

Leo Rafolt

Academy of Arts and Culture, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

Queering Distances and Disoriented Dancing Bodies: Matija Ferlin's Relational Performances *Sad Sam* *Revisited* and *The Other for One*

Abstract: The paper argues spatial parameters in defining queer identity, especially in Anglo-American critical discourse, eager to employ it as a strategy for queer performance, or notable, modern, or contemporary dance hermeneutics. Leaning on traditional queer researchers, e.g., Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and José Esteban Muñoz, to name just a few of them, as well as on materialist concepts of the body, affects, the human touch, etc., a deep analysis of two Matija Ferlin's performance projects is offered, precisely from a perspective of queer resistance to dominant heteronormative paradigms of 'orientation', 'identification', and 'affectuality'.

Keywords: disorientation; queering; dance; embodiment; trauma.

*“La lutte continue. The world we inherit [...] is more degraded, more violent, a degradation of violence laid down by industrial capitalism and morphed into our post-Fordist nightmare.”*¹

Introductory notes: (De)staging performances

The relevance of queering structures implemented in arts' research usually re-surface when discussions delve into specific LGBTQ movements and communities, e.g., in Eastern Europe, along with their strategies. For instance, the endeavours of LGBTQ individuals to find their place within their national communities, the organization of pride parades, and the utilization of the EU-backed human rights discourse often come under scrutiny as specific political or activist agendas. Surprisingly, when attention shifts towards the political landscape of the arts as such, e.g., contemporary dance, validity of the construct of post-socialist European 'backwardness' often occurs. I share the concern that many theoretical frameworks of queer performance, or

¹ Christina Crosby, "Queer Studies, Materialism, and Crisis: A Roundtable Discussion," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18, 1 (2011): 135.

queer dance, or even their research, often exhibit a Western-centric focus and offer limited tools for unpacking non-hegemonic contexts that stem from the arts *eo ipso*, and not from a broader political context. This approach tends to spotlight the woes of dominant spaces, while only superficially mentioning lived experience of marginalized ones. Nevertheless, different artistic forms can help to dismantle this partial and oversimplified understanding of this 'regional' homophobia, while also obstructing the scrutiny of LGBTQ actors' alignment with Western ideals of sexual democracy, which may intertwine with post-socialist European quasi-nationalism, or its discourses of modernity and progress. Despite post-socialist Europe often being portrayed as Europe's less developed counterpart, nationalism probably plays a pivotal role in its assertion, transcending itself as a mere geographical marker, as a complex political, cultural, historical, and temporal category. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the sudden disappearance of the Second World category, many post-socialist states underwent a process of transition, aiming to transform their perceived backward and totalitarian states into Western-style democracies. From the outset, these 'transitional' states were often perceived as lacking in democratic knowledge and practices, trailing behind the West. This perspective, still influencing the configuration of Europe's internal hierarchies, defines these states as constantly catching up in both material and institutional terms. A good example of trans-positioning these 'transitional' habitus of post-socialist (artistic) legacy into the realm of dance is, definitely, a compelling two-channel video installation by Igor Grubić, called *East Side Story* (2006–2008). By interweaving authentic documentary footage with a captivating re-enactment through the artistic medium of dance, the author offers a thought-provoking view into the challenges and activism of the LGBTQ community, although deeply rooted in the interdisciplinary realm of queer studies and informed by the ethos of LGBTQ activism. The documentary segment adeptly amalgamates televised snapshots from two pivotal gay pride events: one hosted in Belgrade in 2001 and another in Zagreb in 2002. These parades were marred by instances of verbal and physical aggression, orchestrated acts of violence perpetrated by neo-Nazi groups, and the unsettling participation of bystanders. These disturbing visuals serve to underscore the grim reality faced by LGBTQ participants. On one screen, Grubić employs a seamless alternation of excerpts from both events, knitting together a narrative thread of shared adversity. Simultaneously, the second screen, thoughtfully positioned adjacent to the first, showcases a re-enactment performed by a group of dancers hailing from Zagreb. Four dancers take centre stage, each infusing their unique interpretation of the documented events by mirroring distinct movements and postures witnessed within the televised coverage. Remarkably, the dancers are queering the screen, they engage in solo performances, as well as the group choreography, all unfolding within the very settings where the original incidents transpired. Notably, the title draws a parallel to the iconic American musical (as well as the 1961 film), renowned for dramatizing the rivalry between ethnically distinct teenage street groups. Within this context, but here, set against the backdrop of Yugoslavia's

post-war fragmentation, this piece serves as a poignant reminder that extreme nationalism, devoid of an immediate external ethnic other, can reorient itself towards an internal enemy, a role, in this instance, embodied by sexual minorities. The ingenious juxtaposition of the turbulent, aggressive visuals on the primary screen against the graceful movements of dance unfolding in serene streets initially creates a jarring contrast, gradually affording a form of healing and catharsis for the historical traumas portrayed. In a word, dance does not serve here only as a juxtaposed form, seemingly confronting the cruel reality of a documentary (television) video materials, but, on the contrary, it resonates as a central queering mechanism – as a *lutte continue*.² One more example situates Central European queer performance in an obsolete (even though more private) political context. Matija Ferlin is a contemporary Croatian performer, dancer, choreographer, and performance director, who has been present on the European stage for two decades ???, mostly transgressing the alleged generic models, whether in contemporary dance or in contemporary theatre, or somewhere in-between. He confronts us with at least four paradigmatic structures of dealing with the performance's existence. The first one encompasses his solo pieces from the *Sad Sam* register, where different aspects of contemporary dance semiotics are being dismantled in front of the audience, usually transgressing the allegedly stable definitions of 'the dancing body', which moves freely through space in a perpetual flow, without any obstacles, relying merely on its technique. Deconstruction of this pre-structured, *habitus*-oriented 'danceness', moreover, allows the performer to deviate from a secure choreographic path towards bodily stubbornness, elusiveness, or the un-commodifying resistance of a structure that resembles dance, but it's not a dance, as well as it resembles theatre, but it does not fully envision theatrical in-betweenness. Or, in other words, what one is about to see does not only stem from what one expects, but, on the contrary, what one would expect becomes merely a failure of an overall dancing structure, or a failure of a conventional theatre performance. A childish playfulness with language is already present in most of the performances from this series. Nevertheless, it will become of central importance in the second paradigmatic structure in Ferlin's continuous dwellings on the dance phenomenology, the one provisionally described as *staging a play*. Not a performance, not a scenic vision, not theatre, not even dance, or drama, but precisely staging – staging a play, i.e., something that is written down, and has canonical value, mostly because it has been written, among all possible, but un-inscribed works of art, that had been left silenced. Ferlin offers them his own interpretation of silence, or even muteness. What happens when a canonical text is deprived of all its nuances, solely because it had been stripped off his worldly existence, e.g., resonating only in the performer's mouth, thus left unspoken, sustained by the performer's body, left inhibited, or maybe dis-attached from the performer's vocality, thus left lingering in a void between organicity (and material structure) of speech and an abstract teleology of language. Paradigm is, often,

² Shamita Sharmacharja, "Postcards from Istanbul – Through Crimson Tinted Glasses," www.artvehicle.com/postcard/40, 2010, s.p., acc. on November 10, 2023.

presented here as a minus procedure, as an 'enjambment' in a poetic structure, as a queering strategy, which rushes towards structural ending. Ferlin's third choreographic structure, also being paradigmatic, explores a communal dispositive, which lies in the background of every performance as a structure. What does it mean to create in an ensemble? And how does this affect complex relationships between singularity and plurality in performance, where precisely the individuation logic was about to assure global creativity. Working with bigger ensembles, or creating different communal as-set, that will approach performance through de-habitualizing and de-familiarizing it, or even deviating it from the movement and gestures, allows Ferlin to fully experiment with queering dance phenomenology as such, whether through its embedment, through an inner criticism of the original narrative structure, or by simply removing all the obstacles that usually interfere, hence emanating from the performer's 'over-educated' or normative body. The final paradigmatic strategy that Ferlin re-employs in his performance pieces is of fully choreographed nature. Nevertheless, even there his concept is eager to simultaneously eliminate "wordness" as total prescriptiveness (-graphy), from the choreographic realm, which often produces an uncanny effect of the improvisation inside of a *dancescape* that would otherwise exist on its own. All these strategies are more than visible in his first performance piece, envisioned as a queer-critique of a normative body paradigm of modern dance, or modern theatre as such.

On being oriented: Dance as political meta-structure

It is quite easy to imagine aspects of experience, as well as realities, that do not represent themselves in propositional, linguistic, or even verbal form, often ill-defined as linguistic aberrations, i.e., almost existing in a space beyond, beneath, and beside visibility, as though they are invoking a sort of "Deleuzian interest in planar relations, the irreducibly spatial positionality of *beside* [that] also seems to offer some useful resistance to the ease with which *beneath* and *beyond* turn from spatial descriptors into implicit narratives of, respectively, origin and telos."³ The author argues that this spatial paradigm of *beside*, moreover, does not produce or enforce any kind of dualism, but it nevertheless comprises a range of desiring, identifying, attracting, addressing, etc. These relations form another linguistic universe, far beyond the hegemony of dominant language, or any other would-be liberatory repressive system of values, encoded in art, or life as such. A solo performer on-stage embodies most of these relations mainly because his existence is defined in spatial relations, e.g., towards a space around him, his props, his movements, his voice, his own body. He is always an activist on the stage, usually triggered by the infantile awareness that somebody is watching, flooded by shame, almost *exhibited* like an artifact in a museum where all his performance assets are somehow on self-display. Thus, precisely this

³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 8.

shame, as it has often been argued, a transformational shame, represents the realm of performance, affecting all of its outlines, or sometimes even being in its ontological or phenomenological centre. To put it differently, keeping in mind the queerness of performative shame that expresses or exhibits itself on-stage: “Performance interlines shame as more than just its result or a way of warding it off [...] Shame is the affect that mantles the threshold between introversion and extroversion, between absorption and theatricality, between performativity and – performativity.”⁴ One could easily argue that this kind of performativity, indeed, resides ‘in space’, whereby the eye of the spectator is often a quite privileged analytic machine, a prestige centre, eager to register and (re)figure most of the inputs, as though being in a museum. Following Derrida, Judith Butler used to perceive performativity in its temporal context, as aberration, iteration, citationality, the ‘always-already’ register for different time-conceived transposition.⁵ Hence, this negative uttering of performativity, or even its peri-performativity, also exists, as it has often been demonstrated within a queer criticism of ‘the marriage example’. In a word: “Persons who self-identify as queer will be those whose subjectivity is lodged in refusals or deflections of (or by) the logic of the heterosexual supplement [...] The emergence of the first person, of the singular, of the active, and of the indicative are all questions rather than presumptions for queer performativity.”⁶ A spatialized dynamism of witnessing an act where heteronormativity is uttered (in a performative realm), thus, could easily be understood as an essence of queer hermeneutics, i.e., of how the queer interprets the world. Judith Butler even argues that the term queer emerged as a kind of ‘interpellation’ within the concept of performativity, that questions its stability, its variability, its dynamism, etc., but always reproducing the same ontology of shame onto subjects in question.⁷ Moreover, queer became a concept that hegemonized a space of identity invocation, e.g., narrow-mindedly linked to accusation, pathologizing, insult, etc., and “this is an invocation by which a social bond among homophobic communities is formed through time. The interpellation echoes past interpellations, and binds the speakers, as if they spoke in unison across time.”⁸ An imaginary chorus that taunts queerness, that Butler is interpreting, nevertheless, ought to be perceived as the discourse of collective contestation, of historical reflection and future imagining, which cannot be framed, and hegemonized – because it is constantly in the process of twisting, deconstructing, or redeploying its political purposes. If one transposes this (temporality-oriented) arguments into field of dance, it is obvious enough that, for queer performers, being visible should not only mean proclaiming otherwise invisible sexuality on the stage, as a form of occupying a space of new social creativity, or political utterance, but, on the

⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁵ Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 11–24.

⁶ Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 71.

⁷ Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’*, 226–28.

⁸ Ibid., 226.

other hand, it ought to also imply a rigid analysis and a wry criticism of hegemonic norms, that usually stems from the most intimate feeling of isolation and personal traumas. Interpretative queering, in a way, whether it is of hermeneutic nature, or purely artistic, often includes different assays of deconstructing mainstream representations, sometimes even forcing it to differ or to signify differently, but as a “refusal of the law in the form of the parodic inhabiting of conformity that subtly calls into question the legitimacy of the command, a repetition of the law into hyperbole, a rearticulation of the law against the authority of the one who delivers it.”⁹ Although Butler does not refer to dance, she is acknowledging that a moving body is always in the core of some sort of sociopolitical embodiment, often derived from the impossibility of choice. This only means that queer bodies (that matter) offer a strange resilience, quite different from the one of contemporary dancers, who were struggling against an over-imposed muteness or grammaticalization of their bodies. Notably, Butler evokes a somewhat specific return to materiality, which has more than one history, and ought to be analyzed as something prior to discourse.¹⁰ Dancing bodies, hence, constantly *flash* with their own materiality which is, in a way, pre-discursive, and even pre-expressive. They do not accept being only an obvious catachresis-machine, i.e., standing for something else, symbolizing, metaphorizing something else inside of the temporal alignment of, e.g., rigid structures of narrative, dramaturgy, rhetoric, or language logic. Dancing bodies are material because they are queer, i.e., because they are not relying on structures they are contaminated by, but they are constantly deconstructing them, often in favour of new phenomenologies that refuse to be stabilized. Both, performance art and dance as body-oriented-performance, as well as the concept of identity, are somewhat misconceived throughout the notion of ‘orientation’. One dances ‘being oriented’, as well as one ‘has’ sexual orientation. To put it in other words: “In order to become oriented, you might suppose that we must first experience disorientation. When we are oriented, we might not even notice that we are oriented: we might not even think ‘to think’ about this point. When we experience disorientation, we might notice orientation as something we do not have.”¹¹ This queer dependence of, both, dancing bodies and identity politics on one often ill-defined spatial concept is of utmost importance not only to dance-as-phenomenon but to queer-as-phenomenon, as well. Disorientation in dance and body-oriented practices often means performative stuttering, ill-structured and not defined moving, but it, moreover, allows us to reconsider the phenomenality of space that is often re-inscribed onto one’s body, and, in different words, “how space is dependent on bodily inhabitation”, definitely “not exterior to bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body”.¹² This does not mean, however, that space of the dancing body is relative to

⁹ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28–29.

¹¹ Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 5–6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6, 9.

subjects around it, to “one’s position”, etc. Conversely, it presumes a moving/dancing subject as “the container of space rather than contained by space,¹³ although it, as a meta-structure, unfortunately, immediately makes a distinction between ‘correct’ orientation and its alleged deviations. Similar process appears in discourse about sexual orientation, where lack of neutrality presumes quasi-standard binarism, between ‘normal’ or ‘normative’ (bodies) on one side and its ‘imagined’ aberration on the other. Bodies somehow ‘become directed’ in some ways more than in others, which consequentially creates social or political requirement for turning in some directions, and not the others. Thus, this question of directing oneself towards something, or turning, is crucial to formation or structuring of one’s subjectivity. Or, to put it somewhat differently: “If such turns are repeated over time, then bodies acquire the very shape of such direction. It is not, then, that bodies simply have a direction, or that they follow directions, in moving this way or that. Rather, in moving this way, rather than that, and moving in this way again and again, the surfaces of bodies *in turn* acquire their shape. Bodies are ‘directed’ and they take the shape of this direction.”¹⁴ Queer identity often represents a kind of detour, set against the social and political norms, where the inhabiting body is not the extension of a heteronormative desire, and social means of ‘correct’ expressiveness, but involves disorientation, seeing the world through different eyes, often dwelling, shifting, or deviating. Queer bodies are usually politicized from this perspective of space, obviously, in order to attribute them a different existence, a different phenomenology. The queer effect can be activated, however, if queer bodies no longer appear to be deviated, off centred, oblique, not aligned, always in comparison with the imaginary central, vertical line. One could even turn to the etymology of the word queer, absorbing most of the afore mentioned nuances of spatiality, denoting a certain ‘twist’, or, translated in identity (politics) terms, an ill-structured sexuality, which ought to be re-straightened.¹⁵ A spatial field of queer subjects is always of deprivileged nature, mainly because it is forced to manifest itself set against the wall of heteronormative spatiality, e.g., a kitchen table, family photos displayed on a living room wall. Dancing bodies are produced and reproduced, constantly, by means of perpetual symbolization, i.e., re-linkage between linguistic phenomena, practices of its institutionalization, cultural practices, or rituals, which means that it is also discursively constructed, only insofar discourse is perceived not only as a mere representation of the social or the historical that encompasses only practices of speaking, writing and communicating, but as something constitutive of the social and of histories that encompasses all dimensions of social reality. In other words, discourse does not reflect the mentality of rationalizing the ‘being’ of an object at the level of universal conceptual form (this would be idealism or realism); it rather reflects the material character of every social construction and that the very being of objects is itself a discursive production – not an ‘essence’. The question that arises out

¹³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 15–16.

¹⁵ Ibid., 67–70.

of the discursive approach to the understanding of objects will then be – not what the objects of art are – but rather *how* they are configured as well as what are the consequences of structuring the objects of art *as such*?¹⁶

Queer differentiations somehow ‘inform’ dancing bodies, and not only because different institutions are eager to frame different artistic practices into quasi-fixed regime of representation – attributing them different historical, social, or cultural symbolics – but also because the institutions are not willing to admit that most practices, they would like to enforce in this way, are often precarious, contingent, and utterly unstable. One has to be fully aware, as well, that arts and politics go hand in hand, always establishing some kind of contingent relationship, whereas the political dimension of arts could be found, both, in its consensual and its contesting nature, in its ‘straightness’ and its ‘queerness’, where the latter contains an antagonism persistent in counter-hegemonic discourse, not only as a point of struggle, resistance, or transgression of a dominant politically imposed order, but, on the contrary, as a constantly contesting force against discourses appropriated by hegemonic establishment. Even the greatest silence on the stage, or even pure abstraction, disintegrates dominance, exposing antagonism as a creative force, re-claiming once occupied field of representation. Dance is precisely that *loud silence* on the stage, contaminated by its own social relations, body signs, different interventions in the fields of subjectivity, representation, etc. Spaces often acquire ‘the skin’ of the bodies they are inhabited by, as though they are being reshaped in this performative *betweenness*. Disorientation is an unsettling bodily feeling, usually connected with losing one’s firm ground, and misstructuring it. But this is precisely what queer bodies tend to produce: gestures that will make deviations, or aberrations, ‘phenomenological’ again. Or, to put it in other words: “This is how phenomenology offers a queer angle – by bringing objects to life in their ‘loss’ of place, in the failure of gathering to keep things in their place.”¹⁷

Dance’s queer futurity

Elisabeth Grosz argues that a human body is constantly opening itself to the environment, internalizing most of its inputs, as well as often externalizing its own ‘organicity’. But it also opens itself up to a kind of prosthetic synthesis, transforming and rewriting the environment’s inputs, and its own ecology, trying to escape all of its de-biologizing definitions.¹⁸ Dancing body is, maybe, a metaphor of this kind of openness, of utmost viscosity, or even fluidness. What queer body tends to manifest inside of the hegemonic realm, a dancing body represents in the most natural form – the abandonment of gravity, direction, or security, for the sake of better, imagined

¹⁶ Goran Petrović Lotina, “The Political Dimension of Dance: Mouffe’s Theory of Agonism and Choreography,” in *Performing Antagonism: Theatre, Performance and Radical Democracy*, ed. by Tony Fisher and Eve Katsouraki (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 259–60.

¹⁷ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 65.

¹⁸ Boris Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 188–94.

futurity. Or, in Ahmed's own words: "For a life to count as a good life, then it must return the debt of its life by taking on direction promised as a social good, which means imagining one's futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life course. A queer life might be one that fails to make such gestures of return".¹⁹ The futurity of the queer dancing body, as it has often been argued, normally stems from its urge to exist in a constant state of potentiality, of becoming, where everything is at stake. Hence, if, on one side, one is confronted with the obvious attempt to reorient queer subjects towards an alleged normality, there is a strong tendency to fix it against the normative setup of the sociohistorical discourse of family, procreation, economy of desire, etc. Referring to Bloch's notion of hope and Agamben's idea of potentiality, as a certain mode of nonbeing that is eminent, or as the non-existing presence, José Esteban Muñoz redefines queerness as something always on the horizon, i.e., a thing that is not yet imagined – so it cannot be historicized:

Queerness as utopian formation is a formation based on an economy of desire and desiring. This desire is always directed at that thing that is not yet here, objects and moments that burn with anticipation and promise [...], born of the no-longer-conscious, the rich resonance of remembrance, distinct pleasures felt in the past. And thus, past pleasures stave off the affective perils of the present while they enable a desire that is queer futurity's core.²⁰

In one of his recent books, reflecting on ill-defined (actually Stefan Brecht's) notion of queer theatre, Muñoz will dwell upon differences in minoritarian and majoritarian approaches to "the fiction of identity", rather convinced that minoritarian subjects "need to interface with different subcultural fields to activate their own senses of self";²¹ as though they are destined to a demand for disidentification, normally, again, coming from (spatially) disoriented realms, which inhabit the margins of artistic practices, e.g., negotiating its own positionality, its own fixedness into genre-structures, or theoretical paradigms. Dancing bodies could, thus, opt for this third way of dealing with a hegemonic discourse, i.e., beyond identification or assimilation on one side and counter-identification, that seldom reverses to utopianism, on the other. If one is about to reformulate Muñoz' arguments, one could even claim that disidentifying performance practices, e.g., disidentifying dancing bodies, obviously try to transform a dominant cultural logic from within, hence creating a resistance that 'remakes' identifying paradigms, negotiating with(in) a variety of discourses or power schemes. Muñoz defines these attempts as 'revisionary', primarily in the sense of different "strategies of viewing, reading, and locating 'self' within representational

¹⁹ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 21.

²⁰ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 26.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

systems and disparate life-worlds that aim to displace or occlude a minority subject²². The mode of reading also opposes, resists, demystifies, or even deconstructs the normative, seldom imposed models of reading and representing identity. A quasi-orientational powers of the dominant (majoritarian) discourse often fragmentates minoritarian (identity) practices, proclaiming it to be not-enough-clean, turbulent, twisted, perverted, or somewhat hybrid. Leaning on Kosofsky Sedgwick's definition of queerness as the ability to attach intently to different cultural objects whose meaning seems, at first glance, mysterious, or excessive and oblique, Muñoz almost rehabilitates this term, arguing that "to perform queerness is to constantly disidentify, to constantly find oneself thriving on sites where meaning does not properly 'line up'".²³ Contemporary dance employs these strategies of attachment to non-orthodox meanings to facilitate performers' bodies, to abandon the rigid jaws of control, normativity, or obedience, while pursuing a new futurity, where their bodies will start to function as a signifying medium, non-representative and unrepresented, distorted because of their willingness to deconstruct all the thresholds between the sociopolitical and the natural. Of course, in performance reality, moreover in contemporary dance, this denial of representativeness is derived from different imaginations that function as pre-expressivity of language, and that explicitly point towards different majoritarian topographies materialized in language, or by language, e.g., different levels of deprivation, logocentrism, Eurocentric masculinism, etc. In a word, Muñoz was definitely one of the pioneers in analyzing the re-emergence of utopia as a theme in queer studies and its connection to capitalist power dynamics. His books emphasize the importance of queer hermeneutics that challenges traditional notions of universality, i.e., often viewing capitalism as heterogeneous and interconnected practices, affected by specific histories and (postcolonial) desires. Suggesting that capitalism is not just about 'material objects', but about bodies and their desires as well – which take various forms, (inter)connected with the mundane labour (of life) – queer studies argue that different confluence of materialist and identity-oriented perspectives are quite able to rearticulate variety of performance theories and consider the potential of queerness for contemporary dance, particularly in posing the question of totality, difference, non-normative bodies, etc. Even the most rigid concept of capitalism could be challenged by queerness, i.e., by queer futurity, so queer hermeneutics is quintessential to understanding the fugitive and elusive modes of life, an un(der)valued desire in the realm of the (minoritarian) identity politics, because "queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future."²⁴ By concluding that the future is actually queerness's domain, Muñoz underlines what many identity scholars

²² Ibid., 26.

²³ José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 78.

²⁴ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, 1.

have already emphasized, and performance (and even dance) studies scholars have often neglected: queerness is, both, spatial and temporal notion of assuring bodies in motion with disidentifying meaning, the one that is able to stipulate transgression. One does not interpret pain or trauma (of identity) as a sign *of* something, and a signal *for* something, but, notably, as the effect of various past impressions, often not so visible, that reshape our bodies, therefore often creating new traumatic impressions. Every touch provokes different attachment, so the experiences of trauma and pain – although being solitary – are never truly private. Or, as Ahmed has already argued, proclaiming every pain to be political and social: “A truly private pain would be one ended by a suicide without a note. But even then one seeks a witness, though a witness who arrives after the anticipated event of one’s death”.²⁵ This sociality is often manifested on the surface of the body, on its imprints, i.e., intense impressions of objects, others, moments of collisions, outer injuries, relations’ surfaces, etc. Instead of asking ourselves how does pain or trauma enter queer politics, here it is, maybe, sufficient to interpret a variety of its manifestations on the surfaces of dancing bodies.

Choreographic *telos* of *Sad Sam Revisited*

One is neither completely autonomous, completely free, nor completely subordinate to the outside world. The ambivalence of this relationship also applies to our desire for the other, for its difference, for our own Other. A reproduction of life itself is often, simultaneously, a threat and a representation of the existence of others, whether these are queers, blacks, or immigrants. These simultaneous procedures can create accumulative narratives that are, again, reproduced, or repeated, usually resurfacing under the sign of biology, quasi-naturalness, etc. Bodies are controlled through repetition: “Through repeating some gestures and not others, or through being oriented in some directions and not others, bodies become contorted; they get twisted into shapes that enable some action only insofar as they restrict capacity for other kinds of action.”²⁶ In these procedures of re-orientation, re-shaping, and compulsory re-directing, moreover, one’s body is being constantly shaped, contaminated by different, concealed normative histories. Disobedience towards a dominant narrative, hence, at least in the case of dancing bodies, often conceals a metaphor of *de-scriptedness*, a certain kind of twisting (etymologically *queering*) a genuine feeling of choreographic *telos*. The physical event in dance constantly takes place in performative self-immersion and release of emotions, often purposely abandoning all theatricality and spectacular excesses, i.e., in bringing the audience into a state that inherently *belongs only to the performer*, the state of the performance, the state of playing. Dancing body does not seek a kind of public comfort, e.g., by extending into social space that is already normatively shaped, or pre-defined, sometimes even tailor-made for heterosexual,

²⁵ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 29.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

patriarchal, masculine, white, or any other privileged, majoritarian intimacy. Sara Ahmed argues that queer grief could easily function as a metaphor for non-existence, because it really “may not count *because it precedes a relation of having*.”²⁷ Without going deeper into these stimulating arguments, one could, nevertheless, fully employ them while analysing queer topics in contemporary dance. The questions posed by most of Matija Ferlin’s performances are related to the interpretation of the body, of the ways how to avoid its determinism, or even how to activate its queering potency, while, at the same time, accepting the immediacy of its action, the rhetorical parameters of its metaphorical and metonymic relationships. Ferlin often deals with the contingencies of use of different viewing strategies, e.g., the play of the invisible and the exposed, superior and inferior, pleasure and pain, desire and absence, etc. Pleasures of the dancing bodies open to the world through opening to the others, taking up more and more space, thus displaying enjoyment, grief, love, hate, aggression, i.e., a variety of emotions that exist beyond verballity of language. Ferlin’s spaces are not only colonised by emotions, but also claimed through them, often generating discomfort in the audience that is confronted with an uncanny gaze. A queer pleasure inhabits new spaces, beyond scripted impressions, often private ones, ripped from the most intimate histories that would never enter official narrative. To put it differently: “Queer bodies ‘gather’ in spaces, through the pleasure of opening up to other bodies.”²⁸ Marina Gržinić argues that Ferlin’s *Sad Sam Revisited* is a “performance with sharp discontinuities in the narration (that are possible as well to be seen but from very afar as references to Jérôme Bel dance performances)”, facing its viewers with a de-stratified “set of anti-actions each pushing Ferlin’s body/mind/presence/absence to and over the edge.”²⁹ The author emphasizes a long, almost Deleuzian, repetitive sequence where a performer, hidden behind a big loudspeaker, with only a microphone, queering and teasing, even though he is not entirely visible to the audience,

produces a sound that forces us to think that he masturbates (what else we do these days?). When Ferlin reappears in front of us we see that he rubbed with the microphone his chest so violently that his skin is long after painfully red. He lip-synchs few old and deadly romantic pop songs in front of the public so persistently long that what was at first, during the first song just a failed karaoke encounter with the public, is soon because of his stubborn in-sistence (he lip-synchs forever!) a repetition of ex-sistence at its purest.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid., 156.

²⁸ Ibid., 165.

²⁹ Marina Gržinić, “Mladi levi 2007: What Is That Wakes a Contemporary Dance Performance Theater?” [manuscript; Slovenian version published as “Mladi levi 2007: kaj je tisto, kar prebudi gledališče sodobnega plesa?”, *Borec: revija za zgodovino, literature in antropologijo* 59 (2007): s.p.

³⁰ Ibid., s.p.

Even if one is not eager to interpret his solo performance in this way, an utmost insistence on repetition – either in walking patterns, endless synchronizations, or proxemic forthcomingings, e.g., in different bodily announcements – is quite obvious. But this repetition only dismantles the global narrative, precisely *as being global*, universal, resisting every kind of social or political appropriation, and, again obviously, being immanently intimate and present. A long-term project titled *Sad Sam* was launched in 2004, creating a tension between Croatian version of the title (*Sad Sam* as *Now I Am* or *Now Alone*) – which alludes to an intimate psychological portrait of an auto-fictional character – and the implied Englishness of this title (*Sad Sam* as *Tužni Sam*). Notably, the attention to present moment, as a driving force of Ferlin's choreo-writing, has been expressed in this performance in multiple variations. The performer comes alone on the stage – in later versions, he stands still, waiting for the audience to enter – having many clothespins on his face. This sequence of de-gesturing is, maybe, the queerest moment of the piece, because it presumes, both, a warming up exercise for an actor's face, as well as its minus procedure, a strategy of eliminating every possibility of gesticulation by applying rigid fixation – almost in a way like classical ballet 'fixates' its dancer's body – to one's own face. This is not theatre, because every possibility of gesturing, hence, becomes redundant. Is it, therefore, a dance? After that, the audience is confronted with a series of repetitive movements that try not to correspond with dance, whether being responsive to music, lines of narrative projected in the background, or props from everyday life. These dramaturgical devices, nevertheless, resist every kind of script, even appealing for the total deconstruction of its own narrative, *re-acting to* and *resonating with* quotidian bodily procedures, persistent in their revival, reusage, and even recycling. Two sequences that are relevant for interpreting this performance in the context of its queer futurity, besides the masturbation scene, are the following: the first one, where Ferlin explores his mouths, an organicity of the organ for speaking, its inner and outer limits; and the second one, where he is engaged in a repetitive walking pattern, in regular, everyday sneakers, with an uncanny Santa-like beard (in one later version with the untied shoelaces, as well). Although he seems to be oriented towards a higher, choreographic *telos*, Ferlin actually performs disorientation patterns, structures that are not willing to subordinate to any kind of narrative, except the one radiating from this presence. The only presence being represented here is a personal story from the author's life, although in a form of continuation of a conceptual current in de-choreographing dance, with visible influences from the Dutch improvisation practice. The horizon of the stage is, therefore, transformed into pure presence, where everything that goes out of the frame, e.g., as his empty walks, his redundancy, his stage inaction, or even his ill-tuned lip-singing impro, turn into an important semantic link towards anything that is about to be transgressed, therefore, anything that does not correspond to a process of *differing* as such. Ferlin's first solo piece represents 'an ontology of dance', embodied by a "pure terrorist (of the Deleuzian type), who has decided to eliminate the too many returns of all there is in the theatre of contemporary dance and opted for difference in its purest form,

which is life”.³¹ *Sad Sam Revisited* encapsulates the procedures of contemporary performance and dance with an unexpected contingency, de-choreographing not only his own dancing habitus, his private embodied history, but also demanding performative stamina in a variety of non-acts of duration, of persisting in forming a bodily ascetism instead of stage dynamics, albeit never wavering to interrupt the narrative. The palette of Ferlin’s performing corpus in *Sad Sam Revisited* performance already incorporates recognisable sequences of the physical procedures he will use in later *Sad Sam* performances, as well as some experimental pieces that date from the same period, e.g., the video-performance *4:48*, inspired by Sarah Kane’s *4:48 Psychosis*, where he employs similar music patterns, repetitive bodily expressions, all ‘tuned’??? to a projected narrative, but this time in a form of subtitles. Even some motives re-occur, e.g., the one with clothespins attached to his face, the skilful shifting between disclosure and hiding, between humour and dryness. If *4:48* performatively played with the traumatic fragments by Sarah Kane, *Sad Sam Revisited* almost parasites on poetic fragments written by Katalina Mella, never colliding with them, never directly referring to them. A pain that is being suppressed, a traumatic experience, does not extend the expressiveness of the projected verses, neither it supplements them. One can imagine a fictional, or even real narrative behind these verses, but its existence is twisted, deviated, queered somewhere on the surface of the performer’s body.

“This is the fortune of a manhood
Images and an image
Burning the calm fever of love
I press the button
He feels
Fainting upon
The distance of touching
Nothing I care remains
He took the silence
And I took the devotion
Of a starring fantasy
The scent of my destroyer
Leans on my mortal goal
Up to the thirst
Unforgotten I knew
The parallel of an innocent choice
In a holy room
Beside
I see the begging in tears
An unknown talk
Symbolic dreams of desire

³¹ Ibid., s.p.

I was chosen
In front of someone who didn't suffer
I knew he was alone
And he was invisible
I tell stories about contrary
Good memory times
I walked outside
And cut my mind
To be desired
Remember the mouth
The eyes
The dangerous situation
Of falling into essential secrets
It is possible to make a mistake
In choosing the entrance
Again and again
I never turned away
I spoke into his eyes
The action of duty
Do not be distracted
I felt I was bigger
Than you
Spectacular touch
The position of his chest
Helped to survive one week more.
I would provoke
The sequences of passion
Once we were in the corner
I tried to lick your offences
Like you like everything on me
I know you would like it
I explain myself
In a natural way
Nothing can reveal my broken legs
I explain the courage
The sins in my songs
I can recall my first death
There is time for being ahead
There is time for being behind
The world made me an animal
Of distrust
I can't be improved".³²

³² All excerpts from the performance scripts are from Matija Ferlin's private archives.

Ferlin demonstrates remarkable choreographic self-assurance on stage, but he is not enslaved to the script, almost like showcasing 'liveness', coupled with negative procedures – of eliminating and extracting, not narrating, gesturing, or dancing. Evidently, he is situated within a conceptual lineage of artists as Jérôme Bel, Gilles Jobin, and Xavier Le Roy, but central to his performance is the profound sense of stage abstraction, as well as the exhaustion of all information that tend to signify. If the process of signification is pre-oriented, clustered by the hegemonic regimes of interpretation and determinacy, then, this non-eventfulness or pre-eventfulness, almost a seclusion-like ascetic awareness, becomes his recurrent theme. First part of the performance, hence, utters linear dramaturgy, with even hyper-controlled movements, where Ferlin nonchalantly 'spends' much of his time on stage with his hands tucked in his pockets, singing nostalgic tunes by Dionne Warwick, or Sandie Shaw, recreating an intimate atmosphere of joy. Although it cannot be depicted, or firmly grounded, even dated in a real (historic) period, these joyful moments are constantly negotiating with futurity using 'queer eyes'. Even the masturbation scene depicts this. Although it is hidden, it is quite obvious that it can stimulate the audience's imagination. Being hidden behind a big speaker does not eliminate its scenic existence, its potency, as well as it does not deteriorate into perversion. Hence, often employed in queer art, e.g., in queer cinema, it almost functions like a teasing moment, or a provocative structure playing with spectators' enjoyment, confronting them with a deviation from the dominant system of values, or from its heteronormative desire. One has to keep in mind, moreover, that this sequence can function as an intimate scene – *as the performance of masturbation* – as far as it preserves its metaphoric potency *as contingent*, not attached and never attributed to some regime of interpretation. In other words, insofar as its outcome is uncertain. Notably, the most intimate atmosphere of *Sad Sam Revisited* does not emanate from a single coherent source, but stems from lucid interplay between introversion (constant presence of the performer's shy gaze) and subtle exhibitionism, which is about to escalate in the last scene, fully disoriented and quite risky for the performer. In-between sequences of serenity, occasionally delving into experimental body-narrating procedures, different acts of masochism occur, culminating in an explosive display of emotions and suppressed trauma and pain. If a visible redness of Ferlin's face, stimulated by clothespins in the first part of the performance, eliminates gesture, or acting, a visible redness on his chest, consequence of a simulated masturbation with a microphone, deterritorializes his desire, queering it not only as a deviation (that maybe unsettles the spectators), but as a turning point in his stage presence, that is now able to stimulate, to trigger, even to manipulate with the viewers own interpretation of deviation, blurring the lines between discomfort and understanding. A reminder that bodily processes and their manifestations in performance ought to somewhat defy simplified, narrowminded, often heteronormative categorizations of cultural norms, therefore, becomes activated. What appears to be a taboo in one context may be embraced in another, eluding every kind of stigmatization and social conventions. For Gržinić, an element of lips synchronizing different tunes, or a

microphone that embodies, function as performative surpluses. Or, to follow her line of thought, fully aligned with Deleuze's notion of difference and repetition:

We are confronted with a violent set of foreclosed sequences completely distilled from any surplus element; only skin and microphone, only lips that try dramatically to synchronize themselves with the playback. This selectivity is a process similar to that of peeling of an onion, in the end only the pure core remains. What is going on here is a radical process of selection that not simply selects, but actively, in the process of repetition, throws away, gets rid of all that belonged to the process of repetition. Therefore, what we get is a drama, the difference at its purest. I can push a thesis that what we get is the Jacobinism of difference, difference in extremis, its totalitarian version. Actually, this third modality is not a repetition of everything, but a terror of a difference at its purest.³³

Even if one only performs, it does not mean that the process of embodiment functions only as *coitus interruptus*. Indeed, bodily fluids highlighted, or alluded to in Ferlin's performance, e.g., sweat, blood, saliva, as well as the implied presence of semen, connect the private, intimate sphere with the outside world, but not orienting it, thus challenging its autonomy and the influence of external forces that are eager to orient, straighten, or taxonomize. This ambivalence is of utmost queering nature, mainly because it 'extends' one's desire for the other, one's longing, one's pain, into purely physical realm. By touching oneself, Ferlin touches others. Or, to put it differently:

The contingency of pain is linked both to its dependence on other elements, and also to touch. The word 'contingency' has the same root in Latin as the word 'contact' (Latin: *contingere*: *com*, with; *tangere*, to touch). Contingency is linked in this way to the sociality of being 'with' others, of getting close enough to touch. But we must remember that not all attachments are loving. We are touched differently by different others [...] and these differences involve not just marks on the body, but different intensities of pleasure and pain. So, what attaches us, what connects us to this place or that place, to this other or that other is also what we find most touching; it is that which makes us feel. The differentiation between attachments allows us to align ourselves with some others and against other others in the very processes of turning and being turned, or moving towards and away from those we feel have caused our pleasure and pain.³⁴

³³ Gržinić, "Mladi levi 2007: What Is That Wakes a Contemporary Dance Performance Theater?", s.p.

³⁴ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 28.

Ferlin's performance contrasts the eventfulness of the body with the uneventfulness of lingering on the stage, moreover, making a strong statement on self-immersion and emotional release through the process of performing one's presence, one's immanent expressive powers. The final release is facilitated with a resonance of Katalina Mella's words:

“Even if I’ve decided not to talk to you
I feel
I have decided to do so
So much
So many times
So often
Several important times
In my life
My moral behaves
Like the bird in your arms
It could fly inside
Touching the edges
And the texture of the entrance
I wanted to enter
To resist the nature of my aggression
Standing there
Assuming again
The impact
Show me the logic
The surrounding informs you
About the logic of the beliefs
This crazy river
And you”.

A stage presence of the performer in *Sad Sam Revisited*, alongside with its expressiveness, does not arise from a hypertrophic usage of dance, acting, or other performance devices, but precisely the opposite: its absence. Consequently, Ferlin's performance art appeals to a necessity of queer hermeneutics, urging us to navigate through the tensions not only between determination and spontaneity, metaphorical and metonymic relations of the body, but between deviated and standardized in modern or contemporary dance-as-art as such. Hence, employing “*karaoke*, where *kara* means empty or void of an *oke*, a Japanese way of pronouncing the English word orchestra (in Japanese it is pronounced as *okesutora*), repeats the void not only of what is without the live orchestra, but as well the void of contemporary dance, as a difference at its purest”³⁵

³⁵ Gržinić, “Mladi levi 2007: What Is That Wakes a Contemporary Dance Performance Theater?”, s.p.

Deconstructing a normative love score in *The Other for One*

After the performance of *Sad Sam Revisited* Matija Ferlin continues to research the concept of pure stage presence, which is, again, visible in *The Other for One* (2007). Intimate content related to a topic of love, or relationships, hence, functions as a procedure for his bodily interpretation of complementarity. Using the experience of falling in love, falling out of love, deception, flirtation, sexuality, sin, and other physical, emotional, and psychic sensations, in the relationship between two people – this time in a form of duo with Dijana Vidušin – he decomposes a normative ‘love score’ onto its primary choreographic elements, as though in an exercise for ‘enacting’ a relationship, but other way around. All the elements of a heteronormative score are thus present: a common place that can function as a flat, common procedures of living together, or being in love, etc. Relationship metaphors are often of directional nature: a love letter addressed *to(wards) him* in the first sequence, female confessions about their love life, variety of quotes from the Bible, as well as its comments, love advertisements, etc. Popular songs about love function also as directional interludes, informing the viewers about the nature of this (or every) relationship, which is often blinded, as well as the performers, therefore, roaming on the stage with their heads covered by everyday clothes. In *Sad Sam Revisited* the performer puts his fingers in his own mouth, as though he would like to penetrate it – with a whole fist. The same procedure is repeated in *The Other for One*, albeit this time a female performer, Dijana Vidušin, is putting her fingers (if possible, her hand as well) in his mouth. Verbality is, thus, suspended, slightly before it turns towards repetition, although here, on the contrary, entirely in a verbal manner. Performers repeat each other’s short sentences, not ready to acknowledge the repetition as their main dramaturgical procedure: “I apologize for constantly repeating myself”. This performance tends to ignore its decorative moment, obviously related to physicality of two bodies, colliding, conflicting, flirting, transforming each other, as it pursues in its research of pure stage presence. A queer moment is, again, being activated. Even when he cites from the Bible, a canonical *Song of Songs* does not function as a narrative metaphor for relations based on Godly love, neither being analysed nor embodied afterwards, but its purpose is to expound it – as a kind of ethereal underpinning, that intersects with the intricate layers of the human condition, two individuals’ pursuit of a deviant authenticity in a world fraught with normative complexities. Within the performance’s emotive ebb and flow, Ferlin and Vidušin channel shared memories – they are friends and have similar artistic background – shaping a compelling portrait of the two body’s ascension to pure love, as well as their decays into quotidian conflicts. The narrative complexity of this performance is reminiscent of different phenomenological concepts of intersubjectivity, blurring boundaries between personal history and artistic expression. Ferlin’s choreographic canvas, often punctuated by shifts in attire and scenery, somewhat even robust, or animalistic (in one short sequence they seem to impersonate animals), echoes with the mutability of relationships, a theme woven into the fabric of Nietzschean

ponderings on recurrence, and again – repetition. Amidst the performative tapestry, a recurring motif of an enveloping fur serves as both a literal and symbolic shelter, evoking musings on deviant heterotopias, liminal spaces that challenge conventional understanding of humanity – as the strongest kind. Fur’s tactile presence unveils a vulnerable, unadorned humanity, emphasizing the inherent openness, responsibility, and interconnectedness between individuals – that are always, like the Bible says, *the other for one*. Ferlin and Vidušin, as two metamorphic entities on the stage, changing constantly, traverse temporal and spatial dimensions of performance, or dance as such, emblematic as a *durée*-structure, i.e., a continuous flow of subjective experience. Their fluid transformations reflect an intricate dance of human desire, echoing an exploration akin to poetic reverie and the queer dialectics of daydreaming about better futurity. In conclusion, Ferlin’s performance of *The Other for One*, an artistic symphony of vulnerability, and complexity, invokes a pantheon of ideas and philosophical notions. The convergence of divine ideals from the opening scenes, followed by human intricacies, and relational nuances, hence, yields a thought-provoking tapestry – like the one re-appearing in the background – that echoes with allegory of the first people, as well as it prompts introspection into the enigma of human connections. It dwells upon the human desire as well:

The affinity of the couple form is socially binding: premised as it is on resemblance and on ‘naturalness’ of the direction of desire, which produce the couple as an entity, as a ‘social one’ (from two). The image of couples as ‘twos’ that become ‘ones’, which flashes before us in the present, is an effect of the work that brings the future subject into line, and as another point on the vertical line.³⁶

Two imaginations are almost trapped on this stage. None of them is privileged. Although it may seem so, the main question of this performance does not revolve around the idea of ‘being male’ or ‘being female’, or ‘acting as male’ or ‘acting as female’. These are not roles in front of us, even though one might easily see it as a kitchen-sink drama; but neither they are dancing bodies. Nevertheless, they are here to embody the principle of complementarity. Relationships are usually based on communication, and communication implies language, as well as its barriers, obstacles, duels, conflicts, etc. Ferlin is eager to explore the necessity of inventing a new communication frame based solely on imagination. In order to do so, one ought to discover first, where, and how imagination fails, by exposing different discrepancies of language, thoughts, and emotions. If the performance of *Sad Sam Revisited* deals with the elusive borders of the embodied imaginative spaces, constantly redirecting the viewers’ perspective from its traumatic narrative to the outer imaginative turn, towards its soloistic choreography, then, on the other hand, *The Other for One* pursues the problematic question of complementarity, whether as performance structure of *twofoldness*, or duo, whether

³⁶ Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, 84.

as a metaphor of life, or human relations in it, which surpass art-as-life with its ambivalence, contingency, or even traumatic experience. Approximately in this phase of his work Ferlin was experimenting with a play written by Sarah Kane, trying to describe this complex relationality, either from within, or from outside. Again, a queer moment occurs, prompted by a spatial deviation. Both of these performances try to explore the subtle balance between solitude and contact with other people, which is what Barthes calls an idiorrhymic model *per se*, or “something like solitude with regular interruptions: the paradox, the contradiction, the aporia of bringing distances together”.³⁷ Barthes calls this *pairing*, not *coupling*, because living-together always deals with mutual alienation of the couple (*folie-à-deux*), i.e., never with conjugal, or pseudo-conjugal relations. Language structures *ones* and *twos*, but it also structures *the dual*, as the body proves, using pairs for eyes, ears, arms, legs, hands.³⁸ The image of unity in only *one* rests dramatized as such, and deviated by so many critical approaches, especially in queer studies. So, the idiorrhymic queerness in both of these performances arises from deviation, or, at least, from deconstruction of the imposed image of duality as a fluid, normal, rhythmic structure one has to be oriented towards. This desire for two is not only questioned in these performance pieces, but it is even complemented by their structure: the first one eager to become a duo, and a second one trying to manifest itself as a solo.

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³⁷ Roland Barthes, *How to Live Together* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 6.

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