

ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, MA theatre Practices

To Act-To Do

Writing Portfolio

Eleni Mylona

2017-2019

Writing Portfolio/ 'To act-To do'
ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, MA theatre Practices
Mylona Eleni
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Dear academia,

This writing portfolio includes texts that I wrote from 2017-2019 as part of my writing practice assignments at ArtEZ University of the arts. Within these two years, writing has been one of my two main artistic paths (the other being performing) as it has helped me find a voice that I didn't know I had before.

Or maybe it is more accurate to say many voices. That of a woman, that of mother, that of a performer, a writer, an institution, a spider, a flower, a friend, a peer, a first grade teacher, an alone voice, a collective voice, a performing voice, a patriarchic voice, an over-identified with neoliberalism voice and many others. And through these voices my dear academia, I felt like I could have more agency, in the sense of potency rather than empowerment, I felt I could move from what is *my* perception, to something that is open to a more collective understanding.

I hoped I could propose a space to imagine you and me together. And I hoped that I could share this process with you and with other less knowledgeable than you readers.

My idea was that through sharing this process that respects the personal and the subjective by giving value to it, I could activate the power of imagination and I could move away from the personal and autobiographical, into a more open space, where different perspectives and fictional narratives could take place.

In my search to transform the personal stories into fictions that can relate to a more collective understanding, I read several texts about the 'care of the self ethos' as a transformative technique, described by Michel Foucault, texts that were linked to the Stoic philosophers and their ethics. The Stoics proposed several practices/askesis/exercises which were meant 'as a development of the culture of the self', and were described in different philosophical writings of the Hellenic and Roman period. These exercises, had to do with how one should look at (analytically and in its totality) an object, an event, and one's own self and life, how important it is to describe what you see and verbalize it to one's self and to others, and how to memorize what you see in time and in space. I borrowed some of these exercises/ practices in my artistic and writing practices, and I applied them as transformative mechanisms within my self fictions.

At the same time, I started asking big general questions about subjectivity and its construction, which led me to questions about my subjectivity as an artist, the subjectivities of the spectators and institutions, and the relationship between them in late modernity.

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Moreover, I started asking who am I when I write and from what position do I write now at this specific moment? And how does my body feel when I write, or where am I at the specific moment that I write, and in what ways this affects or interrupts (or not) the narrative I write? I also asked how can I move from the personal to the relational and to the public? And what is the relationship between me as a writer or performer and you as a reader and spectator? And how do I/you/we/us artists produce ? And how can I propose alternative ways of looking at, of speaking about, or of describing events and narratives?

In-between these questions, and within the aforementioned voices I described, I thought that a potential lies, an artistic and a political one, and I hoped that my texts could act on you or on other readers, and I also imagined that you and other readers acted on them.

The texts I have written in this portfolio my dear academia, although each one of them is very different to the other, and although each one starts from a very different point of departure, they have something in common. The concerns, three main concerns/interests/needs that emerged from my artistic research. First, my interest in bringing people together in order to create together, as a way to oppose individuality in the modern world, second, a concern to create caring spaces for this co-existence to take place, and third a need to create language (micro) choreographies¹ where language has substituted movement as a compositional tool, in writing and in performing.

At this point, I would also like to share with you the fact that I am aware that the use of imagination and language to create fictions that intervene in the dominant narrative of stories, as well as notions like the senses, care, and the body, have been appropriated by different fields for different reasons (organizational behavior, several types of therapies, activism and others) and is one of the methods of production used in late capitalism for the creation of new narratives. For this reason, and with the consciousness of being on the edge, and the danger that this poses, I want you to know that I will continue my writing practice (hosted or not by you), by reflecting on how I construct these spaces, what their frame is, as well as my intension and the means I use for their construction.

¹ Master Thesis, Elena Novacovits, 'Re-imagining contemporary choreography : Exploring choreographic practices in the post-moving era'. The notion of 'language choreography' is the title of chapter 4.3, and an idea throughout the thesis. Novacovits uses the notion to explain a tendency by choreographers in the post-moving era, to use language instead of movement as their main compositional element. Novacovits examines how imagination is activated through language, and how language reshuffles a (micro) choreography. In my research, language is my main compositional tool, that has substituted body movement, and body expression, in order to give space to all the possibilities language and imagination can offer, like the movement of thought, stillness, and mental motion. I also borrow the term in relation to how language activates imagination to transform my autobiographical narratives into fictions.

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In this introduction my dear academia, I am expected to critically reflect on my writing practice, its trajectory in the two years, how this practice is embedded in my overall artistic research and in what ways I have been developing it.

In the first attempt to execute this task I failed.

I failed badly because I tried to talk to you by appropriating your language, if I am aloud to say. And I am not good in that. And I think there is a reason I am not good at it.

I am an artist. And there is an amount of violence that the artist experiences when in connection to you. And I know, there is an amount of violence that you experience when in connection to me.

I don't aim to change this violence. I just aim to make us be aware of it and admit it. Because there is a type of knowledge and clarity, as a point of arrival, you expect me to have when I talk to you, which has a value that I need to consider. And there is a type of ignorance and unclearness I would like to sustain which is part of an ongoing process, that maybe has a value for you to consider.

This is what I call an emancipation process. To acknowledge our differences and from this point of awareness to continue our trip in existing, differently, subjectively and objectively.

My hope is that in this second attempt I will manage to include us both in my writing.

And I hope that both you and less knowledgable readers than you, will be able to understand the position and structure of my writing portfolio by reading this introduction, which has both clear and unclear sections, both knowledgable and ignorant parts as every process has.

With my warmest regards, and wishes for a pleasurable reading,

Eleni

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1. What is already there. Bringing people together in different modes of co-existence.

The '***Self-interview***' is a first attempt to talk about what is already there, at the very beginning of the research. It shows a responsibility I want to embrace, namely to bring people together and to create caring communities where people are invited to converse, read, write, and imagine together.

It is evident in the text a distinction between artistic and social interests, the lack of awareness in methodology, and an interest to present parts of my process, rather than end artifacts/products.

2. A first attempt to use language as the main compositional tool in order to create a micro language choreography

'Me and a fly in an empty studio' explores the possibilities of language and imagination, by deconstructing a sentence. It plays with how this sentence can work when it is voiced and heard in different ways. Imagination works in favor of opening different spaces for perception for the audience. Here, language is used as rhythm which is one of the ways I explored as a choreographic method, as I don't aim to create meaning by representation, but rather meaning is constructed through rhythm and the use of it.

In content, the text alternates between the proposition of the aforementioned imaginary choreography, and an autobiographical narrative, within which I describe the struggle of my early years to come in terms with the competitive logic of the market. Here, a tendency towards a care of ethics, in which process is valued more than the end product, is evident.

3. Theory as a tool and as a trap

My work in relation to four sources. Three books and a performance.

In this assignment I used four sources (the books '*Artist at Work*' by Bojana Kunst, '*State of Insecurity*' by Isabell Lorey, and '*Artificial Nature Series*' by Mette Ingvarsten, and the performance '*Speculations*' by M. Ingvarsten) in order to reflect about my work and to define concepts that emerged from the research and were at an early stage, and not so aware at that moment.

It is the first time I use self-observation as a concept (in relation to subjectivity and the artist at work), in order to find methods to perform it within my research. The notion of precariousness and a definition of it seemed important at that moment, and the use of imagination and language was also something I started to articulate through the work and writings of Mette Ingvarsten. Although the sources of this assignment helped me define the aforementioned concepts more clearly, they

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also became a 'trap', as I identified with them and therefore used theory to '(ap)prove' my re-search. If I had to re-write this assignment, I would have chosen the same sources, but I would have used performative writing to analyze them. The reason I did not re-write it, is that I think there is a value in failing to do the task, that is important to remember and to share with you.

It is one that praises the moment within a process as more valid than the actual successful completion of a task, and this one is a process of learning and of trying and failing and trying again, which I think is important to be nourished and shared.

4. Taking the position of the market

In *'Letter to Bavo and Renzo Martens'*, I aim to analyze my research by adopting the technique of over-identification, a technique proposed by both artists, as a way to criticize capitalism.

The artists propose, instead of resisting to produce in ways that are common in late modernity, to do the contrary and over-identify with these methods as a critique to the system.

In my letter, I borrow techniques from my previous experience in advertising and marketing, and I talk about my artistic work and research using tools from these fields.

This creates a completely different imaginary to the ones I have proposed up to then, one that works in line with the values and ethics of the market, and exposes the 'dangers' of it when one (over) identifies with it. This letter is part of a collection of letters to institutions and to people related to institutions that I have written during my two years in ArtEZ, and which I will publish at the end of the program.

Following my aforementioned aims, these letters (although diverse in their content and the way they act on the reader) start from an autobiographical story that is emotionally loaded for me, and aim to confront with the real² in a symbolic way (through the use of language and imagination) in order to transform it.

5. Co-creating an intimate/caring space.

'It rains here now. How is the weather there?' is a trans-authored text that took place in different temporalities and spatialities that are evident in the text through the use of footnotes.

Rodia Vomvolou, my main collaborator in these two years of research, and myself, meet several times in the period of three weeks online, and we write a dialogue in silence for 50' on the topic of 'productive gaps'. We then work on the written text independently at our own timeframes, by

² I use here the notion of the real in the way Lacan defines it as that which escapes the symbolic, that which can be neither spoken nor written.

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writing footnotes on the existing text. Within this text all of my three main concerns/elements/needs are evident. Co-existence and being together, is actually defined by the task as it is a trans-authorship text. Inviting my close collaborator has the meaning of creating an intimate caring space with the hope that this will be depicted on what we write and how we write it. Reflecting now on the text, I think that parts of it need to be reviewed, as the intimacy between the two authors, can 'exclude' the reader, the one who is not intimate enough. In that sense, creating a caring space for the reader is important for this text.

Moreover, this text is a choreographic proposition.

Movement is in the core of it, both literally as the reader needs to move her gaze between the main text and the footnotes all the time in order to read it, but also within its content as it has the specificity that it is written by two different writers in two different geographical places and in many different timeframes and spaces. Lastly, within the text several descriptions of how the bodies that write the text feel at the moment of writing take place, which is also part of the choreographic proposition.

6. An agonistic approach guided by care-focused feminism

I am a professional female artist – Manifesto, is an audio letter in the form of a manifesto, which literally replies to the question of one of the participants of a collective theatre group I used to work with: '*But why are you professional, and why do you need to get paid, just because you studied it?*' It therefore is, the only letter that has been actually sent and received by its addressees, and the only one that deals with a real situation in a literal way.

In it, I try to explain what it means to be a female professional artist, and most of the statements I make, are influenced by the ethics of care theory, which is associated to principles of care-focused feminism and the values of 'interdependence, community, connection, sharing, and the body'.³ Its relation to the real takes a more agonistic⁴ approach, which is in line with my intension for emancipation and agency. (triggered by the question I was asked).

I used audio as the medium for this letter, firstly, because audio is a medium I have worked with within my research as a way to link text to the body. Secondly, because my artistic research explored ways to include the senses, and audio relates to the sense of hearing.

³ Rosemary Tong, "Chapter 5. Care-focused feminism", in *Feministic thought, a more comprehensive introduction*, Westview Press, 2009, 163.

⁴ I use here the word agonistic in the way Chantal Mouffe uses it in her book '*Agonistics*', as an approach that consists both of agonism and antagonism, and for which the public space is where conflicting points of view are confronted '*without the possibility of final reconciliation*'. Verso 2013, 92.

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Lastly, this is the form I used to send it to the aforementioned group, and I thought it has a value to include it here in its original form, as it also relates to the several voices I explored through my research, this being literally *my voice* that speaks this manifesto.

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1.Self -Interview

Hi.

Hi.

Are you a dancer?

I am trained as a dancer.

Ok, now the interview can start.

What is it that interests you in your artistic work?

Well, as an artist I want to create as many alternatives as I can.

I attempt to bring light to the unseen complexities of a notion/question/ situation that interests me at the time, and explore diverse ways to approach it.

I engage in a process of providing alternatives through various experiments/exercises, in order to create a palette of new ways on looking upon things.

What is the force behind it?

I think what motivates me is the urge to live. In the present time. And share this with other people.

What moves your work forward?

The people who are involved in my projects, and anything that comes with that.

What is it that you know and what you don't know?

I know that I am interested in what the body is, and I don't know all the rest.

How do you do your work?

My work exists within thinking, moving, sharing, dancing, imagining, talking, and reflecting.

How do you do your work?

I do my work (she thinks)... ..

.....

.....

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....my work exists within thinking, moving, sharing, dancing, imagining, talking, and reflecting.

If you had to give a title to the body of your work as a whole what would that be?

Alternations between shared and solipsistic body based experimentations.

What is your latest project about?

My latest project is the creation of a platform that provides space for people from diverse knowledge spheres and backgrounds to meet, and explore ways of experimentation through (kinesis) movement, and (logos)-word, speech, text.

So it is not a project that leads to a performance piece?

Not necessarily. It is a research process in which each participant gets something different from. I personally use this experience in different ways.

Sometimes I use it to make performances, others to give workshops and classes.

Others it might seem that the process leads to a whole new theme of questioning and experimentation. This might mean that the process was interested for what it was, and I don't feel the urge to produce something out of it. Apart from archiving material from the research of course.

What is the name of the project? Of this platform I mean. And could you please elaborate a bit on how it works?

The name of the platform and of the group (which is not a constant one, people come and go all the time and every season they are new) is KONTÁ . A Greek word that means near or close. The way the research process develops depends on what we question each time, and on the people involved in the process.

But there are some rules in how we do it, that came out of trial and error and these are the following: People meet around a table and share knowledge, experience, and personal stories, on agreed topics/ notions/ questions. The topics up to now have been mainly related to processes of identity formation, by exploring issues regarding gender , sexuality, and power. The group looks on them from different angles: psychoanalytically, culturally, personally, in an imaginative way. They then use this experience to propose a body based experiment and guide group members in diverse improvisations, in which varied methods, materials, and tools are being introduced.

Doers and observers alternate. During and after each gathering they take time to think, to reflect, and to write.

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I see, it sounds like group movement therapy...

It's funny that you say that. Many people say they feel like that when they participate... I think it is because they find a space to talk about what is important to them. I am wondering if the fact that up to now only women have taken part in these groups, plays a role on that. Probably, the body explorations, the improvisations, and reflecting and writing, have a therapeutic effect to the people involved..

Non of the initiators of the research process are therapists though, and we don't intend to provide any kind of therapy. Our gaze is turned to the performative aspects of what we are researching, and not to the therapeutic ones.

That's interesting to hear.

Which leads me to my last question. What are the dynamics in the group, how do you define authorship?

Well, this has been a challenge for everyone and especially within the three initiators of the group. We have passed through many phases. Initially we wanted everyone to do everything, or at least everyone to have the freedom to work in any way she wanted to. We tried to let that happen organically, by being specific on what each of us wanted to work on. This gave space to three different experiments to unfold, eventually, the whole work was based on these three initial experiments. We tried to give more or less the same time for each one of us to explore her experiment. The three of us worked 3 times a week and then we shared our experiments with the group once per week. Everyone was becoming a spectator and a participant, and everyone had the chance to propose changes in each and every experiment. Now, problems came up again when we decided to show our research to the public. Differences among us showed up, conceptual, esthetic, ethical ones. We tried to solve that again, by being very specific on what each of us can do, what we want from the other to do, and what is the best role each of us can have to help the work of the other. After all, we were all interested in bringing light to the work we had done in the previous months. We found out that by being very specific on what we can do, and by trusting the opinion of the others in the group, we actually found again an organic way of working together. It was not easy, but it happened. What also helped was that we had many rounds of feedback from the group, even from people who attended our meetings only once.

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2. Me and a fly in an empty studio

Lights on, the performer enters the room, goes to the podium.

She reads from her papers :

I am here today to *do* my artistic research through writing, while taking into account an audience that is attending it.

Turns to the audience . she says : hi, hello. hey.

I am expected to have worked in terms of content.

Do I make content while I am speaking? And dramaturgy.

How am I presenting it?

How am I p r e s e n t i n g i t ?

How do I share, and what do I share , what do I leave out?

A year ago I started discussing with my close collaborator, about what is it that we are doing.

What is it that we *are*. As artists , as researchers?

What are our basic questions are, what is it that we are as women.

What is it that we want to do, to show, to write, to say, to breath.

What is it that we want to dance, to speak, to reflect, to take care of?

What is it ... (she leaves the last “what is it” open in her logos, without a full stop, open for interpretation)

I will borrow the idea that stayed within the group, yes, there was a group and but... emmmm... initially, it was only me.

In an empty studio. And a fly. She shows with her hands the movement of a fly flying and says :zzzzz

Me and a fly in an empty studio.

Looking for complexities, contradictions, and tensions.

(Exegesis) :

I am that and the other, I am in language and in movement, I am both that and the other, both that and that, this as that, that as that, that not...

Starting there where something has already happened, this is actually the way Deleuze describes the difference between a short story and a tale. (but I read it in La Ribot's book). So, Deleuze argues that the difference between a tale and a short story is that the former is oriented towards the question “what is going to happen”.

In the short story, however, something has already happened, “not with the content or object of the secret to be discovered, but with the form of the secret which remains impenetrable.” *La Ribot volume II*, merz & centre national de la danse (2004, p.61)

Me and a fly in an empty studio

Exhausting dance in an empty studio

You know what? I wanted to show movement, while saying this line “exhausting dance in an empty studio” .

But, I don't feel safe with the representation of movement.

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Because I was trained as dancer, I judge myself for every movement I show to an audience.

And I think I am bad at it.

To make myself clear, what I think I am bad at, is showing anything that is danced outside training or technique. I don't like my movement uncontrolled let's say. Or maybe "unsophisticated" is the right word?

And the paradox is that I spent years and years in trying to get rid of techniques that my body was trained in, because I felt trapped in them.

So now, for different reasons, I can neither dance within technique nor outside of it.

I reject my self in showing movement.

Pause

I started training in dance at the age of three. I loved it so much that I used to go from my house to the ballet school in first position with a perfectly pointed for the age of four, foot. People were staring at me , and the more they stared the more I tried to perfect my posture...(she shows the posture)

At the age of eleven I auditioned for the State School of Dance, (Kratiki) which back then was mainly a classical ballet school in which children trained to become most of the times ballerinas and were also prepared to enter the Greek National Opera.

Children from all over Greece were applying to the audition, several rounds of classes and exams took place, and we had to show our capacities to a varied mixture of teachers and committees.

Parents were boosting eleven year olds standing in line from 8 o'clock in the morning outside the school. Children were crying, and sweating and felt vulnerable sometimes only to be rejected after one class.

The race, it felt like a race, was taking place for several hours and days.

I passed the first day, the second, I was expecting final results.

From the hundreds of children who took the audition only EIGHT would get in.

The phone rings, I am at school, my mother tells me: You are in.

I am in , I am in, I am good, what do I say, I am the best, I am eleven years old and one of the eight most talented children in Greece, who can do first, and second and third position and pirouettes and go on points barefoot no matter how much blood and flesh is left on the shoe after you take it out.

My joy didn't last much though, neither my feeling of being a talent, as from the first day it was made clear that all of us had to compete with each other, as if there was not enough space for all of us, as if the fittest was going to survive us all...

We were weighted almost every week, spent days and nights perfecting fouettes, be thrown shoes when they were not well sewed, and had no free weekends.

I could not hold my leg for a long time in the side and turn around myself (she goes to the center and shows the turn), my mother was told it's ok to include a bit of pasta in my week menu, but cheese and tomato sauce should be forbidden from my diet.

At the age of 15, having reached my psychological limits, and having no more stamina to resist the competition, I quit the school, and with it the dream of a successful ballet career. (doing a ballet posture with grace).

It takes many more years and a lot of effort to take out of my body the style and technique I learned there, a style so recognizable that when for the first time after no dancing at all, I dare to go to a random contemporary dance class, the teacher asks with curiosity: did you study dance at Kratiki? Yes.

Thirteen years ago, I reply.

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 Pause

Back to my line.

Exhausting dance in an empty studio.

I was thinking as I was telling you, that because I don't feel safe in showing movement maybe if you agree, we could imagine together a dance while I say this line.

What possibilities do we have to imagine a choreography with only this sentence?

In other words, what is left to imagine together as a dance when no bodies are on stage, no music is there, no objects are used, and we are left just with one sentence of one, two, three (she counts) six words that I repeat for about 10 minutes?

I will try to guide us through this imaginative choreography.

Ok ? let's try!

She stands still.

She says :

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exhausting

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studio

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studio

studio, studio, studio, studio, studio, studio, studio , studio ,studio

dance

an in dance, dance , dance, dance , dance, dance, dance, dance, dance, dance

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exhausting in dance

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di-da

dio-da

dio- haus- o-ex-o —o, ex-o-o, ex-o-o

in an em – o

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 in an dance –da
 ex –ex-o
 sting- sting-ing
 exhaust
 ex-haus (aspired)
 ex-HAUST
 ex-hempt (aspired)
 hempt
 hem-pty
 in –an – em
 in-an-em
 in-an-em

o – ou- i- studio
 ex-o-i- ou-i-o

stou ouououououou
 studio
 stou di iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii
 iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii
 sting
 sting
 exhausting
 ing
 dance –ing
 empt-ing
 stn- ing
 ex-ing
 di-ing , dying, dying, dyioying, dyioying ding, ng
 dance
 dance
 dance
 dann cccccccccccccc
 stu-di-o
 stu- dio (god)
 stu-deus
 stu-din-an-en
 stu-di-I
 stu-di-I I I
 stu-di-I I I I I I I I I I Fly
 I fly
 Empt- I
 Ex-I
 Ex-haust-I
 fly
 Ex- FLY
 Ex-haus –dance- in empt-stou
 Hosting-dance-in-empt-stu
 Hosting-da-in –em-stu

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 Sting-da -i-e-ou
 o-i-a-i-e-ou
 e-o-i-a-i-e-ou
 ex-ho-sting-da
 ex-ho-sting-da
 ex-xo-sting-dance-ting
 ex-ho-danc-ing
 ex-ho-pti-stou

haus
 aus
 us
 dance haus
 dance hus
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She stops talking, remains still and silent with her eyes closed for a few seconds.
She says: ok, thank you. She leaves the room.

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3. My work in relation to three sources

At the beginning of my research there was a book that became very important to me.

It was Bojana Kunsts' *Artist at work*, and the reason it became important was not only because it was relevant to the topic of my research, and because it helped me support my line of thinking, but mainly because it informed and still does, basic directions that the research takes.

It helped me understand how me (and others) work as artists in the post-Fordist era, in which ways my work is connected to my life (5.2. The female artist between work and life), the relation/proximity of my artistic processes to the capitalistic system, and therefore to neoliberalism. In that way, *Artist at Work*, helped me become more aware about issues of power and powerlessness, methods of production, and the notion of 'crisis', that later in the research, proved to be very important, and interrelated to the notion of precariousness that is the main topic of my artistic research.

Chapter two 'The production of Subjectivity' in the same book, and especially 2.1 'The Crisis of Subjectivity', turned my gaze to the crisis of the subject in relation to everyday life processes (actions, production, consumption) and helped me see how the artist (and the non artist) 'needs to be and constantly persist in a state of crisis in order to be even more creative.'⁵

I also recognized in it an image of myself as the artist/subject, working and living in the contemporary world, an image with common characteristics among many people around me, artists and non-artists, that I started observing, in their/our ways-processes of working and living.

This was somehow summarized in chapter two and especially in the following paragraph:

'If we wish to work successfully, we must come across as relaxed as possible, babble as much as possible, enjoy and show all of our potential and be critical to boot.'⁶

I got interested in observing how people work (among them and myself), what are the common characteristics among them in terms of rhythms, flexibility, hours of working, the connection between work and life, and how these were linked to my main topics of interest that had to do with anxiety, vulnerability, insecurity, precariousness. At the same time the main questions that I was

⁵ Bojana Kunst, *Artist at Work*, Zero Books: Alresford, 2015, 25.

⁶ Ibid, 31.

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working with were: 'How to deal (confront and resist) with precariousness in the modern world?' And 'How to use mundane, ordinary movement and speech to create ways/conditions (on stage and off stage) that will help me confront and resist the feeling of precariousness in the modern world?'. In other words, I was looking for ways to confront and resist precariousness within everyday life movement and speech, and I was finding a way to do so, by observing the subject in crisis in working life conditions/processes. This later on helped me realize that I describe in writing about what I observe, or that I observe better by describing in writing, and therefore decided to make writing one of my main artistic mediums.

I started describing in writing, auto-biographical narratives of working conditions/processes/events. The line of thought behind this, was that by describing the subject in crisis in the everyday life event (and especially in the way the subject works), my main topics of interest will be revealed, namely, precariousness, anxiety, insecurity, vulnerability.

I also thought, that by making these descriptions public (by writing for the theatre, and by staging them and performing them) was already a way to confront and resist precariousness.

At that point, I realized the importance of this research to be a solo one, as the subject who is observing is also the one who is being observed, and also the one who writes is the one who performs.

I want to bring awareness on who the subject in crisis is, who is precarious and vulnerable/insecure in each one of the above situations (observer- being observed- writer- performance maker-performer).

I started producing narratives of auto-biographical (with the intention in the future to become biographical) stories, by describing in as much details and precision as possible, the working life experience-process-event-image. After all, I thought that if the subject in the post Fordist era is in crisis, then one does not need to do anything else to reveal-confront with precariousness and crisis, other than describing her life in relation to modes of working in every detail.

Another very important resource for my artistic research proved to be a book by Isabell Lorey, 'The State of Insecurity'. After working for some time with my research questions, I came to realize that it is important to become more precise/aware about the aspects of precariousness that I would like to observe/confront with, in order to find ways to resist it. Through the texts of this book, step by step, I started naming these aspects, and I came closer to a definition of the notion.

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The introduction, Chapter 1, (The Government of the precarious) and Chapter 5, (Virtuosity and the Post-Fordist Public Sphere, especially The Privatization of Risks and Cares), helped me name how I see precariousness in the research, namely, 'in the broadest sense as insecurity and vulnerability, destabilization and endangerment.'⁷

Therefore, I am not occupied with the distribution of it in relations of inequality, I am rather, interested in two different interrelated interpretations of the notion.

On the one hand, I look into precariousness as the anxiety of the body. An anxiety that as Lorey writes relates to existential precariousness (anxiety that a body because it is mortal, cannot be made invulnerable).

I see existential precariousness as living with the awareness of a mortal body, living with the fear that life is dangerous, in fact so dangerous that at any moment without any prior warning, life might not be there for us or for our loved ones any more. (*Family Matters*, Eleni Mylona, 'Oh this utterly, earthly life' https://www.familymattersswitzerland.ch/expat_earthlylife-2/)

On the other hand, I examine precariousness as social vulnerability, that relates to a concrete fear of political and economical precarization (fear of unemployment or of not being able to pay the rent or health-care bills).⁸

I see social vulnerability as a condition of every human, living in late capitalism, as living with the fear that social and political conditions are so dangerous (whether one has or doesn't have a job at present) that at any moment, without any prior warning, one can lose her financial and social security for good.

Attempting to give a definition on the notion of precariousness, I would say that precariousness is a social and existential condition of every life that relates in its broader sense to insecurity, vulnerability, endangerment and anxiety.

I looked into both of the interpretations as related to the crisis of the subject. And this is where the two sources played a reciprocal role in the research. I started observing precariousness as experienced in the working conditions of the subject (me being the subject/ and others) and started exploring ways to resist it.

According to Bojana Kunst, 'The crisis of the subject reveals itself as an endless barrage of human abilities, actions and aspirations, the driving force of contemporary non-material production: one needs to be and constantly persist in a state of crisis in order to be even more creative.'⁹

⁷ Isabell Lorey: *The state of Insecurity*, Verso: London and New York 2015, 10 .

⁸ Ibid, 88.

⁹ Kunst, *Artist at Work*, 25.

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This helped me revise my questions as following:

How human abilities, actions and aspirations are revealed in the working conditions/processes/experiences/events of the subject in crisis?

How to observe and better understand the 'non-material production' (that Bojana Kunst writes about) of the precarious subject (the subject in crisis), describe how it is revealed in working life and find ways to resist it?

Both sources also helped with my second main artistic medium, which is movement.

I started observing how certain theory terms (from the aforementioned sources) can be translated into movement tasks that experience the bodily crisis of precariousness, and search for ways to resist it.

Initially, this took the form of an embodied movement practice in which the terms/notions were used as a 'springboard' for a movement improvisation that guided the participants and myself to experience through movement the following terms: Public movement, Private Movement, Collective Movement, Hegemonic Movement, Individual Movement, Independent Movement, Affective Movement, Immaterial Movement, and Agonistic Movement.

After this experiment was worked for about three months with different groups of people, I was observing that the terms were 'keeping' the bodies in a state of crisis.

The notions were too 'broad', and mentally challenging, so what I observed was that the body reacted to them for some time without struggling, but after a while it seemed as if this task was keeping the bodies in a state of 'crisis'¹⁰ rather than help them resist it.

Looking for ways to help these bodies 'resist' what is overwhelming while coming into contact with the terms, I found a book and a performance that helped me to form another strategy and move on with my movement research. It also helped me a lot with my descriptive writing, and with the part of the research that is dealing with public addressing and performing, as ways to resist precariousness through the agency of the performer.

The performance was Mette Ingvartsen's 'Speculations', and the book was 'The artificial Nature Series' and more specifically the texts 'Using language to create imaginary movements', 'Imaginary choreography', 'The production of affect', and 'Storytelling, orality and speech practice'.

¹⁰ I here use the notion crisis in the way described by Lauren Berlant in the introduction of her book '*Cruel Optimism*', 'crisis is not exceptional to history or consciousness but a process embedded in the ordinary that unfolds in stories about navigating what's overwhelming'. 2011 Duke University Press, 10.

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Mette Ingvarsten was of course doing a completely different research, but seeing the performance and reading her texts, made me realize that for me language and movement were part of the same continuum, and what I am interested in, is exploring movement through language and language through movement. Maybe then, I thought, this struggle I was observing in the bodies was the struggle of bodies trapped within the dichotomy of language and movement.

I then thought to stop improvising by moving with the terms, and develop a speech practice in which initially myself (and later on others), imagine the movement a body does when confronted with the theory terms, and apply them to speech. Speculation, imagination, and description (which was already present in my writing practice), and a speech practice in which movement principles and imagined movement, are applied to and through speech, seem to be a way to 'resist' the precarious subject in crisis (the moving bodies confronted with the theory terms).

Both of the above sources helped me with the third and also important artistic medium/ research territory which is public addressing (presentation and performing).

Here, an attempt towards resistance is made possible through different strategies.

'Speculations', helped me search for a space between the real event (a process-event-image that the performance maker has experienced), the auto-biographical description of this experience through narration by the performer, and the imagination that happens the moment of the description by the audience. In this space, I found an opportunity for resistance, a space that I was looking in the beginning of my research and was calling it 'in-between space'.

I was also helped to see how important to me the relationship between the performer and the audience is, and look at it as an opportunity to resist precariousness, our shared precariousness in life and inside the theatre. This relationship between the audience, the performer, the narrator, the maker, the institution in which the presentation takes place, and the observed artist at work, is an opportunity for resistance and takes affective, embodied characteristics. (who is the subject now, who is precarious, who makes the story etc are perceived affectively both by the audience and by the performer).

Placing the spectators inside the performance area, slowing down the time of perception by zooming in and out of narratives, using temporality and language to create imaginary narratives and movement, seem to be related to (observing and resisting) precariousness in the making and in

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 presenting/performing/publicly addressing it.

Focusing on bodily presence and absence, on communication and the loss of it, on the voice of the performer (calm, secure, feminine and/or aggressive, stressed, insecure) and on the imagination/speculation in order to produce a bodily sensation, I aim to question who the precarious subject in crisis is, and how this position can change by including different subjects in different contexts in the story (cultural institution and collaborators in Zurich, peers, teachers and cultural/educational institution in Arnhem, who makes the story, who is observed, what is resisted by whom etc.).

Lastly, the performance and the research of Mette Ingvartsen, helped me a lot with another strategy I employed initially in writing and later on with performing the text. All the autobiographical events were and are described in the present tense. I observed that bringing different temporal events in the present moment, makes the story more complicated on the one hand (what happened , when it happened) but on the other hand it leaves space for the co-creation of the now, of what happens now between the audience and the performer which is also a way to explore resistance to precariousness.¹¹

¹¹ I see precariousness here as used by Isabell Lorey at 'The State of Insecurity' : 'precariousness is not simply individual or something that exists 'in itself' in the philosophical sense; it is always relational and therefore shared with other precarious lives'. Lorey, *The state of Insecurity*, 12.

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4. Letter to BAVO research team and Renzo Martens

Dear BAVO research team,

Dear Renzo Martens,

I have been following your work through articles and videos that my mentor and teacher Konstantina Georgelou has shared with me, for the MA of Theatre Practices at the University of ArtEZ.

I am an artist myself, and I have passed through several phases in order to approach my need to confront (through my art) with the existing order in late modernity.

My practice and my artistic work have been informed each time by my attempt to articulate more accurately within language, body and time/space, how to deal with what is happening in the world today, politically, socially, and ethically.

My search has started with what I called 'in-between' spaces, looked upon as spaces that overcome the binary form. Being completely disappointed when I discovered that a liminal or an in-between space can easily work in favor or in line with the principles of the existing order (namely capitalism, neoliberalism, and many other 'isms') I started looking for what I called (not in the sense that I gave name to it, but mostly in the sense that I claimed right for using the word) alternatives or alternative spaces.

Spending some time with these terms, I realized that an alternative could also be something equally bad or even worse than the initial attempt I wished to oppose to (and therefore wanting to find an alternative for), and for this reason I continued looking for new articulations.

My Dears BAVO research team, and Renzo Martens, I don't want to risk to bore you by naming here one by one each of my attempts to deal with, react to, come to terms with, confront, resist, and/or create a dialogue within my artistic research-practice with what I called precarity, vulnerability, endangerment, and anxiety, so I will cut the long story short. No matter how many the attempts were, what I would like to let you know, is that I am still within the process of searching.

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I address this letter to you today, because I came up with this idea, that I would like to share with you.

I thought to use my work experience in marketing and advertising in order to analyze my artistic research/practice, because maybe then I thought, maybe this would give me and you more insight in regards to the articulation of the above attempts, and therefore to the artistic research/practice itself.

I also thought that there is no better audience to address this letter than to you my dears, as, as you have most probably realized up to now, although we do not know each other, we share similar ethical and social questions. My analysis will be done using the tools that I managed to remember (I haven't work in the field for almost 20 years now), in no specific order, and I hope it will inspire and disgust you, as much as your propositions have inspired and disgusted me.

Target Market

Primary Target Market

A primary target market is the particular group of consumers at which my product/service is aimed at. Below, I include as many demographic and psychographic factors about my primarily ry target market as I can.

Women and men, 25-45 y.o., in Arnhem, Zurich, and Athens, of higher socioeconomic and educational status, artists, academics, intellectuals, teachers of the MPT in ArtEZ. Women with the aforementioned characteristics interested in creating a dialogue with the existing sociopolitical order within late modernity.

Women with the aforementioned characteristics, interested in the performing arts. Women with the aforementioned characteristics interested in the possibilities of language and the body, within time and space.

Women and men with the aforementioned characteristics that see art as the ability to change the world, not by money or force, but by orientation, by radically transforming the 'sensible', or sensory, reality of the eye, ear, taste, touch and smell, which inevitably results in a change in ideas, understanding and insight.¹²

Women with the aforementioned characteristics with an interest in the performativity of the

¹² Mika Hannoula, *Artistic Research Methodology*, Foreword x, Peter Lang Publishing 2014.

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 ephemeral in the theatre.

Women with the aforementioned characteristics interested in the introduction of temporality in the theatre.

Women with the aforementioned characteristics who have done some kind of therapy (psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, dramatherapy, dance therapy) for a period of one month and/or more in their lives.

All the first year MTP's ArtEZ students: Mariela Nestora, Konstantinos Voudouris, Conrad Useldiger, Maria Joao Falcao, Flora Mc Murtie, Jan Deboom, Silas Neumann.

My ideal customer, and/or my most loyal buyer persona, is a woman who is interested in an artistic work/research that does not follow a certain aesthetics, her interest is rather related to its ethics and is based on creating a dialogue between the inner and the outer self, the personal and the social, the intimate and the general. The only person I know who has the above characteristics is my partner in life, and because he is a man I am obliged to categorize him in the secondary rather than the primary target market.

Secondary Target Market

Men and women, 25-45 y.o. in Athens and Zurich, performance and dance enthusiasts that would go to anything imported or new in town, friends of the artist (i.e. me) around 50 people, school classmates who think they still need to support the artist as a group (although they are not interested neither in the topic nor in performances) two or three people who believe in the work of the artist.
 My partner in life.

Key Competitors/Direct Competitors

Direct competitors are seen as people who sell the same or very similar to my product. They compete across the board, or for specific products, for certain customers, or in certain geographic areas.

Women and men artists, makers, choreographers, and researchers between 25-50 y.o., that show work in Arnhem/Amsterdam but also in Zurich and Athens.

Coming from the broader field of dance (choreographers, dancers, theorists of dance, researchers) with an interest in exploring movement through/within language.

Exploring the movement of language through contemplation/imagination.

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With an interest towards an ethics that explores possibilities of dialogue within the sociopolitical existing order in late modernity.

Key/Major Brands as Direct Competitors

Mette Edvardsen and most of the products she sells

Ivana Müller and some of the product she sells

Andrea Božić

Bojana Cvejić

Product : 'Contemplations' performance, by Mette Ingvarlsen

More specifically, direct competitors are the following artists and researchers that compete with me across the board in the geographical area of Arnhem.

All the first year MTP's ArtEZ students: Mariela Nestora, Konstantinos Voudouris, Conrad

Useldiger, Maria Joao Falcao, Flora Mc Murtie, Jan Deboom, Silas Neumann.

Indirect Competitors

Potentially all researchers, makers, and choreographers who sell work in Switzerland, Holland and Greece, and are somehow sensitive about what is happening in the world around them.

More specifically, I consider as indirect competitors artists who although do not offer the same product/service as I do, still satisfy the same consumer need in the same geographical region as I do.

All the first year DAS theatre students: Ira Brand, Samara Hersch, Max Gold, Billy Mullaney, Max Gold, Brogan Davison, Ana Vilela da Costa, Ingrid Vranken.

Marketing Tagline

A tagline is a short phrase that encapsulates my service's/product's image.

It is actually a one-liner that portrays my artistic research /practice philosophy, and potentially will help me differentiate from my competitors. It should be a tool to explain one's business philosophy or product in a couple of words. If I remember correctly, it has to be concise, emotional, specific and positive.

'Exaggerate the subtle or subtle the exaggeration'

Company mission statement

A mission statement is a brief explanation of one's company's reason for being.

In general one should keep the mission statement short to one or two sentences, but as you may see below, I failed to keep it so short, so probably my artistic research /practice statement will need to be re-evaluated in a later phase to become stronger.

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My artistic research/practice mission is to find ways to respond inside the theatre to the ethical, political, and social questions that concern me as an artist.

Moreover, through writing/language, body/movement, performing, and their relation to time and space, the research looks for ways to create a dialogue with 'being vulnerable and precarious' in the modern world.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

Swot analysis is a framework that analyzes the factors, internal and external, that have an impact on the viability of a project, product, service, place, or person. Internal factors are seen in regards to the product/service and external in regards to the market the product/service is placed in.

Strengths and weaknesses analyze the internal factors whereas opportunities and threats the external ones.

Strengths

Things the research/practice does well

Invites people to meet and work outside the theatre. Planning and organizing. Performative writing, performing, dramaturgical and artistic compositions.

Qualities that separate me from my competitors

Well-motivated, independent, self reflection/ awareness, focused, persistent.

Internal resources such as skilled staff: Trained in working with consistency.

Tangible assets such as intellectual property: I don't believe in the ownership of art, but I consider my personal artistic process as an asset, in relation to the specificity of the experience earned and therefore 'owned' in that sense.

Weaknesses

Things the research lacks: Being fully aware of own strategies.

Being more pragmatic and nuanced in ways that theory is perceived, and in dramaturgical and compositional decisions.

Things my competitors do better than me: Research proposal articulation, critical writing, economy of expression.

Resource limitations: Reluctance towards the formation of a structure to support the artistic work financially.

Unclear unique selling proposition : The way precarity is used is still unclear. Whether the use of the word is needed is also still unclear.

Opportunities

Underserved markets for specific product/service: I analyzed the niches I am targeting at in my primary target market. I looked into interests of the target group instead of analyzing only demographics, which is what I think opens a door to one's niche underserved market, and therefore to more opportunities.

Few competitors in my area: I covered the competitors in the direct and indirect competition part.

Press/media coverage of my research: ArtEZ university does this work partially. Tanzhaus Zurich also 'covers' small parts of my research. In Zurich, Stillpoint spaces, Maxim Theater, and Holzke Kollektiv have done this work in the past and can potentially do it again.

Threats

Emerging competitors: Institutions that teach and individuals interested in learning a form of representation that constantly leave(s) open the possibility to discuss any subject.¹³

Changing Regulatory Environment: Data protection and privacy may affect the artistic research market in relation to how qualitative and quantitative research results are used. How the theory of affect, and embodied knowledge are perceived and used in the specific market also influence and regulate the environment within the market.

Negative press/media coverage: Two main arguments that hold two opposing positions. On the one hand, artistic research can be easily seen as not valid, as if it does not exist, in relation to the knowledge it produces, (especially when compared to scientific research) and on the other hand, it may be wrongly interpreted as everything and anything in the art field.

Changing customer attitudes towards my research: Changing customer attitudes is in general very difficult. Customer attitudes is a combination of a consumer beliefs, affects and behaviors towards a brand. Especially for my research I think the problem is that there is not an established attitude towards it because it remains very 'domestic' within the institution of ArtEZ. Probably, if I create a structure to support my artistic work and therefore make my name more established in the artistic market (artistic institutions, theaters, educational institutions) then it would be easier to change customer attitudes towards my artistic work.

One of the strategies I employed to change customer attitudes, is the approach of classical conditioning, which tries to 'pair' the product with a liked stimulus. For example, we 'pair' a car with

¹³ Ibid, Foreword ix

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a beautiful woman. In my case this year I will try to 'pair' my artistic research and work with the artist 'Mette Edvardsen' as I will ask her to become my external mentor. This may or may not have an effect on the attitude of my customers in the following years. I already have employed this strategy last year, by 'pairing' my artistic research and work with the artist 'Danae Theodoridou'. The results of this pairing were very good in comparison to my customers' positive attitudes towards my research.

My Dears BAVO research team, and Renzo Martens, this was a short analysis of my artistic work (research-practice) in which I used only very few of the tools, strategies, and tactics that I 'borrowed' from the field of marketing and advertising.

In case you find within it some interesting strategies that relate to your work, and would like to discuss with me further, please don't hesitate to contact me personally via email at mylonaeleni@hotmail.com or call me at +41 767 872 400.

I will be very happy to discuss with you possibilities on how to cooperate in order to deal with the common concerns that we have in the best possible ways (whatever that may mean).

At the moment, I am looking into templates of business plans and advertising strategies in order to refresh my memory and be more ready for our discussion when and if this happens.

I hope we will find a way to continue this dialogue further,

Best Regards,

Eleni Mylona

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5. It rains here now. How is the weather there?

by 'Eleni Mylona and Rodia Vomvolou'

In the question 'what is it that we are writing together?', you answer that the focus of my artistic research is the notion of productive gaps.¹⁴ Can you please explain more on that?

Or is it that you say that the focus of what we write relates to the notion of 'productive gaps' that somehow also relates to my research? In any case, can you please elaborate a bit on that?

Yes, in fact when I was writing the questions I was trying to involve in my writing the notion of the gap, as it was what we said we are interested in, in relation to the artistic research conference.¹⁵ So in a way it was a bit "artificial"¹⁶! But what I meant was that the focus of what we are writing is on the 'productive gaps' of your research and of our collaboration.

I didn't mean that the focus of your research is on this notion.

For me it is interesting to start maybe naming the obvious gaps we are experiencing right now...¹⁷

I think that somehow the notion of the 'gap' will appear anyways as it is unavoidable, but I am intrigued by your proposition of writing down the obvious gaps we are experiencing right now.¹⁸ I

¹⁴ Maybe what we are 'writing together' actually relates to the performative gaps this performative text claims to have. This text acts as something or has the intention to act as something and it is based on some performative gaps that act differently within the text. The first image I have of a performative gap is the turbulence one experiences when flying. Although you know that they are gaps of air, and it is not something to worry about, they act on you in a very different way. And at this point I need to ask if these gaps between us, whether performative or productive, have this kind of impact turbulence has when one is flying on an airplane.

¹⁵ Seeing this document as a text that can stand on its own and people can follow it, here I need to give information about what conference we are talking about. The 10th SAR conference is organized by the Society for Artistic Research in Zurich, March 21-23, 2019. The call for contributions asks for contributions on one of the three topics: Productive gaps, Enhanced Dissemination Formats and Inspiring failures.

¹⁶ I find very interesting the fact that an artistic research conference can create an 'artificial' element in this text. I almost fall for this artificiality in comparison to something that is more 'true' and less artificial or more authentic maybe. What I find interesting is that this conference somehow brings a reality check to this text, the check one needs to anyway take into consideration when one creates something, as it always has to be connected to the real. What connects this text to the real then is indeed a 'productive gap'.

¹⁷ In fact there are some "obvious gaps" that affect the form, the content and the context of this trans-authorship: the geographical gap, the one being in Utrecht and the other in Zurich; the age gap, the one being in her twenties and the other in her forties; the position gap, the one being a dramaturg and the other a maker.

¹⁸ I don't know if it is obvious enough, but to me a gap that creates a very weird feeling is the fact that while I write this

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would also like to let you know that I am not interested to explore the gaps of my research at the moment as this is not about my research although it relates to it, but rather let the gap of what is happening now appear, may in our writing together, our thinking together, our dialogue,¹⁹ within the content, the context itself etc.

Maybe I have to be a bit careful with my articulation because when I said 'the productive gaps of your research' I meant more how your research relates/engages with the notion of productive gaps, and not actually talking about the gaps. I don't know if it is still clear though.

Going back to the obvious gaps we are experiencing right now, I must say that the most "disturbing" one for me personally is the gap of (hmm I have to think of how I'm going to say this) my thinking going faster than our writing in the sense that I feel like I want to respond and react to many different things of what you say but somehow I have to slow down and choose. So I would say that it is also a gap between oral discussions and written ones or maybe a gap of temporalities.²⁰

Let's talk about gaps then. Slowing down seems like something that happens immediately when one develops a written dialogue in silence²¹, and for me has to do not only with orality, but with the speed of thought (even if we do not express it orally) and the time needed to express this thought (orally or written). Now that I write, I am very much concerned about how this will go 'somewhere'²²so the gap of creating meaning/content and of how one (in our case more than one) composes in

footnote, on the same computer (mine) I get a message from you on a different platform. And I need to actually stop my writing here in order to change window to see what you have written. And from time to time I see you entering this text and I imagine that you visit this doc to read my footnotes because you know that I write them right now, as we talk simultaneously on the other platform about these footnotes and how we feel about writing them. Ok, I am confused now.

¹⁹ What if we call this attempt to write together this text, trans-performative instead of trans-authorship. The trans- is more about movement, and the performative about action. How would that transform what we write?

²⁰This gap of temporalities seems quite crucial to this document. I'm writing this footnote six days after the text has been written and in a way I'm activating again a different temporality that this time has not to do with the speed of thought and the expression of it but with continuity and fragmentation. Or seeing it the other way around the text is functioning as a gap of temporalities in the sense of not having a specific temporality on its own, but instead working as a gap in-between all the other temporalities of our lives.

²¹I am convinced now that in order to change from a dialogue to a trans-authorship text one needs to find ways to change the turns the people who write take, when they write. I mean now I write independently of what you have initially written, I respond to our text with new thoughts, this is not a dialogue, it is an attempt to move forward, beyond, over it and make it act as something else.

²²Lately this expression of 'getting somewhere' means a lot to me, related to a positive view to things or some kind of a solution/end that is coming and it is comforting as a thought. It is connected with this song:

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writing? The first most obvious gap I see here is what I want to say versus what you want to say.²³

And the ways we compose and express ourselves as one. Also, the gap of writing in a language that is not our mother tongue (especially because our mother tongue is common) feels so precarious (to use a word that relates to my research) to me.

I just now realised that this gap of writing in a different language functions for me as a productive gap. Even though I feel extremely vulnerable (as I'm also doing a lot of spelling mistakes in english) at the same time I think that I couldn't do this conversation in greek with the same level of concentration. Then, as for the gap of what I want to say versus what you want to say, I must say that I'm not experiencing it so much like that, but more as I said before as a gap of the strive and (προσμονη; I need some help) anticipation? that we want to communicate and think along and the slowing down of the task we choose.

I wanted to ask since the moment I read it, what is a productive gap?²⁴ I now realized how I really dislike the word productive even when it is paired with something so diverse as the word gap. It creates this connotation of having to produce a qualitative result that really makes me feel unsafe. It's interesting that you say that you feel vulnerable with English, I kind of feel more safe with it, I don't expect so much of me, if we were writing in Greek I would feel a lot more vulnerable to be correct with spelling and content, to be more 'productive' in my mother language, so to say. In relation to what I say versus what you say, I agree with you in the intention, but I am still concerned about creating meaning and this meaning relates somehow to what 'one' versus 'the other' wants to say. At least at some point of the process, otherwise how can a trans-authorship text exist? If we have not dealt with these questions I mean.

I'm not proposing not to deal with these questions, neither that we are not actually dealing with them right now, but the way I personally experience it right now does not focus on this direction. I

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6Vl_OFScbc

²³ Again here I am reminded of Mette Edvartsen (I re-read last week her contribution to the book POST-DANCE) where she asks : *'How can we be in proximity with each other, and at the same time recognise the infinite distances that exist between us? Let's never fill this gap'* (POST-DANCE, MDT 2017, p. 218)

²⁴ What happens if we replace 'productive' with 'performative'? What is a performative gap? Maybe it is a gap that you can *do* something with it, you can *act on* it or it *acts on* you.

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was actually expecting you to pose the question “what is a productive gap?” and share your discomfort with the word earlier I must say! Looks like before you were still “fascinated” or maybe “adapting” to the context of this dialogue and you just now realized it.

I think the conference uses this specific word deliberately because it is a “catchy” word that is all around different discourses paired with words like gap or failure that seem to be the opposite. Even though I understand your frustration with the word, I have to say that I very easily overpassed these connotations you mentioned and just jumped into the content, taking for granted that this is what we have to talk about. This is something that I do more often and I consider it as a “problem” for myself. Seems like somebody has to come to me and say “Hey, wait” and then I will think “But of course, she is right, how come I didn’t see it?”.

To me it is really a good thing that you managed to overpass it. I could have stayed with it forever and it would have finally become the ‘gap’ as it would have probably paralyzed me and maybe not let me go further. But I am still interested to discuss about it, apart from the obvious interpretations I mean. You see I am fascinated with meaning, and different ways of creating it. I don’t think content is the same thing. I am not fascinated by content, but by how can we ‘mean’ differently, or how can we create different meanings maybe?²⁵

You know this fascination of yours with creating meaning, to me has a lot of common elements with the word “productive”.

Ok, elaborate.

(I tend to need the other “obvious” gaps in this document, between your writing and my writing).^{26,27} It sounds like you are concerned with doing something/thinking something/writing something that creates meaning, so in other words, that is productive for us and for others. Do you

²⁵There is a very interesting quality in what you say because it implies that one can actively create meaning using different ways. It sounds almost like kind of a practice.

²⁶ What makes this document a trans-authorship and not a dialogue?

²⁷I have worked like this before. The online writing in silence for a specific timeframe, had been one of the main practices we developed together with Annekatrin Becher. This is why I now have to wonder about the gaps that you mention you need, whose gaps do you actually need, who is the author of these gaps, you mention you and me, but it seems that many other subjectivities are involved within these gaps.

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 consider what we are writing now to create meaning?

Everything creates meaning of some sort.²⁸ My interest is to find ways to change the meaning we create in things. This is what fascinates me, that's why I am interested in discussing the meaning of productive gaps, rather than to strive for meaning per se.

What does the parenthesis mean? We need to finish very soon as we have reached 50'.

In my writing code, the parenthesis creates a gap in the flow of the conversation, in order for other kinds of meanings and thoughts (in a self-referential level) to claim space in this document.²⁹ How can we finish? How can we deal with the gap we are going to experience when this conversation will be over?

Are you finished for the moment? I don't know if I am. I am not so much afraid of gaps, but I am very much afraid of voids... Maybe this is a void that we will experience?

Funnily enough, I don't know the meaning of a void. But I'm afraid of gaps!³⁰³¹

Inspired by my fascination of changing the meaning, I will finish with two associations that are obvious but have been in my mind since we started : GAP the brand (how scary can that be?) and

²⁸This statement sounds quite generic and I'm wondering what would happen if we tried to articulate the short of meaning that this text creates.

²⁹Here the meaning of gap is closer to a layering.

³⁰A gap has the meaning of an opening, like a small hole or break in something. A void has the meaning of an empty space, a vacant space in the sense that it does not contain anything, it is not occupied by anything, it is not filled in with something. I kind of think they have somehow a negative meaning. A gap is a hole, a space through which things can pass from (e.g. a crack of light comes in from the gap between the door and the floor). A void has the meaning of emptiness in ways that nothing can pass through it, as if this emptiness is solid. I am so afraid of this emptiness, of this nothingness so to say. It is as if a gap has the meaning of a passage between two things whereas a void has the meaning of the end of being, of the end of existence to me.

³¹As an academic my relation to gaps is different to my relation as a dramaturg. For example, I'm thinking of a very common expression in academic research that you have to name 'the gap of knowledge' you are going to fill in with your research. So in that case, the gap is something desirable, you wish to have a gap in order for your research to have a reason to be realized. At the same time, when thinking of gaps from my academic perspective, it is closely connected to a sense of insecurity about the existence of a gap in my research, my thesis, my argument or my structure, a gap that I haven't spotted on myself and someone will find out. On the other hand as a dramaturg, I immediately see the gap as a productive thing or as something you can play with and use it.

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 'Mind the Gap' at the London tube.³²

I am not very sure if you are there, I need to check your breath, your breast coming up and down to be sure that you are still on skype with me.³³ This creates a void I was previously³⁴ talking about.

I was actually almost not breathing, holding my breath in a suspension moment until one of us will start writing.³⁵ Now that you said that, I realized I also had to check if I'm breathing.

It is a feeling that somehow makes the gap very visible and almost tangible in me, but I consider it a gap and not a void as it is performative (if we agreed that this is what we are going to use instead of productive) as it acts on me as a trigger to think of the gap again, to tune it with our conversation.

I agree it is performative (this gap) as every suspension of a moment holds something performative in it. I also agree on the use of the word performative rather than productive as it is closer to what we both are looking for. I believe though that what we experienced a few minutes ago was a void and not a gap. It was an empty moment, the moment that we both don't do something actively (or so it seems from the outside), this moment holds an emptiness that creates a tension. The gap does not have a tension within it, it is something between something and something else, it is not something on its own.

Exactly because of the fact that it is something in between, it holds great tension, the kind of tension

³²There was a time when I was teenager that I was really a fan of the "mind the gap" expression, and I was using it all the time as a way to express the gap between the world and my feelings, or the feeling of an internal gap or maybe better a void.

³³ It is interesting how in this text there isn't a visible sign of the gap between the two sessions. It seems like in a text about gaps we are avoiding one of the obvious gaps or trying to minimize their visual representation.

³⁴ Where does this 'previously' refer to? It signals a moment in time that it was before something but as this text has no specific temporality or has different parallel temporalities, it functions as one of the few time-signs.

³⁵ I am actually wondering now about beginnings and ends, or starts and ends. I write one day after our last session and more than a week after the previous one, and this sentence (the one on which I write a footnote) somehow denotes a beginning. And it is the beginning after the end of last session I suppose, and it starts with a breath. Actually, it starts with me observing your breath and with you declaring that you suspend your breath until we start. But in the paper there is no beginning and no end, there is a text that flows continually. This brings in mind a text I recently re-read by Mette Edvartsen in which she wrote that '*a piece is never finished and neither does writing, it goes on*', she writes. And she continues by saying: '*Like this text, it will never be finished*', I wonder what does that mean about our text here. (POST-DANCE, MDT 2017, p.220)

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that waits to be released or transformed in something different, the moment we are filling or overpassing the gap. If what we experienced was a void then it would have been the end and not a transitional moment.

I was observing the cursor and the gap between the moment one can see it on the screen and the moment it disappears and you wait until you see it again. It can become very intense. But, I don't see a gap as something in-between, I just see it as something being between things. That's different. And it can hold tension I agree but not the tension a void holds. I don't see the void as an end, I see it as a liminal space...

I ³⁶was observing the gap of sound between the typing on the keyboard and the silence when it stops, how long it is, how decisive? I'm using it as a sign to understand if you finish what you wanted to write or what you ³⁷are just thinking. ³⁸It is interesting what you say because I see the gap as a liminal space, as something in-between that carries potentiality with it. ³⁹So I'm curious how you see the gap then and what is the difference between something in-between and something being between things.

It rains here now. How is the weather there?⁴⁰

It is funny that when you stop writing you accompany it with a deep breath and a movement that

³⁶There is a need here and will try to explain it by activating it in practice in this sentence. The feeling is that all the 'I's' and 'me's' should be eliminated almost to non-existent in order for this text to become a trans-authorship one. Maybe working on the economy of language from now on, and on eliminating the personal perspective, will have this effect. On the other hand, this distinction between 'you' and 'me', letting the gap between 'one' and 'the other' to be revealed, is so interesting.

³⁷The idea of eliminating all the 'I's and the 'me's' at first seems indeed like the right thing or the most rational one for a trans-authorship text. However, there is also a danger here, the danger of implying that in order for something to be considered trans- it must be a unified thing without subjectivities and differences. The choice of the 'one' and the 'other' instead of the 'me' and the 'you' creates a generic and impersonal tone that tries to smooth down the subjectivities. Thus, I find it much more intriguing to do a trans-authorship including the 'I's and the 'me's' as we can then think of other qualities that make this text a trans-authored one.

³⁸Attempt to rephrase this sentence in relation to footnote 23. "The previous sentence has interesting qualities, especially when looking at the gap as a liminal space, as something in-between that carries a potentiality in it."

³⁹*Today it seems that the only places where there are still gaps and time (in a studio) which is not instrumental to production (product), is within artistic research and educational institutions. Let's take care of the gaps.* (Mette Edvardsen, POST-DANCE, MDT 2017, p.221)

⁴⁰Reading this sentence outside the flow of the live conversation, it seems as a gap. It makes me take more time with it, wondering how it came into the conversation.

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shows you are done with it, I think I am also doing it, it is as if we have developed already a 'secret' code to show to the other that we are finished with what we have written. Could that be called a method?⁴¹⁴²

I am wondering about what is it that we don't see here, what is it that we don't talk about although it is there, that's why I go to the bodily expressions and affects and to what is happening in the weather etc. Maybe this plays a role in what we want to say or what is there and we don't see or talk about it.⁴³ What seems important cognitively to talk about is rather the difference between the word between and the notion of the in-between, if I understood that correctly.

Here it is really sunny and from where I'm sitting right now I can see a part of the blue sky and some yellow-brown trees. It is a quite poetic image I must say.

I think yes it "qualifies" as a method of our practice⁴⁴ as it is something that we developed in and through the practice and it is neither mine nor yours. For me it works not only as a sign to you but also as a preparation before I write or a release afterwards.

I must say though, that I'm not experiencing a gap between this other levels of expressions or discussions about the weather, but rather I feel it as a continuity with the writing, as a kaleidoscopic way of being together and conversing, that has different trajectories in parallel, depending on which perspective you look at it.

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⁴¹ The word method according to wikipedia has the following meaning: *noun* a particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one. "a method for software maintenance" *synonyms*: [procedure](#), [technique](#), [system](#), [practice](#), [routine](#), [modus operandi](#), method of working, [formula](#), [process](#), [means](#), [medium](#), [mechanism](#); The word practice is synonym to the word method in this definition of Wikipedia. Isn't that a great within the meaning gap? Or maybe a leap?

⁴² Speaking of methods, now that we have finished this text and I re-work on it, I need to expose the most obvious method we have used in order to create this trans- text. And this is the method of writing a text together and adding footnotes separately. But, what I think is important here, is the fact that this method is not something we came up with, it is rather an appropriation. This appropriation is relevant and important to the trans- quality of this text, as it has been appropriated by a book that is written by the teacher who is going to assess this assignment. And I think this adds different layers to the trans-authorship of this text.

⁴³ I notice that in contrast to me, you are avoiding to go to the personal or the everyday in the footnotes.

⁴⁴ Chrysa Parkinson has three different definitions and uses of practice: an 'active thought', a 'habitual or regular activity' or a 'try'. (From Georgelou, Protopapa and Theodoridou *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on actions in Performance*, p.)

⁴⁵ I have just opened the document in order to re-read it and write more footnotes before our skype meeting this evening, and while I scroll down I see the pink cursor standing right in the spot that this footnote is, which signifies you are also active right now. I feel excited!

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The sound I hear when you type, makes me imagine that you write in a keyboard that has very heavy keys, really big and heavy and that it takes a big effort to press them. You know the sound the piano keys do when it is not working? You try hard to press them and still they don't make a sound and it produces a very weird effect, because of the expectation you have that once you press they will make a sound. This is my experience here when you type.

In relation to the weather I am not sure that what you describe is real or fiction. First of all, because I don't have an image in my mind of a yellow-brown tree... But secondly, because I am very reluctant to believe that the weather is better there than here, as I am souther than you, and this just does not make sense.

It took us 50' and a bit more to create a method, if as you say this can 'qualify' as one. I would like to pay more attention in what we do and try to describe it more clearly. What is it that we do when we need to stop writing. Describe it like a score maybe.⁴⁶

(This score has just killed you)⁴⁷.

Your imagination of my writing in a keyboard is not so far from reality as indeed my keyboard is not working very well and especially for some letters like w, s, x I have to press hard if I want to type them...

I kind of like the fact that you are not sure if my window image is real or not, so I will leave it like that. But I have also to say that I was a bit suspicious when you said that it rains over there as I cannot hear any sound of rain coming from your side and I think this is strange.

It took us 50' and a bit and a self-reflective attitude to find and name it as method. I would be very interested in describing it as a score but I must also say that our 50' are just over. So we have to

⁴⁶ Focusing on the sound that comes via skype. Looking at you to see if your gaze is still on the screen or to me. Reassuring that your cursor has stop moving. Breathing out, breathing in, making a change of my body position to a 'writing' one. Typing. Pausing. The gaze opening up out of the screen only to come back a moment later with a new thought. Typing. Pressing the keyboard harder than one should. Making effort. Pausing. Zooming out of the document. The gaze back to you. Changing of body position. Drinking water. Making the hair. An invitation

⁴⁷ This I find it almost a cheeky way to add layers and subjectivities to the trans-authorship!

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 make a choice on how we proceed.

I need to cook lunch for my son, he is at home and a bit sick...

But maybe you want to write a bit more...⁴⁸

Just one very quick note. The rain here is silent, it is not a heavy one and it looks like powder.

I will try to remember and describe what I do, and what you do in the next session or when I write the footnotes.⁴⁹

I will do it like that too, I don't want to continue on this text on my own temporality.

The powder rain sounds similar to the yellow-brown trees.^{50 51}

Any change of meaning to close for this time? In our previous session you finished with a change of meaning by bringing in two associations of the gap, and I was wondering if you have anything now.

Or maybe not. Let's stay with the powder rain and the yellow-brown trees for now.^{52 53}

⁴⁸What does the '...' imply?

⁴⁹The hands stop typing. There is a pause there, for the sake of this document, I will name it a gap. Then there is a short breath in, followed by a longer breath out. And then the hands get off the computer, and maybe there is a tiny movement before that, where the hands push slightly the computer forward before taking the hands off it. The gap does not really change, it is still looks forward towards the computer.

Then there is again a longer gap, I interpret this gap as an invitation to 'the other' to start writing.

If this gap lasts longer than expected, there is another movement that interrupts the rhythm, a more staccato one, a hand grabs a glass of water, or fixes the hair, that works as more suggestive of the fact that 'one' has finished writing, and it's now the right time and space for 'the other to start'.

⁵⁰The use of the word 'sound' in this sentence is in fact intriguing. Especially because the phrases 'powder rain' and 'yellow-brown trees' do not SOUND similar... Yet there is a similarity in relation to their poetics and to the images they produce, which intrigues the curiosity about the use of the sound of them, and how do they sound, and what is similar about the way they sound. How would one pronounce them in order to sound similar to each other? Powder rain, yellow-brown train ... Or how do poetics sound? It is interesting in relation to this context also, because this is a writing exercise and therefore there is a lot of writing and reading, there is no direct sound of the phrases, but now I wonder about the sound of them in space.

⁵¹ When reading the powder rain and the yellow-brown trees I immediately envision it as part of the title of this document.

⁵²*But the time it takes is not normative-there is a limit to improvement- sometimes it is good to know when to stop. And maybe that is just a beginning*'. Mette Edvartsen, POST-DANCE, MDT 2017, p.221

⁵³I really enjoy reading Mette Edvartsen's quotes popping out all over the document since the last time I visit it, but it would be good if in this little tribute the spelling of her name is right. EdvarDsen.

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I feel a bit overwhelmed as I have different things in mind that I want to bring in today's session and I don't know from where to start.⁵⁴

Recently, I participated in a session in the context of a group I'm part in Veem House of Performance that somehow we decided to focus on the notion of gap. More specifically, the woman in the blue pullover and the ponytail proposed to focus on the care that a gap needs. I thought it was a very nice perspective that I would like to bring in our conversation about performative gaps. How do we care about the gaps? What is caring for a gap activate?

Do we care for the gap by having these conversations? Is making the gap visible an act of care?

The first thing that comes to mind when I think about 'caring for' something or someone, is the needs she, he or it has. What are the possible needs of a performative gap? And since you participated in a session focusing on the notion of it, do you have to contribute with some more feedback maybe. I am interested in the 'caring for' as I have spent a lot of time looking for the transformation of precarity to care and how this can happen, but for the specific issue in relation to the gap, I need more time to think about how can one care or take care of a gap. What do you think?

There is also a language thing when discussing about caring as you can care *about* or care *for* or take care *of*. I'm not aware of the linguistic differences in english but I find it interesting to think what are the differences, or what each one of these propositions bring when paired with the notion of care. The first intuitive response is that each proposition changes the focus between the one who cares, and her, him or it that is being cared. So when caring for the gap it indeed brings in mind the needs of the gap, while caring about the gap highlights more our need to have the gap.

Caring for the gap means then trying to fill in the gaps the gap has, the needs that are not fulfilled, something like trying to provide a wholeness to it, or reassuring the gap that she/he or it is enough in what it is, and does not need to become something else in order for us to accept it⁵⁵. Caring about it could possibly mean that when the gap has a problem we are there to help or give a friendly advice? When for example the gap does not feel important enough then we are there to make it

⁵⁴I'm now really wondering if we have to put any kind of sign that separates the different sessions we had or not. On the one hand, it is interesting not to have a visual gap between them as it activates a different gap, that of meaning or continuity of flow. On the other hand, I cannot stop desiring to have some kind of date or other sign.

⁵⁵This thought, the way it is articulated can easily function as a metaphor on how caring for 'others' should be.

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appear important, like with the footnotes, where it appears as a consequence of the format. Lastly, maybe taking care of a gap has the meaning of what we do now, actually taking into consideration the fact that she/he/it exists, and we offer our time and space to include it in our conversation, even to give to her/him/it a very prominent position in our conversation.

What I like here is that you make the gap sound almost like a human being, there is a subjectification of the gap.

(You look sad or disappointed and that concerns me as I feel like you are not satisfied with our conversation today.)

(I am tired and relaxed, I know it is not common for me to be relaxed, this is how I look though, it has nothing to do with our conversation)⁵⁶

(Maybe it has to do with the fact that it is the first session we do in the evening and not in the morning, so there is a gap in my understanding of you.)

(The fact that I am relaxed has to do with doing the session in the evening, time passes differently now, in the evening. Do you write only with one hand?)

(Yes I always write only with my right hand, sometimes even only with my second finger.)

There is an immediate connection that happens between care and time, as if taking care means first and foremost to give our time to her/him/it we are caring for.

And our attention, we acknowledge it as what it is, a gap.

Can you explain what you just said?

Taking care means giving time to the one who is being cared by, but also giving attention to it. And by giving attention I mean trying to understand what it is 'as a being' that which you care about, for, or of. In our case we are asked to understand what a gap is and acknowledge it for what it is and

⁵⁶Reading this sentence now makes me want to say: Of course it has to do with our conversation, everything relates to everything. Although I have to admit that since I was younger all of my friends had a problem to recognize the way I looked when I was relaxed, and they most of the times interpreted it as a disappointment or sadness. I remember one day I was sitting on the terrace of the summer house of my friend Themis with whom I do not talk any more. The terrace was overlooking the aegean sea. At some point she looks at me and says: 'What is wrong with you? You are silent and look sad', only to continue her sentence: 'Oh, yes... I forgot, this is the way you look when you feel relaxed!'.

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 nothing more or less.⁵⁷

This acknowledgement for what it is, sounds very relieving, like we don't have to do something big or extreme but already this subtle act of acknowledgement means something. Going back to your fascination with meaning, I'm wondering how do you feel about it now?

I don't have a fascination with meaning, I rather do have a fascination with changing the meaning of something, or saying it differently. (thank you) But, I am not sure I understand what you mean.

I guess, I mean if you feel like the changing of meaning is part of what we are doing now.

I think that we are looking for ways to do different things with this text. By taking the time to talk about and understand what a gap is, we have made different attempts to give alternative meanings to it. I just need to inform you that we have overpassed our 50 minutes now. What shall we do?

If this is our last session, are we going to find a (temporary) end to this text? Or at least an end to this specific temporality of this text, the one that we have 50' to write together live.⁵⁸

Shall we look for an ending instead of an end? How do you imagine this ending or temporary end ?

I imagine it as a question: How is the weather there?

And you?

I imagine it as something very common, ordinary, like : Goodbye...

⁵⁷This resonates with your initial need 'to make the gaps of what we doing here appear'. Does this text bring into appearance these gaps after all?

⁵⁸ In regards to the kind of trans-authorship this text activates or actualizes, there is another interesting dimension beyond the obvious one. In order to write it, we chose to practice two tasks that we appropriate from others. The first one being the writing dialogue in a specific time frame and the second one being the footnotes (coming from Ivana Müller and Jonas Rutgeers 'Notes from the margin' *The Practice of Dramaturgy*, valiz p.120-132). Even though an 'appropriation' I think it enabled us to start formulating our own idea of what a trans-authorship text is through the practice *of it* and not through a discussion *about it*. I also find very interesting the fact that the main person that will read this, namely Konstantina, is actually one of the persons we 'appropriate' the task from.

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Or maybe kiss(ed)⁵⁹ goodbye?⁶⁰

Kiss goodbye?⁶¹ mmmmm, I am not sure, it is too loaded with other meanings.⁶² I kind of like goodbye, as it is both ordinary enough and therefore not loaded, and new each time, as it relates to the specific moment it is said.

Goodbye then!

The weather is very cold here today. Goodbye.⁶³

⁵⁹I always thought that the phrase is 'kissed goodbye' until you wrote it down.

⁶⁰I enjoy a lot those hidden parts of this text, that for us mean something more than what it looks like.

⁶¹It's 6.15 a.m. and I'm standing in front of a sign in Amsterdam Schiphol Airport that says "Passengers only! Kiss & Goodbye". I find it odd, almost too personal for an airport sign and it triggers me to open the laptop few minutes later, while I'm waiting in the gate and write some more footnotes.

⁶² I wonder how these 'inside' jokes (connotations in our case) work in relation to the trans-authorship quality of the text. What is the effect of something as personal as an inside joke, something that means specifically something to specific people, on the trans- of this text.

⁶³The last couple of sentences, especially the ones that are very short in length, reveal more the format of the dialogue between us. That's why I would like to mention here, that unlike what I was thinking previously to this practice, it is the first time I question the format of trans-authorship as something that excludes dialogue. I actually do think that a dialogue belongs or should belong to a trans-authorship text.

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6. I am a female professional artist – A manifesto

~~<https://instaud.io/3BC8/delete/95daa61054d13751008444aca9cfa2cdda801c5f>~~

<https://www.mylonaeleni.com/video-reel>
(I am a professional female artist manifesto)