otherwise called, *Expanded Public Pedagogy* (Fryd 2007, p.23). *Three Weeks in May* blurred the boundaries between performance-art and activism and proposed a 'simultaneous juxtaposition of art and non-art activities within an extended time frame, taking place within the context of popular culture' (Lacy & Irish, 2010, p. 62). It explored critical pedagogy involving the human body as a site for creation by engaging with performance art and open-ended frameworks for circulating knowledge and embodied epistemologies. Lacy's work involved ways to play with re-structuring power relations of knowledge production through performance, critical negotiation and ephemeral exchange. In a nutshell, this was what Lacy described as 'a public classroom' which connected 'the singular voices of audience members to larger social issues, often over extended periods of time. In a sense, her projects are always ongoing — extended through the conversations and actions undertaken by their participants long after the artist's role may have ended' (Knight & Senie, 2016, p.230).

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[60]Second-wave feminism begins in the early 1960's through to the early 1980s in the United States. Whereas first wave is mostly focused on women's rights in terms of gender equality (voting, property rights) the second wave opens up the agenda of issues including inequality in the workplace, sexuality, sexual harassment, domestic violence, reproductive rights, marital rape. Marital and acquaintance rape were not considered crimes, and each state interpreted the definition of rape in different ways (Second-wave feminism, 2016, paras.1-2).

Note: Retrieved from http://www.suzannelacy.com/three-weeks-in-may

Tracking performance art history in search of a translational comparable to the agitprop work that *Les Noces* appeared to be, I chose Suzanne Lacy's *Three Weeks in May* as a contemporary example of performance art that incorporated and embodied pedagogical interventions such as self-defence classes. This Exercise, however, is not the incorporation of Lacy's project in my research but rather an example of performance art which I took inspiration from. The inclusion of a self-defence class as a 'choreographic readymade' in *Exercise: Les Noces* is an attempt to examine and underscore the historical trail of works that followed *Les Noces's* proposal which is acknowledging performance as a social strategy against woman's oppression. The choreographic choice to include a self-defence class as a 'choreographic readymade' is therefore, an attempt to ask questions about the relation between performance/dance and pedagogy such as: In which ways is an artwork pedagogical? Or even better: Is it possible for art and forms of peda-

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gogy[61] to co-exist without cancelling one another? How can translation as a choreographic mode play a role in this relation?

The creation of this 'comparable' has been theoretically, and conceptually situated within a critical theory framework grounded in postmodern, poststructuralist and feminist thinking. My intention was to follow the historical path of *Les Noces* (as an agitprop artwork) and allow us, through this connection, to think about the ways in which these two performances (*Les Noces* and *Three weeks in May*) are relevant; considering *Les Noces* and *Three Weeks in May* as works which dealt directly with issues of sexuality, hegemonic masculinity, and power. Hence, even more, questions were raised: Could these links become an opportunity to rethink the performing body and its potential for interruption of the operations of normative discourses through pedagogy? What does a defence class 'do' to *Les Noces*? Is it really possible for *Les Noces* to exist solely in this form — as a self-defence class? *Les Noces* as self-defence class against what? How is it possible to transfer/translate Lacy's and Nijinska's ideas into a broader education and pedagogical realm through bodily practices of performance? How does a self-defence class question authoritarian and specialised knowledge to create a temporary space where imagination and embodied dialogue can flourish? Finally, could such a practice give space and time to imagine a more substantive model of a radically democratic society?

Jen Harvie in *Fair Play - Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (2013) appears rather skeptical when she states that perhaps the turn to relational or social art risks offering a 'spectacle of communication and social engagement rather more than a qualitatively and sustainably rich and even critical engagement' (p.3). This might be partly true as many of the audience members of *Exercise: Les Noces* who remained in the Asylum did not participate in the self-defence class but perceived the class as a dance, trying to find the links in

[61]This thesis is not trying of course to reconcile the differences between propaganda and education rather, this is the way that I read Nijinska's project: I read *Les Noces* as an attempt to educate women rather than persuade or convince them through brainwashing and punishment.

the movements between the Tai-Chi exercises and the dancing that took place previously. Writer and curator Irit Rogoff seems to raise a similar concern when she states: 'there is a certain slippage between terms like 'education', 'self-organised pedagogies', 'research' and 'knowledge production', so that the radical strands of the intersection between art and pedagogy blur easily with the neoliberal impetus to render education a product or tool in the 'knowledge economy'' (2008, para.4). Hence is it even possible to make art as pedagogy? How is art not canceled from the pedagogic project?

Figure 22: Self-defence class as part of *Exercise: Les Noces*.

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

Claire Bishop in *Artificial Hells* (2012) dedicates a chapter to pedagogic art projects. It is imperative to think of pedagogy and art together, she says, given the contemporary situation where we experience the rise of academic capitalism as well as an artistic 'desire to augment the intellectual content of relational conviviality'(p.241). Artists and curators, though still to a limited extent however increasingly, engage in projects that appropriate educational modes such as 'lectures, seminars, libraries, reading-rooms, publications, workshops and even full-blown schools'(p.241). Rogoff attempts to think what

the educational turn in art and curation signals, arguing that the time might have arrived, 'the moment when we attend to the production and articulation of truths–not truth as correct, as provable, as fact, but truth as that which collects around it subjectivities that are neither gathered nor reflected by other utterances' (2008, para. 36). Could it be that artistic/pedagogic modes of working have the potential to rupture or disturb established grounds, drawing upon places of desire and transformative knowledge? Is it possible that through pedagogical means we can begin contracting new habits, desires, perceptions, and ways of being and relating to the world?

Figure 23: A self-defence class as part of *Exercise: Les Noces*

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis.

Lacy's project used art to disrupt authoritarian models of transferring knowledge (newspapers, television or the police) and proposed empowerment instead through collective awareness.[62] However, it is impossible to know the impact that *Les Noces* had on peasant women informing them about the injustices they endured in marriage. Thus, Bishop poses a few critical questions in relation to art history and pedagogical artworks:

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[62]*Three Weeks in May* prompted the police and the city government to address violence against women openly and to publicise rape hotlines (Meyer, 2002, p.106-107).

'What does it mean to do education as art? How do we judge these experiences? What kind of efficacy do they seek? Do we need to experience them first hand in order to comment on them?' (p.245). Continuing to work on the hypothesis of the agitprop character of *Les Noces*, and as it is impossible to know its impact in 1923, in what ways is it still useful to think of the self-defence class in relation to *Les Noces*?

For this thesis, it has been imperative to examine Nijinska's project historically as a performative gesture which affected social reality — both in terms of her work as a choreographer as well as a teacher. Her ideas for the 'new dancer' and the art of dance reflected in the curriculum of School of Movement in Kiev, which was also influenced by the 'new Suprematist beings' as well as the 'Constructivist machines' were undoubtedly manifested in the choreography of *Les Noces*. *Les Noces* has to be read as a proposal for a new society, as an experiment through dance for a new social formation. Could it be that translating *Les Noces* into a self-defence class we allow the work to continue to operate as a 'choreographic site' where we can continue to imagine new models of social configurations? If so, in what ways does participation in a self-defence class propose a different kind of involvement and sense of engagement and togetherness in a group? Has *Exercise: Les Noces* the potential to form a model of a society which is that of practicing democracy — the function of the class not being that of information transfer rather than of shared experience?

In her conclusion, Bishop discusses *Chaosmosis* (1993), the last book of Félix Guattari where he asks: 'how do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?' Bishop claims that 'for Guattari, art is an endlessly renewable source of vitalist energy and creation, a constant force of mutation and subversion'(p.210). Bishop refers to his 'ethico-aesthetic paradigm',which according to Guattari is 'a tripartite schema of art's development, in which art is no longer beholden to Capital'. Art, he says should claim 'a

key position of transversality with respect to other Universes of value' bringing about mutant forms of subjectivity and rehumanising disciplinary institutions' (as cited in Bishop, 2011, p. 211). The ethico-aesthetic paradigm involves a critique of art, and a critique of the institutions into which it permeates because art blurring entirely into life risks its disappearance. Hence for both Guattari and Bishop, it is crucial for art as pedagogy to address both fields critically. Through this lens, this study would like to conclude with a question about translation as the choreographic mode and practice which can potentially critically discuss and facilitate intermediality. Through this Exercise I would like to propose the final series of questions: can translation become this choreographic methodology through which we discuss interdisciplinarity, and we make interdisciplinary projects in order to test, revise and expand upon the criteria we apply to practised disciplines with a view to expanding or devising new adequate domains and languages?

Figure 24: Participants working in couples in self-defence class as part of *Exercise: Les Noces*

Note: Copyright 2017 by A. Akritidis

More specifically, could translation really become a methodology that addresses art and education critically? Can translation invent the intermediate sites and languages for the different disciplines to co-exist without cancelling one another?

This project proposed an expanded meaning of choreography combining art and dance. Moreover, it proposed the 'choreographic site' as an alternative platform which can engage audiences differently, enabling alternative ways to encounter, attend and engage with art as an experience of translation. Lastly, by translating *Les Noces* to a self-defence class initiated a discussion about the practice-based possibilities of translation with a view to expanding to education. However, it remains a question for the future researcher whether a similar methodology between art and education can be developed so as to expand the languages, modes and platforms of both disciplines.

Conclusion

This research proposes 'translation,' as opposed to other appropriating strategies, as a theory and practice which invites the possibility of performative postproduction throughout the making, performing and attending of dance.

Taking into consideration Boris Groys's (2015) definition of newness as the result of a new comparison, my contribution to new knowledge in this PaR/practice-based project is the new-old lives, these performatives which were made possible by bringing translation theory and dance/art practices together; by bringing and thinking all these texts and textures, bodies, eras and mediums together:

> Every occurrence of the new is basically the making of a new comparison of something never compared until then, because it never occurred to anyone to draw the comparison. Cultural memory is the remembering of these comparisons, and the new accedes to cultural memory only if it constitutes, in its turn, a new comparison of its kind (Groys, p.55).

Exercise: Les Noces, is neither dance nor visual art, neither choreography nor installation, neither theory nor practice, neither old nor new, but an exercise of all, in floating and suspension. To summarise, employing translation as a choreographic practice made possible an examination of the past regardless of traditional historical narratives and disciplinary contexts. This PaR project proposes a translation as a method and practice — meaning through consideration of certain translative ideas and methods such as 'afterlife', 'translatability', 'equivalence', 'constructing comparables', 'translation as performance' and 'performance as translation' — in order to read and rewrite the past through performance. This project also proposes terms and formulas which belong to different mediums such as the 'readymade' and 'constructing comparables' and translates them into choreography. This project coins a new term, that of 'choreographic site,' where translation is practiced as a 'doing' of the performer and the attendant. It is

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in the intention of this hyper-hybrid translation to force any sense for a single 'original' meaning to evaporate; and it is through the bodies of the choreographers, the performers, the attendants and their relationships that the potential for reconfiguring the future can emerge. More specifically, the mode of translation has been analysed and examined as a choreographic methodology in relation to:

a. the notions of 'afterlife' and 'translatability' through the writings of Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida, in order to examine the ballet of *Les Noces* and thus, trace the texts and bodies that the 1923 ballet translated and the ways *Les Noces* fulfilled other texts' potentials;

b. the notion of 'equivalence' through which I am able to advance Paul Ricœur's formula of 'constructing comparables' to an interdisciplinary choreographic method between dance and visual art;

c. the schema 'performance as translation' through which I am able to view every performance as a translation that enters the economy of 'here and now' as a multiple and unstable text and as such, render the loci of performer and attendant authoritative and authorial;

d. the schema 'translation as performance' through which I am able to examine translation as the dramatised conversation between multiple texts and authors, across mediums and eras. As such I propose translation as a tool of analysis and critique of the past through performance.

Understanding the notion of 'afterlife' through the writings of Benjamin and Derrida I have been able to consider the potentiality enacted or revealed by linking disparate texts which do not traditionally belong together. The idea of 'afterlife' formulates my proposed choreographic methodology which is about making connections between texts, mediums and eras in a non-hierarchical or historical fashion with a view to ad-

dressing the immense potentiality that lies in the newly expanded life with the 'other,' the 'foreign' text which may belong to another medium and era. The concept of 'after-life' proposes a model for reading *Les Noces;* a model which also proposes a way to read dance and art histories together as a 'constellation' of events where causality and linear historical progress are irrelevant. Adopting this model of reading history from Walter Benjamin, I have highlighted the relationship between art and dance in the life and work of Bronislava Nijinska. This reading allows for a different understanding of the significance of *Les Noces* as part of the Russian avant-garde insinuating alternative thinking of art and dance as forms and mediums, as well as, a revision of their historical narratives.

This thesis also focuses on the 'translatability' of *Les Noces* aiming not to offer another translation as historicism but to look for the interconnections that exist within the texts that comprise *Les Noces*. Additionally, I seek 'foreign' texts, such as various cultural products, to translate *Les Noces* that reveal something else about the potential of the 1923 choreography. The consideration of 'translatablility' acknowledges *Les Noces* in its singularity, as a radical choreographic monad, as nothing else ever made as well as a totally transparent text, contiguous to other texts in the way that *Les Noces* fulfils other texts' potentials.

Les Noces, throughout this research project, is constantly becoming multiple other texts: a Byzantine icon, a Suprematist painting, a Constructivist relief, an experiment for a new physiology and a new dancer, an experimentation on movement, a pro-feminist work, an agitprop work, an avant-garde project as well as a poetic depiction of the current human condition; subsequently, *Les Noces* is also translated into *Nothing Compares 2 U, Concrete Stereo, Invisible Sculpture, Suicide, Men In the Cities*, a self-defence class, a copying action, a poem, a contemplation on originality, a performance in an old church, a video documentation, a PhD project; simultaneously changing in various ways in afterlife, as

changes occur on top of changes. In my translational exercises, I pose questions interrogating the past and seek answers in the newly invited texts which are foreign, unformed and unrecognised by the historical contexts of Nijinska and *Les Noces*. The gaps and glitches that are enacted in the conjunction of texts involved in *Exercise: Les Noces* allow the possibility and hopefully invite the potential to imagine the work differently, enriched and defined by the foreign voices which do not belong to the work and its balletic history such as Warhol's, Longo's, O'Connor's, Malevich's, my own, the performers, the attendants and so on.

Furthermore, this reading of *Les Noces* insinuates the works allegiance to an alternative historical trajectory other than that of ballet, leading not to modernist 'purity' but to the Russian avant-garde with reference and quotation to a range of art as well as non-art sources. In this historical discussion, *Exercise: Les Noces* does not respond to the 'high/low art' or 'high/non-art' binaries that seem to preoccupy much of the historical discussion in art. Instead, the choice of visual artworks in which I translate *Les Noces* into *Exercise: Les Noces*, contributes to the historical dialogue between the two art forms and attempts to unsettle and question any remains of the old 'visual art/dance' binary.

Through the translative method of 'constructing comparables,' I propose the term and process of 'choreographic readymades' which involves the gestures of selection, recontextualisation, and designation. The works which were chosen to construct *Exercise: Les Noces* were 'remade' or 'disguised' readymades, or 'choreographic readymades' chosen, recontextulised and designated to fit the context of theatre. The translation of an object that has history, hopefully addresses that history, and activates that history of references (seen as a text-in-afterlife) in a 'dramatised dialogue' between the previous authors of the work. Hence, it is through performance that the readymade performes anew but also assumes an author (the choreographer, the performer, the attendant) who

removes the previous purpose and function from the readymade so that the new performance becomes a comment on that previous function, status, and form. By choreographing the readymades, I initiate a critical discussion of the mediums involved as well as opening up the possibility to expand these mediums beyond their means of production. The idea of translating art works and objects to scores in *Exercise: Les Noces*, proposed an expanded notion of the existing choreographic practices of postproduction (involving modes and means such as the 'choreographic readymades' and the 'choreographic sites') with a view to legitimising the pluralist practices of dance and art that would often fall outside the institutional mechanisms of theatre and/or art. In other words, translation transforms stable artefacts into living entities whose performance unravels new ways of making meaning beyond its prescribed roles. These translations from one medium to another, which are made possible through the choreography of the 'readymade,' function like a wedge, contributing to the fracturing of the idea of the medium altogether, proposing alternative ways of making and attending art. Hence, *Exercise: Les Noces* is not a drawing, or sculpture, or dance anymore but a choreography, a structure, a knowledge or a semiotic system which negotiates along with the performers and the attendants its translatability and afterlife. *Exercise: Les Noces* proposes an expanded meaning of choreography combining art and dance. Moreover, it proposes the 'choreographic site' as an alternative platform which can engage audiences differently, enabling alternative ways to encounter, attend and engage with art as an experience of translation.

As previously mentioned, translation is not just a choreographing practice, but is proposed as a performing and attending practice. This thesis develops the schema 'performance as translation' which describes an alternative, fluid mode of authorship — that of performance; 'performance as translation' is a process, a mode which acknowl-

edges authorship as performative and therefore, an author is something we 'do' rather something we 'are'. This concept of 'performance as translation,' which again works towards the growth and renewal of the text in translation, disavows the role of the author as originator reinscribing a new-old purpose to the role of the performer which is that of the translator.

This choreographic practice of translation is a 'practice-based project' and thus, translation is also proposed as a meta-practice; a tool to analyse, critique and which proposes translation as an alternative method to approach the past or another medium through performance. The proposed schema of 'translation as performance' speaks of a practice which is conscious of itself and its citational character. Through the analysis of translation's citational and performative potential, this thesis uses translation as a practice and model for questioning social and historical norms. 'Using the citational potential of its mode, it can exaggerate, highlight, displace and queer normative expectations across genders and cultures as well as languages' (Bermann, 2014, p.292). What is more, postproduction, which is made possible through the invitation of the 'other' or the 'foreign,' enacts the promise, according to Butler, of 'a radically democratising enrichment, that comes with new, more complex languages and ways of knowing' (Bermann, 2014, p.295). What this thesis firstly affirms in relation to Butler's assertion, is the recognition of Nijinska as a radical choreographer of modernity and *Les Noces* as an avant-garde creation.

One line of action seems prominent to constitute this translational practice as 'ethical': the additive and expanding. The additive is defined as the encounter with the foreign or the 'other' exercised by 'constructing comparables', selecting, designating and recontextualising readymades to make choreographies. Additive practice is also exercised by practicing emptying, repeating, creating gaps and employing exercises of un-

learning, inviting different voices from the past but also from the present of the work to reinscribe their meaning to the work. The additive and expanding were exercised during making but also during the performing and attending of *Exercise: Les Noces*, allowing the performers and attendants version to become the work itself.

Lastly, translation is proposed as a mode which expands the languages that it puts to work. Hence, this thesis advances an expansive notion of choreography as well as of the art object through the 'choreographic readymades' as well as an expanded definition of the gallery and theatre setting through the proposed 'choreographic site'. By providing multiple practical, theoretical, temporal and spatial planes of engagement, through the practice of translation, this project has attempted to temporarily create 'choreographic sites,' which are proposed as sites of 'becoming,' which allow both performers and attendants to engage with radical forms of knowledge dissemination actively.

Nato Thompson (2015) proposes relational art as the creation of sustained relations and engagement with others which, over a period of time, can influence our ability to create new forms of being collectively. As Thompson suggests, 'the encounters enact a range of transformations that exceed mere words. They are somatic. They are lived. These encounters come with feelings as well as ideas' (p.135). Such encounters are enacted in the 'choreographic site' and moreover, the expanded duration of the work can result in a choreographic experience that potentially upholds new forms of collective being. The 'choreographic site,' which is proposed through the translation of *Les Noces* as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, is a model site which can potentially, if exercised, cause a powerful break in our everyday understanding of the world and its narratives. *Exercise: Les Noces* has the ambition, as 'practice-based research,' to become, through performance, an 'ethical project' and site where the politics of the 'interruption of selfhood' are at work, inviting the previously unheard, invisible, unrecognised human traces and voices so that

we, translators, choreographers, performers, citizens can open up our bodies to question, and possibly change, our perception of ourselves and the world as we know it; so that we, translators of desire, makers, and performers, realise that our doing is a writing which is not about the past. This writing is actually a choreography which can and will, undoubtedly, determine the future.

Appendices

Appendix 1(A): Video of *Exercise: Les Noces (2017)*

Please find the DVD in the accompanying booklet.

This is a video documentation of the performance - installation *Exercise: Les Noces* as it was performed on Sunday 29 January 2017 at The Asylum, Caroline Garden's Chapel, Peckham. Duration: 3 hours (approx.)

Credits:

Concept/Choreography: Elena Koukoli

Collaborators: Irene Fiordilino, Hattie Harding, Eve Hopkinson, Lewis Sharp, Robert Suchy, Jay Yule (Performers/Choreography), Andreas Papapetrou (Composer), Martin Hargreaves (dramaturgy), Simon Veis (Design), Pagona Koukoli (Costume), Nicole Lomas (Tai Chi instructor), Aris Akritidis (photography)

Appendix 1(B): Video excerpts from dress rehearsal

This is a video with excerpts from the dress rehearsal as it took place on Sunday 29 January 2017 at The Asylum, Caroline Garden's Chapel, Peckham.
Duration: 30 mins (approx,) Camera: Aris Akritidis

Please find the DVD in the accompanying booklet.

Appendix 2: Video documentation of *Exercise: Les Noces (2014)*

This is a video documentation of the first version of Exercise: Les Noces as it was presented as work in progress during the Graduate School Showcase 2014 at Laban Studio Theatre. Duration: 20 mins (approx.)

Credits:

Concept/Creation: Elena Koukoli

Performers:Sophie Farrell, Elinor Lewis, Olivia Paddison, Hannah Parsons, Vivian Triantafyllopoulou

Set design and realisation: Simon Veis, Elena Koukoli

Costumes design and realisation: Pagona Koukoli, Elena Koukoli

Please find the DVD in the accompanying booklet.

Appendix 3: Music of *Exercise: Les Noces* (2017)

by Andreas Papapetrou

Once_Less is a glitch collage soundtrack created for Experiment: Les Noces, a durational choreographic installation by choreographer and visual artist Elena Koukoli, presented at The Asylum, in Peckham on Sunday 29th January 2017 as part of the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance Parallax series.

Following Koukoli's example — to create a new work as a translation, in my case inspired by the music score for Les Noces — I worked with recordings of Igor Stravinsky's music and, after some rather severe editing, clipping and layering, created a long soundtrack for the event.

I participated in the event as both sound designer and performer, adjusting volumes, starting loops and moving samples in the sequencer during performance. I also operated a small hand-held cassette player, loaded with a tape recording of garbled spoken word, which I collected from random websites, and the "mothers' lament" as heard in the ending of the ballet's third tableau.

Once_Less is a reiteration of its anagram (i.e. Les Noces), a reimagined nightmarish version of the original ballet, featuring parts of the original as found artworks.

The five recorded excerpts you have before you serve as documentation. They do not feature the live elements of the performance, but can give a thorough impression of the piece's sound world.

Andreas Papapetrou
February 2017

Please find a CD with the music in the accompanying booklet.

CD Tracks:

1. Once_Less I: Intro & Nightmare
2. Once_Less II: Clock Strikes Twelve
3. Once_Less III: Echoing Immanence
4. Once_Less IV: Razor Chimes
5. Once_Less V: Fragment - Epilogue

Appendix 4: Mother's Song (the text)

18 translations since 1923 of Sappho's Fragment poem

1. It's not right, lament in the Muses' house…that for us is not fitting….

2. Must I remind you, Cleis, / That sounds of grief / Are unbecoming in / a poet's household? and that they are not suitable in ours?

3. There is no place for grief in a house which serves the Muse."

4. For it is not the custom that a funeral song be heard in the house of the servants of the Muses; for us, it would be inappropriate.

5. For it is not right for lament to take place in the house of the servants the Muses [ ] this would not befit us

6. For it is not right that there should be lamentation in the house of those [i.e. poets] who serve the Moisai (Muses). That would not be fitting for us.

7. In the house of the Muses' servants grief is not right. / It would not suit us.

8. It is not right for there to be lamenting in a house where the Muses' servants dwell

9. For lamentation may not be in a poet's house: such things befit not us.'

10. For it is not right that in the house of sono- there be mourning. Such things befit not us.

11. In the home of the Muses 'tis bootless to mourn.

12. For it is not right in the house of Muses that there be lament this would not become us

13. For in a house that serves the Muses there must be no lamentation: such a thing does not befit it

14. For in the golden house of the singer the voice of lamentation may not be.

15. Nay, lamentation must not dwell Within a poet's house…

16. No house that serves the Muse hath room, I wis. For grief; and so it ill beseemeth this.

17. For it is not right that there is lament in the house of the servants of the muses, this not convenient for us.

18. Even in the face of death I forbid lamentation in the house of music

Appendix 5: The video installation (Cutups / Leftovers)

This is the video *Cutups / Leftovers* that was projected in loop as part of the installation *Exercise: Les Noces*. Please find the DVD in the accompanying booklet.

The works featured in the video are:

Nothing Compares 2 U, Sinéad O'Connor, 1990 (Music Video)

Invisible Sculpture, Andy Warhol, 1985 (Sculpture)

Bronislava Nijinska portrait, Man Ray, 1922 (Photography)

Bouquet, Isa Genzken, 2004 (Sculpture)

The Passion of Joan of Arc, Carl Th. Dreyer, 1928 (Film)

Bizarre Love Triangle, New Order, 1992 (Music video)

Leftovers are part objects in time rather than space. Leftovers suggest fractures rather than continuous time. They are cut off from both a past and a future. This cutting adrift is more violent than we might at first imagine. This is neither an archive nor a memory bank of things. If memories are stirred by some objects, they are quickly cancelled being dislodged from the circuits they normally inhabit. They leapfrog from one to another, temporary residents in a different space. A kind of violent dispersal is at work, a dispersal that generates a tissue of shifting relations (Briony Fer, 2005)

Exercise Les Noces (Score / instructions)

Sequence 1 - Nothin Compares 2 U

- Wear (over your current clothes) the black raincoat poncho

- Wear the red lipstick around your eyes

- Go to Ron Arad's concrete stereo, pick up a headphone, wear it and stand still with both of your arms bend holding the cables of the headphones at the height of your waist

- Wait until all six of you are in place

- The last one presses PLAY and takes place

- Lip sync the song

- When the song finishes remove the headphones, walk back to your seat and remove the raincoat and lipstick

Please find below the lyrics of the song:

NOTHING COMPARES TO YOU

It's been seven hours and fifteen days
Since you took your love away
I go out every night and sleep all day
Since you took your love away
Since you been gone I can do whatever I want
I can see whomever I choose
I can eat my dinner in a fancy restaurant
But nothing
I said nothing can take away these blues
'Cause nothing compares
Nothing compares to you
It's been so lonely without you here
Like a bird without a song
Nothing can stop these lonely tears from falling
Tell me baby where did I go wrong
I could put my arms around every boy I see
But they'd only remind me of you
I went to the doctor guess what he told me
Guess what he told me

He said girl you better try to have fun no matter what you do
But he's a fool
'Cause nothing compares, nothing compares to you
All the flowers that you planted mama
In the back yard
All died when you went away
I know that living with you baby was sometimes hard
But I'm willing to give it another try
Nothing compares
Nothing compares to you
Nothing compares
Nothing compares to you
Nothing compares
Nothing compares to you

Sequence 2 - Robert Longo

- Wear your black suit and tie (and possibly shoes?)

- Start doing the 5 balancing poses. You have 5 each but repeat them at least 2 to 3 times. Please take your time. Really try to maintain your pose for as long as possible and please do not fake the falling or do not take too many steps while falling

- When the beat in music starts slowly move into your poses' sequence - make the movement very crisp: 5 poses, 8 counts each / 10 poses, 4 counts each

- Pulsing for all your 5 poses - Take your time

- Go into your Dance: +1 +1 +1, +2 +2, +1 +2   OR   +4 +4 +4, +5 +5, +4 +5
  Repeat 5 times — introduce the low walking with the fists next to your head to move around

- Pulse - 2 poses

- Dance

- Pulse - 2 poses

- Dance, start gathering in the centre. Your dancing should be much more organic by now. When you are in the centre please loose the walking. Reduce your dancing to less moving around. Your movements should still be quite intense but your are moving together as one entity — between pulsing and moving - make it sexy - take your time

- Disperse - break away from the group with the balancing poses. make it gradual, take your time

- Once you feel you finished return to your seat

Sequence 3 - Singing (Mother)

- Collect your lyrics

- Take a place in the space, that can be either sitting or standing, moving or standing still and of course you can also decide to go from standing to moving, sitting to standing etc

- Singing in canon. The singing groups are: A. Irene and Robert, B. Hattie and Eve, C. Jay and Lewis (Low key). We have rehearsed a certain order but this can also change

- You don't have to be close to your partner when singing but make sure you have eye contact.

- Sing your part at the same time with your partner. You sing different lyrics but the same melody

- When all of you have finished their parts, look at each other, breathe in and do your chorus together.

- Repeat twice : For/ it is/ not right in the/ house of/ Muses, that there/ be la/ ment this would not/ become/ us (Please learn it by heart)

- Repeat the whole sequence twice (?)

- Return to your seat

Please find your part and cut it out or copy it in a separate piece of paper and have it with you

Sequence 4 - Invisible sculpture / trampoline

- Either Hattie or Robert take the dry shampoo spray and put it in your trousers' pocket.(Wear your trousers if your are not wearing them already)

- Go to the Ron Arad concrete stereo and take the speaker that has one white surface. Place the speaker with the white surface facing the audience and stand next to it for a while. Copy Warhol's pose, notice his hands!!!
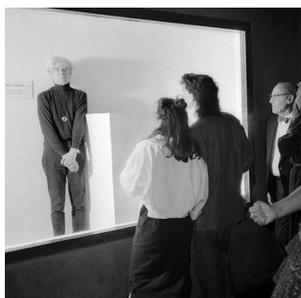
- After a couple of minutes take the dry shampoo out of your pocket and spray in the air.

- Go to your seat and wear your black hoodie

- When the talc powder has dissolved two performers take they places on the trampettes.

- Wear the skirts and braces and start to bounce together.

- Robert of Hattie start their slow walk until they reach the corner which is diagonally opposite to the trampettes.

- Run and stand on the two performers on the trampettes replicating Warhol's suicide image:

- Jump off and repeat the slow walk.

- Repeat the whole sequence with the walking and bouncing 4 times

- When the Hattie or Robert have performed their last jump they go back to their seat and take off their hoodie.

- The two jumpers bounce for a little more and then stop, come out of the skirt and return to your seats

Sequence 5 - Slow Ballet Triangle

- Three performers stand in a triangle shape.

- Slow ballet sequence:

Stand in 1st position arm in low V, palms forward

1-4   Rise

5-6   Lower

7-10   Dégagé R leg sideways in fondu. Tilt the whole body away from the extended leg. One straight line from head to toe.

11-12   Recover to 1st

1-12   Repeat on the other side

1-2   Fondu, R leg to ankle. R arm circles in front of the body, L arm behind, fists clenched. Look down

3-4	Extend R leg forward. Lift R Arm in 5th position, in fist. L arm remains behind the back in fist
5-8	Pose R Leg through rise in attitude derrière with L leg. Arms remain in same position
9-12	Hold
1-4	Extend and lower L leg degage, fondu on your supporting leg
5-8	Pivot and step with your L leg to recover to starting position (in 1st, arms in low V)

- The turn in the sequence is not full. We will try to make it so that the tip of the triangle is a different performer each time and that your facing always changes.

- This can also be performed as a solo or a trio on its own

Sequence 6 - Air costume sequence

- For this sequence you should be in your black shorts and vests

- Go to the big yellow triangle, take a costume wear it and go to the side where the left blower is so you can inflate it.

- When the inflation stops immediately go to the middle a lie down to start your sequence.

- This is your 'glitches, echoes', emptied Nijinsky choreography. You start on the floor and it should take you about 10mins to stand up.

- 2mins in silence or thinking about your sequence, 2-6 mins: floor sequence (gradually developing), 6-8mins middle level, 8-10mins coming to standing, 10-12 gradually coming to your fully developed standing sequence

- After you finished transition to your first gesture. Here in the order of the gestures:

  - Eve'e pop (standing, on the spot)

  - Hand-eye shuffle (standing, moving)

  - Twist heel (standing, on the spot)

  - Running leg (standing moving)

  - Joggler (floor, on the spot) - Move away /remove your costume

  - Wiping leg (floor, moving)

  - Up-down sleep (standing, moving)

  - Chin cry (standing, on the spot)

  - Triangle duet (standing/floor, moving)

  - Punching jump (standing, moving)

- I know that you still don't know what the Joggler and the Wiping leg gestures are.

- Please spend enough time with each gesture so it is exhausted in repetition.

- The transitions should be very subtle. Please do not make them another gesture. They shouldn't last longer than the actual gestures.

- Take your time and gradually increase speed. Play with speed to improvise with the given gestures.

- In order to finish bring the 'Punching jump' to stillness

- Take your costume, roll it so that you remove some of the air and place it back to the triangle.

- Go back to your seat.

Please remember to bring with you:

1. Black suit trousers
2. White shirt
3. Black trainers
4. The lyrics
5. The instructions
6. Black vest
7. Pair of black shorts

Thank you!!!

Appendix 7: Score / Instructions for *Exercise: Les Noces* (2014)

Exercise: Les Noces

The order of performance

- Audience lights, 'Concrete Stereo' is already on stage
- Black out

Act 1
- Performers enter stage
- Hannah turns the lights on while the rest of performers are wearing their headphones and stand next to 'concrete stereo' (backstage)
- Hannah presses play and wears her headphones
- All performers are lip-synching 'Nothing compares 2 U'
- When the song finishes all performers look down and Hannah turns the lights off
- Black out

Act 2
- During the blackout all performers take off their headphones and raincoats which they place at the back of the stage
- All performers stand in a line centre stage
- Vivian turns the lights on and she joins the line
- All performers do the 'Longo' sequence
- Everyone finishes in the 'Warhol' position and Olivia stays in place
- Everyone else takes the stereo off stage. Eli – amplifier and headphones, Vivian – turntable and headphones, Hannah – speaker.
- Sophie places the white side of the speaker next to Olivia and changes the lights—wash on Olivia
- Olivia does the dry shampoo (?) and goes away soon after that
- Hannah starts bouncing on trampette
- After 20 bounces Sophie changes the lights into a general wash and joins Hannah into bouncing
- Olivia sets the stopwatch to 4' and starts counting
- Eli and Vivian enter stage and start their 'Yves Klein' sequence
- Olivia does her 'suicide' sequence
- Olivia turns the lights off after 4'
- Black out

Act 3

- During black out all performers wear their raincoats and take off their trousers.
- They all place themselves in a line backstage
- Hannah turns the lights on

- Sophie, Olivia, Eli and Vivian walk towards down stage and they do their 'Tracey Emin' pose
- Hannah turns the lights off as soon and the rest of the performers are on the floor and opens the back curtain(?)
- Everyone clears stage
- black out—'it's not that's crying, it's my soul'

<u>Longo Sequence</u>

a. 1 (Random) , 2 (Random), 3 (Random), 4(Random), Tableau 1

Tableau 1: Sophie + Olivia - 8
        Elinor - 2
        Vivian + Hannah - 6

b. 1 (Random) , 2 (Random), 3 (Random), 4(Random), Tableau 2

Tableau 2: Olivia + Eli + Vivian – 5
        Sophie – 8 (mirror)
        Hannah - 1

c.1 (Random) , 2 (Random), 3 (Random), 4(Random), Tableau 3

Tableau 3: Sophie + Elinor +Hannah – 3
        Olivia+ Vivian - 4

d. 1 (Random) , 2 (Random), 3 (Random), 4(Random), Tableau 4

Tableau 4: Olivia + Eli+ Vivian – 2
        Sophie + Hannah - 6

e. 1 (Random) , 2 (Random), 3 (Random), 4(Random), Tableau 5

Tableau 5 : Everyone Warhol

one   two

three

four

five

six

seven

eight

nine / Warhol

Yves Klein

Appendix 8: Exergon

Beginning to write this thesis, I already find myself in the awkward position of trying to structure an archive, that is, a body of texts - scores, dances, paintings, music and so on. This process of gathering that 'precedes inscription', is what Jacques Derrida in his book *Archive Fever* (1996) calls 'exergon' which, and according to him, 'consists in capitalizing on an elipsis' that is investing in lack (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1996, p7). In my case, this 'elipsis', this lack is constituted by the fact that my thesis has not yet/already been performed and translated. Nevertheless, I have to invest in it with meaning and value. Simply put, this practice (of reading, writing, choreographing, performing and attending) is all about investing in the void that other bodies have left behind.

Consequently, in the action that will follow or in this archiving of my future/past translations/performances there will be derelictions, loquacities, inaccuracies, a lot of approximation and many, many losses but there will be no mourning. This is the archive you will have to consider as the 'origin' of my project and my 'original' contribution to new knowledge. This written dissertation is an official document. This will be the preserver and provider of my work, but most certainly, the destroyer of it. Or, this paper will be the archive of a completely different text: that of my performance right now while writing, or of your performance right now while reading.

Being the archivist, I am responsible for the consistency of the information I provide to you and thus I assure you of the existence of meaning in this work which will be revealed to you through the action of reading. But never forget that the meaning you will find is only your own, desired one.

However, please consider that this thesis will be an archive within the archive; part of a process that has already been taking place within Laban institution. The format,

the context and the content of this document will have to be deduced to the rules of the specific 'house' that is going to accommodate it. Therefore, this is what you will have to consider as the 'origin' of my project.

I have to warn you: This archive contains a lot of deaths, including the author's.

This is a work in progress and it has already started.

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