

Pop Up



Performance Philosophy Experiment — May 15, 2019

NODES

Demet Kurtoğlu Taşdelen

[“Onebetweenness in Rising”](#)

Eskişehir, Turkey

Tom Armbrecht, Jon McKenzie, Mark Nelson,

Andrew Salyer, and Katie Schaag

[Madison Performance Philosophy Collective](#)

(Actual) Dijon, France; (Virtual) Berlin, Germany; (Actual) Madison, Wisconsin;

(Actual) Ithaca, New York

Elisabeth Belgrano, Ami Skanberg Dahlstedt, K Benedikte L Esperi,

Fredric Gunve, Cha Blasco

PP GOT

[“Reconfiguring Network”](#)

Gothenburg, Sweden

Dhira Rauch, Julia Meeks, Su-Yee Lin

Holes in the Wall Collective

[“What you catch depends on the size of the holes.”](#)

Freshkills Park, Staten Island, NY and Grand Central Terminal, NY, NY

Will Daddario and Joanne Zerdy

[“Shadow of Grief”](#)

Highlands, North Carolina

APPENDIX

[Call for Participants](#)

“Networks, or An Alternate Net of Togetherness: Onebetweenness in Rising” Demet Kurtoğlu Taşdelen

Proposal

My starting point for the theme “Networks, or...” was the word “Ağ” that is used in Turkish for “Network.” I will search for and experiment with, together with those who will participate, the possible effects of the different Turkish usages of “Ağ” on our communal actions.

The word “Ağ” is a root word from which lots of words are derived. All the words that are derived from the root “Ağ” preserve the meaning “rising, ascending, growing.” Some examples of these derived words are: *Ağmak* (to rise, to ascend), *Ağdırmak* (to lift up, elevate), *Ağır* (heavy, respectable), *Ağaç* (tree, that which goes up), *Ağıt* (lament, that which rises from within), *Ağlamak* (to cry, to come upwards), *Ağrı* (pain, involving the action of rising).

The word “Ağ” is at the same time a word that has a meaning on its own. It is used for natural things such as a spider web and objects like fishing nets and tennis nets. The word “Ağ” that is used for such objects and which preserves the meaning of “rising” is also a word that is chosen along with technological development to fulfill the need to find a word in order to describe, abstractly, the togetherness of people. At least, it is open to interpretation in this sense. Therefore, it can be asked how the word “Ağ,” standing in for “Network,” would reflect a kind of togetherness that preserves these meanings.

A gathering like a social network, in which there are people who know or don’t know each other, actually generates a model/visuality of togetherness that is formed according to members’ character traits and the quality of the contribution they choose to make to the network to which they belong. Usually in this configuration there are members continuously coming and going. Some stay while others come and go. Some are devoted, some just stay by chance, and some even belong unknowingly. As long as we have such a broad social network interaction, we will have the most general word “Network” to describe that kind of gathering. However, the Turkish word indeed reveals a lot concerning quality. Therefore, why not concentrate on the usage of as well as the meaning embedded in this Turkish word to see whether there could be another word that can be preferred instead of the word “Network”? In other words, why not work around the root meaning of “rising and ascending”? Even though there is no compelling reason to change the word “Network” since its usage is already settled, such a search can possibly give us an alternate model of it. What it could be will be our aim.

For example, can ideas like catching/to be caught, trapping/to get trapped—that come to mind with the use of the word “Ağ” in words like spider web and fishing net—be thought of together with the meaning “rising and ascending”?

My second point would be to add to these ideas another word which is “*biraradalık*” that is used in Turkish for the word “togetherness”. Actually, if we try to translate it directly into English, it would be more appropriate to use a word like “onebetweenness”. The word “Biraradalık” is

composed of a couple of words which at the same time mean, “one,” “between,” “interval,” “space,” “search,” and even “call” as in “call him/her.” When we try to combine the meaning involved in the word “Ağ” with the meaning involved in “Biraradalık,” will there not arise a model of network that is peculiar to a/my culture?

For a start, I will name the model as “Onebetweenness in Rising.” I will also search for whether this model can be combined with a concept from Far Eastern philosophies which is “many in body one in mind”? This is a concept that can perfectly be used to describe the “ideal” network of togetherness in which there are lots of people (many in body) with different characters but in which they all are united around the same goal (one in mind). This would imply the idea of “helping” one another to rise/ascend/grow within the network in such a way as to realize a goal that is wanted by all the members and without members losing their identities. (Assuming of course that the network has a goal to achieve!)

We will also have to take into consideration different gatherings/networks of people even within the same big gathering/network.

All these ideas will be brought together to make an event of performative philosophy based on the theme “Network or...” Philosophical ideas and questions will be combined with movement and the use of some objects to create *onebetweenness in rising*.

The event is planned together with my philosophy students who are currently involved this academic term in my “Performative Philosophy” course. We will first make a discussion on the topics I mentioned above and then experiment how this discussion can evolve towards a performance.

The event will be on Sunday 19 May 2019 and will take place in a big space at one of the parks (called “*Kanlı Kavak*”) in Eskişehir, Turkey.

It is quite likely that the event will also expand beyond the space where we might be to attract those who are at the park to pass time. If this happens, it will also give us an opportunity to experiment with whether we can form a gathering just by coincidence and how we might immediately transfer our ideas to have people contribute to our pursuit of *onebetweenness in rising*.

The list of my students who participated: Burcu Günsoy, Buse Ceylan, Eylem Karakoç, Alara Özbudak, Berkay Dönmez, Baran Demir, Neslihan Kemer, Nida Ateş, Saliha Demir, Mehdi Kayıtmaz, Berrak Tüter, Oğuzhan Yılmaz, Gurbet Saçan, Melodi Güneş, Melda Kardeş

Report of the Experiment

A network of people (young women and men), without “knowing” what they were going to do, came together at a park in Eskişehir/Turkey, enjoyed the moment just by being together and started to “play” with/in the experiment.

We gathered in the park and chose a place to discuss and perform. Because I announced our pop-up via social media, one woman I knew before and two of her friends joined us too. They said that it was the first time for them to participate in such an experiment.

We first warmed up.

We then sat down and discussed the topic according to the proposal I had written.



We moved/danced in accordance with the feelings, sensations and thoughts that we all had from our discussion.



We made some spontaneous patterns based on “sitting-standing-lying down.” We sometimes watched each other and sometimes performed. We experimented with being an audience member and with being a performer. Without waiting for this pattern-based performance to end, I brought the fishing net among our group. So people started to discover the net and what they can do with it. Some wanted to get into the net and even didn’t want to go out of it for some time. Some didn’t prefer to go in. Some really wanted to get caught up. Some didn’t. Some went on to “save” the person who got in. Some just watched what was going on without knowing what to do or how to “save” the person who got in. What was going on was life in our world, what was going on was our relationships...that was perfect. We had created an experiment spontaneously and that experiment was all about a life within life.

We took a break

A guest student of mine (Burcu Günsoy), who came to my course “performative philosophy” from another city in Turkey every Friday during the academic term, had the idea of bringing colorful balls of wool as a representation of the theme “network.” Before bringing them to us, from each of the balls of wool she had stretched out a certain amount of string as to form one big ball of wool. So what we saw was a bigger ball of wool that looked like a root giving birth to five other balls of wool.

After the break we started to stretch out each of the balls of wool in whatever way we wanted. We then started to knit together by passing the balls of wool into each other at some points. It was like knitting a net. Each node, each knot, was linked to our solidarity, to our group becoming stronger and stronger together. While knitting, we were touching each other, talking, smiling, laughing, bumping into each other, waving, fluctuating inside the net, web or whatever.

As the yarn interlaced, we too interlaced with each other. We found ourselves on the soil. The yarn stayed tied very tightly on some parts of our bodies: wrists, arms, legs, waist, ankles, belly. Staying there where we were without moving, we naturally—without making an explicit decision—went on saving each other from the yarn into which we were all woven. In fact, that was the only way for us to be saved. *So we rose together. We were the roots, we were the trees. We grew up into a tree of people that we can perhaps call a “family tree.”*

*You young girl, how beautiful you are in your own way, in your own uniqueness
Like a tree that rose up from the earth, like a fruit that came up from the tree
You too grew, you too bloomed
You young man, how beautiful you are in your own way, in your own uniqueness
Daring to trust others
Daring to open your heart to the unknown
Daring to become a part of a solidarity that you yourself is the actor
The perfect moment of being together
Of rising together
Of being one between others
An ideal unity rises
As onebetweenness*





Is it then possible to think about the “network” as a family tree? A network can be considered as a family tree of, for instance, “many in body, one in mind,” (that comes from a Buddhist philosophy). It is a kind of unity in which we keep and develop our individuality, our uniqueness, our being together, while gathering around the same goal.

What was our goal then? Can a group have a goal without noticing what it is?

Our goal was to put into practice what we discussed. However, we didn’t have a specific, fixed goal. The stream that guided us was to act together, to be together, to flow together, to become together, in whatever we were going to do. This can be taken as the ultimate target that underlined our experiment. So in a sense, when we started to flow together, we realized that there was no separation among us. This constitutes a sufficient reason for a group of eager people

to have their spontaneous and ultimate goal at the same time.

On the other hand, what guided us in this stream was the “four possible combinations of unity and disunity discussed in Buddhist writings.” I introduced these categories in our discussion at the beginning. These are as follows:

- *Itai ishin*: many in body, many in mind. Here there is no unity of purpose. This concept is applicable to society today. Most people are pulling in different directions most of the time. Individual success is possible, but group progress is difficult. The extreme of this type of disunity is anarchy.
- *Dotai ishin*: one in body, many in mind. Here members of a group or organization appear to be united and committed to the same goal—they may even wear a uniform—yet, in reality, the members do not agree with the goals in their hearts. Time will prove their unity to be superficial. This concept also applies to an individual at cross-purposes with himself.
- *Dotai doshin*: one in body, one in mind. This is akin to fascism. Group members are coerced into looking, thinking, and acting the same; individuality is perceived as a threat and is crushed. Ultimately, this kind of unity will disintegrate into dotai ishin.
- *Itai doshin*: many in body, one in mind. This is the kind of unity advocated by Nichiren Daishonin as the 'blueprint' for achieving *kosen rufu* [that is, social/world peace through individual happiness]. Here, people are free to develop their individuality while working towards a common goal.

(Jean Kemble, “Buddhist Unity (Itai Doshin)”, *UK Express*, January 2001)

So, *we were the roots, we were the trees*. “Many bodies” (us) having decided to form a unity, of being one mind, at last ended up with becoming the network of unity. We *rose up in onebetweenness (biraradalik)* and grew into a tree of people/a family tree.



Our experiment/play ended up with one of my students (Berkay Dönmez) taking the net we knitted onto himself and running with it for a while. He was our image/symbol of “onebetweenness in rising.”



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Madison Performance Philosophy Collective
[Tom Armbrecht, Jon McKenzie, Mark Nelson,](#)
[Andrew Salyer, and Katie Schaag](#)

Complete Documentation

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Excerpts

On May 15, 2019, Tom Armbrecht, Jon McKenzie, Mark Nelson, Andrew Salyer, and Katie Schaag convened a Madison Performance Philosophy Collective experiment in pop-up networks. We popped bubble wrap and glowing balloons, and realized that our impulses toward the “pop-up” theme had been mostly sensory/material -- we approached the prompt as artistic research, and leaned into the “performance” end of the “performance/philosophy” spectrum. We made playful theory-practice videos -- Jon’s bubble-ification of a discussion of bubbles (<https://vimeo.com/336215335>), and Mark’s pop-ification of a performance of popping (<https://vimeo.com/337697299>) -- and made diagrams and took notes and made conversation: dialogue as life/art/performance/philosophy. Through collaborative improvisatory methods, we explored abstract and concrete networks in our intersecting spheres.

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Complete Documentation

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**“Reconfiguring NETWORK”
by Elisabeth L. Belgrano**

(Included in this verbal reconfiguring are selected fragments from the other participating contributors in the pop-up PP project.)

It takes courage to enter a room. Do I dare? Who will I know? Will I become an outsider? How will I feel? What shall I say? I have nothing in common with them. I have nothing to say. Will anyone listen? Or will everyone just think and speak among themselves. Is anyone *really* interested in other thoughts and opinions? Or is everyone just merged with their own preoccupations? Being in their own bubbles? I am afraid. I am *so* afraid. Afraid to leave my own bubble.

Yet I enter. With eyes closed at first. Taking a huge risk. My face is giving the impression I am terrified. Gripped with worries of what is about to happen. Though, standing on the threshold I know I cannot be more ready. Something in me tells me: *Just go. Just enter. The room is ready. It is set up for your joining. You'll be safe. At least in your own body. You will know how to act eventually when you are there. Stay open. Tune in. Trust while taking this risk. Cut Together. Stay apart. Cut. Together-apart. Cutting together-apart.* (Barad 2014) *Be here-there-then-now. Jump.*

And I jumped. Jumped into. Because I wanted to. Because I was longing for. Because. There was an urge from inside. Desire. Not to be left outside. To be acknowledged? Being something? Being somebody. No, more like a desire for being part of...

*All the words that are derived from the root “Ağ” preserve the meaning “rising, ascending, growing. [...]
Ağıt (lament, that which rises from within), Ağlamak (to cry, to come upwards), Ağrı (pain, involving the action of rising).
(Demet Kurtoğlu Taşdelen)*

Roots. A place from where I come from. From where we come. Traditions. T/radi/tions. Through roots. (I love playing with words.) Radice in Italian means root. Radices. Roots. What connects me as a human to another human? Me and my mother and the cord that tied us together. Nurtured me. Made her double. Made us one. Roots.

Words are written out in black letters. Letters I am not familiar with. (We have letters in Swedish too that are different). I wanted to hear the sound of the word. Jumping into the details of the

word. Of its sound. Of its characteristics. Expanding along with what is being uncovered. Rising. Swelling. Bursting. Popping. Like a balloon. Where are the tears in such an explosion? Tears expressed in the act of swelling. It might all seem as a violent process, though I have learned that the rising of sorrow can appear in silence. Even unnoticed. One day tears can't be neglected. They just can't be ignored. They are there. In an immense amount. Like a swelling lake of tears. Coming for a specific reason or for no conscious reason at all. Rising from within.

We popped bubble wrap and glowing balloons, and realized that our impulses toward the 'pop-up' theme had been mostly sensory/material

We bounced ideas off each other, making spontaneous connections that in turn led to new thoughts and ultimately a fragmented, yet coherent conversation that made us feel together.

No person is subsumed: our ideas emerge and then mesh through intellectual and amicable bonds.

immigration

Be in the moment. In the living room. Eating popcorn. Blowing up a balloon. Ghost of an idea. Fragments. Wanting to materialize and/or subvert. Sensory as philosophy. Strength through community vs. will to power; Utopian society going back to the 19th century. Marx. Network gives us a false sense of security, but keeps us docile and subjugated. Mutualism and self-reliance. Community. Network of obligations.

In the traditional metaphorical sense, popping a bubble breaks an illusion, causing people to come into contact with a new reality. In a pop-up network, realities collide unexpectedly, despite potentially significant differences in space and time (zones).

(Madison Performance Philosophy Collective)

Bursting. Bouncing. Meshing. Philosophizing. Emerging. Moving. Living. Popping. Endless acting. Silencing. Breathing. Seeing. Sighing. Listening. Trusting. Risking. Differentiating.

The ongoing processing incorporates meaning. Deep stuff. How can it not? Life evolves, no matter if we like it or not. Moving. Meshing. Thinking. Becoming. It is really simple. Theorizing is developed as a way of making sense of what can't be really understood. (The question comes to me is: what is this that can't be understood? Or explained? Mystery? The more-than-other?) Meaning-making can't be separated from the very acting of emerging. Is this the challenge? Wishing to hold on. Keeping things in control. Keeping a control of a reality that keeps bursting. Organizing illusions. Networking. Working out nets. Embracing impossible entanglements. Staging nodes. Making encounters meaningful. Trusting that controlled nodes are more useful and sense-making than emergent unexpected uncontrolled nodes. Making. Acting. Doing. Performing.

I stop at the idea of breaking illusions, "causing people to come in contact with a new reality". It is something disturbing about breaking. The opposite of healing. Making whole. Or is the

breaking-itself the key? Is it an act of breaking-cutting-together? I fall into Judith Butler's and Karen Barad's words:

We have to understand how an atemporal mode breaks into another, or how an atemporal mode breaks out from with a temporal one. *Such traversals are possible only on the condition that finite and present temporality does not contain the other temporality that runs through it, flashes up within it, or breaks up into or out of it.*

[...] In other words, *nature is constituted as transcendent in and through the breaking-in of an atemporal temporality.* [...] 'The conclusion is not that the messianic belongs to another order, but only that it operates within this one [the this-worldly] as a constitutive alterity – breaking in, breaking out, flashing up, confounding without collapsing the spheres of this-worldly and the otherworldly. (Barad 2017:69)

The breaking into/through/with creates difference. Creating possibilities. One might also say that what is created is something new. An illusion will become a different illusion. A reality becomes a different reality.

it by its nature must be to be open to the possibility of a meeting outside of one's own sphere.

The very fact of observation making the quotidian suddenly appear grotesque

Without scaffolding, there wouldn't be the buildings. But when they're gone, we don't remember them or think of them. We just see the building.

(Holes in the Wall Collective)

Open. Open to the possibility. Open to the possibility of a meeting. Is this openness equivalent to the structures of scaffolding? Is this openness part of the supporting system that allows new forms to be created? The openness that might not be very important. More something naïve and irrelevant in respect to the actual object that is about to become the center of attention. The openness is maybe something taken for granted. How is then the relation between the act of breaking/cutting together-apart and the act of being open?

Seeing networks. Does this kind of seeing require a specific openness? An openness as a curiosity for the imaginative? An openness for imagining. Imagining networks. An openness for artworks. Because art is the act of making. *Arte* in Florio's 1611 dictionary tells that *Arte* is "any kind of art, trade, science or occupation. Also a whole company of any trade in any city or corporation town" (Florio 1611: arte) I continue to read the surrounding words and I come to the word *Articolare*:

to articulate, to distinguish, or to speak distinctly. Also to condition, to covenant, or come to articles and points. Also to distinguish joint by joint. Also pertaining to the joints. Also a painful swelling or gout in joints. Also the Primerose or Cowslip". (Florio 1611: *articolare*)

Playing with words continues to create a sense of togetherness and a breaking with what I already know. Embedded in me is a certain sense of openness and curiosity. *Arte+Colare* transforms into an occupation of joining together. An act of gluing together. Of bringing one made thing into another. Flashing on body into an other. Artmaking. Art work. Net work. Suddenly I encounter the word *caule* and I don't really understand its meaning. Does it have something to do with the word capsule? If so, working out capsules and containers and joining them one to another creates nets of containers. A net of bodies. Of companies and institutions. There is a freedom in my act of thinking that stimulates both my body and my mind. I turn to traces (or containers/capules/bubbles/joints/fragments) articulated by Will and Joanne:

Can a 'we' come together in the name of Performance Philosophy without naming the group as such?

Can naming things clearly do performance philosophy?
Can there be a performance of unnamings?"

as belonging to such-and-such a discipline or discourse

The 'shadow' of grief turned out to be a difficult area to survey. What is the substance of shadow? Can shadow exist independently of light? If not, then what is the nature of the interaction between light and shadow? What kind of instructions are needed to lead people into a productive confrontation with shadow? If participants have little or no experience tuning into the bodily dimensions of grief, then how can you create a welcoming environment for an encounter such as this?

talk through [...] internalizing the discourse [...] the encounter with

what happens on a bodily level when you turn over a rock that you find outside? There, on the dark side of the object, a world of life teems. Worms squirm, nourished by dampness. Fungus thrives. The appearance of this world causes a two-fold movement, both toward and away from the scene. The 'away' movement is that of revulsion. The 'toward' movement is that of 'fascination.' Both are honest reactions, and both movements happen at the same time, thereby causing a kind of split in the self. This split has the capacity to transform 'revulsion' from its pejorative and reactionary meaning into the active and activist 'revolt!'

If you ignore the shadow reality, then the revolt will manifest as a schism in the self.

the multifaceted identity of 'woman' seems to spring from the ecotone between exterior and interior, the place where light meets shadow, where conscious and rational thought meet bodily and affective excitation.

Approaching the rock, the women were instructed to tune into the sensations in their bodies as they reached down and turned it over.

What is the shadow world that exists in parallel to our artistic and scholarly productions?
What revolting scenes play out in the damp beneath us?

Beneath the soil exists a rhizomatic network of connections and symbiotic connections with microscopic lifeforms. Wherever we see the above-ground singular manifestations, we would do well to dwell on this underground world so as to incorporate the shadow of PP into our thinking.

And this leads to the final question: What role does grief have in Performance Philosophy? We all grieve. We all bring our grieving selves into our work as performance philosophers. Yet, do we make space to acknowledge and reflect on how grief drives our work and shapes the connections we make, both with living colleagues and with the discourse of those who have died?

(Will and Joanne)

Encountering every detail in the articulations by Will and Joanne will demand a whole paper (or even a book) in itself. This will need to wait for now, but I bring it all into my capsule. Into my bubble. My world and stage where I am right now. And I keep on engaging with word by word.

There is an aspect of care embedded in the act of making a net. Care for both shadows and light. For the articulated artifacts presented; calling for my occupation and my will to stay open. Every thought proposed is a fragmented statement ready to join another fragment. Left for the other to encounter. There is and isn't a scapeway. It is up to me and a fragmented network called 'myself' to become *part of* or to haste further into the next capsule waiting ahead.

I want to think that grief as well as joy and happiness (and all other sensations) are part of the art of shaping new possibilities. Part of living and caring. Grief as a way of making expression. Grief as an occupation. Grief as an art of caring for and with others. The vast openness is perhaps the shadowland that allows for a tuning in and out of capsules. The caring movements in this shadowland are capsuled by a continuum of meaning-making-matterings...

Initial quest:

The questions to which we arrive are these: **is “network” a concept/term/spatial-social configuration that continues to serve us in the field of performance studies, or is there a different concept/term/spatial-social configuration that resonates more intriguingly with the complexity of the present? Should we continue to foreground the network or are there compelling reasons for moving along without it?**

Network is word as many others. It carries more than one meaning. For some it has some clear-cut structures. For others – who are interested in the openness of wording and playing - network can be performed continuously. Network is an established word and perhaps this is what the world needs. Establishments. (Not least the academic world).

On the other hand an *Entanglement* might be a better option/concept for performing a complex world of non-linear, practice-led, somatic thinking-actings.

In the introduction to the volume *Entangled worlds: Religion, Science and New Materialisms* (Keller & Rubenstein 2017) the editors are citing a phrase from a conference presentation by Karen Barad. I would like to finish this ‘reconfiguring of Network’ with the same citation and a short response by the editors:

“All touching entails an infinite alterity, so that touching the other is touching all others, including the ‘self’, and touching the ‘self’ entails touching the stranger within.” And the responsiveness of this mutual touching of science, religion, philosophy and theology, indeed also of the social sciences and of the arts, the growing complexity of our entanglements take on a consistent ethical texture of urgency. (Keller & Rubenstein 2017:7)

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“What you catch depends on the size of the holes.”

Holes in the Wall Collective

Dhira Rauch, Julia Meeks, Su-Yee Lin

First- a NETWORK amuse bouche.

Of Work and Net—that which toils /and/ that which catches.

A net is not a basket or a bucket or a cup. It is designed to let most things past through and catch something bigger. It catches something to hold it /not to keep it. It is different than a web.

Work is active. It knows itself in the making.

The origins of network are interesting to me as they went from a literal system to one of information to one of people as opposed to the other way around.

[any complex, interlocking system (1839) referring to transport of actual goods/things by river or rail a way of holding and sharing information in terms of a broadcast (1914) interconnected group of people (1947)]

But it didn't become a verb until the 80s. Now even the noun of network is fueled by its verb. It's strange to have the golden age verb-ing everything (tweet, snap, post, tag) even we grow more and more disembodied through our reliance on the technology to do it.

To network. To catch information big enough to eat or small enough to throw back.

Two proposals of Network

Here in New York, networking is a verb as ubiquitous as overflowing trash cans.

It is seen as social capital- a uni-directional ladder upwards in the art of the hustle, getting by in the city, 'making it.' Yet the meat of what gives it real capital is still in horizontality— or widening width - something that transcends hierarchy - something that catches but does not hold.

It by its nature must be to be open to the possibility of a meeting outside of one's own sphere.

As the tide of capital continues to devour that which is unique, authentic, scrappy, and thriving off the essence- what still gives New York its flavor is our networks- both creatively and more so in the patterns that make something unimaginably big unimaginably manageable. Junior at the corner Bodega who know how many sugars in your coffee, the pathway you always take to get to the subway (side of street, where you turn, how fast you walk), the way your brain knows what information to take in and what not even to register that you saw it/ smelled it, stepped in it...etc.

Holes in the Wall Collective's namesake comes from a quote from the Polish theater maker/ mystic Jerzy Grotowski and our work is in direct relationship to it:

I work, not to make some discourse, but to enlarge the island of freedom which I bear; my obligation is not to make political declarations, but to make HOLES IN THE WALL.

The things which were forbidden before me should be permitted after me... I must solve the problem of liberty & tyranny in practical ways-- that means that my activity must leave behind traces, examples of liberty.

Especially in a city- the parts taken apart don't make a whole. It's the spaces in-between that hold us- the familiar pathways that navigate the endless possibilities.

PROPOSAL ONE

Holes in the Wall Collective has just begun a project, the 360 residency, to give creatives 6 hours in a place somewhere in NYC that we match to their work. Non-transactional, neither costing nor

giving money to the space or the creative resident, the value becomes what is left in the traces of the participants' work and in the space. The residents make a post for a running blog of their experiences that will form the narrative of the network or net worth of the experiment. In a way, it's a love letter to New York and a thumbing our nose at the cat and mouse game of making it in the city to reclaim the creative and social capital of our own networks.

PROPOSAL TWO

I and possibly one to two more will do a creative insurrection on the streets of New York measuring social distance between people using measuring tape, a clipboard and chalk. We will reposition network into the body, the literal space and out of the fiberoptical currency. What is immediate, what is embodied and what is not spoken.

Notes from the field- May 15th.

1.

We awoke, got in our car and drove to Staten Island to meet writer Su-Yee for part of our 360 Residency program, where we place creatives throughout the city for 6 hours to inform their work, rethink what a residency looks like and enliven spaces. Su-Yee is writing about a bird centered mythological story about the environment and we were matching her with Freshkills park. Once the biggest landfill in the world, it is now one of the largest environmental remediation projects ever undertaken by a city.



The day was beautiful. We met Mariel Villere, the manager of programs arts and grants at Freshkills Park at a nearby LA fitness at the edge of the park. We were escorted inside one of the more striking vantages I have seen in the city- over two thousand acres of green space surrounded by the residential and industrial skylines of NYC and Jersey.

I am weaving this program into the performance Philosophy's peek into Network as it relies on a currency of relationship- between people and between space- and the ripples that come. How and why else should we withstand the pressures of this city if not for the tendrils of meaning we make from the interactions and small places of familiarity and/or possibility?

Here are the reflections in our 360 blog from that day:

<https://www.holesinthewallcollective.org/360-minutes/su-yee>

2.

After visiting our friends doing a hunger strike outside of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office to protest the large Williams pipeline project under the river off the southern coast of NYC (and subsequently near enough to the estuaries that still flow into Freshkills Park where we were that morning), we (Dhira Rauch and Julia Meeks) decided to record the trails of people on one pedestrian sidewalk right outside Grand Central Terminal, one of the busier transit hubs in the US. Using white chalk, we began to notate and outline the places people stopped, the diagonals they walked, the pathways they took to see and map the intersections of step.



Instead of notating the distance between people, we were curious on their pathways- the trails left and how people instinctually or not follow paths already made or go out of their way to make new ones. We found just notating pathways created enough of a disruption for people to change their pathways. The very fact of observation making the quotidian suddenly appear grotesque.

Afterthoughts on network:

What connects us? The spaces between or the threads that tie us together? Is our network real or is it merely how we know where and where not to step again? Broadening network into a system of relationships, of time/space and objects including that of people, we still find ourselves caught in the very vernacular stick.

In the pathways of performance polemics we often elbow our way towards the front with who we

know & where we've come from- as a way to validate our being and saying and doing- more than where we are going and what we don't yet know.

It's always impressed me how little Jerzy Grotowski used social network to give meaning to his work. It's not that he was deaf to lineage- to praise, to accolades, community or resources. Or to a mystical network of tradition and time. But the learning did not satisfy on a width of constellations placing him on the map as much a depth of mastery found in the making. It's a rare quality that pierced the gauze of civility and decorum and gave us something undeniably potent, corporeal.

The spaces between. What we catch depends on the size of the holes.

The spatial relationship of people, ideas and materials. Time. Space. The feeling of belonging and stepping out beyond that belonging. Sometimes we get concerned in who and how we know the world less than how the world knows us. Who will come when you call? When you invite them to your show, bail you out, call you when your mom dies? Who will tell you when you drank too much, when your writing sucks, when you misstep/act from blindness? How does the grass feel to be stepped on compared to pavement- does it remember you? What possibility comes from transformation- literally as energy where even the process of decomposition is alive itself (Freshkills Park). How does our observation change the thing we are seeing (Grand Central Station). How will we ever know?



And yet, back in the vernacular jugular of the NYC network- here we are, always thinking we need a wider net- Instagram followers. Readership. For the sake of the ideas! For our impact. To be heard. Seen. To make a living. To feed our kids. To have it matter. Yet a network is still a conduit, a lifeline outline among the rough seas for creativity to catch - to have a next song to dance to. It's not *not* important. It's every(no)thing that tries to explain the thing that holds the thing itself. Without scaffolding, there wouldn't be the buildings. But when they're gone, we don't remember them or think of them. We just see the building. So maybe is the philosophy of network.

- Dhira Rauch • May 2019

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“Shadow of Grief”
Will Daddario and Joanne Zerdy

Can we come together in the work of performance philosophy without naming it as such?

What might we gain from thinking about the "shadow" of PP, a shadow to our network (that is surely also a part of the network)?

What role does grief have in Performance Philosophy?

The North Carolina node of the Pop-Up Performance Philosophy experiment took place at the [WomenSpirit Gathering](#), an annual event coordinated by the Universalist Unitarian Church and held at [“The Mountain Retreat and Leaning Center”](#) in the town of Highlands.

Discerning readers will note that I, Will, am not a woman, and may therefore wonder how exactly this pop-up event happened. The answer is that I participated from a discreet distance. My wife, Joanne Zerdy, had been invited to teach two workshops at the gathering. By special dispensation, I was allowed to come onto the premises in order to watch our son and stay near Joanne for the weekend-long event.

Joanne’s workshops both focused on grief. The first taught strategies for [spatializing one’s grief experience by creating a variety of maps](#). The second helped participants dissolve the binary of “light/shadow” and, by extension, the “good/bad” of grief. To accomplish this, Joanne led several embodied exercises aimed at discerning what she refers to as the “ecotone” of grief, that place where light and dark flow into each other as on the seashore where ocean meets land. I helped Joanne to design this second workshop, and it was during that collaboration that I decided to treat this event as a node in the Pop-Up PP experiment.

Here we arrive at the first question: if Joanne never uses the phrase Performance Philosophy during the WomenSpirit gathering, can the activities of her workshop still be considered a part of PP? In other words, can a “we” come together in the name of Performance Philosophy without naming the group as such?

I don’t have an answer, but I very much like the question. Do you have an answer?

In the absence of an answer, I can at least elaborate on the question. During the 23rd PSi (Performance Studies international) conference in Hamburg, Germany, the Performance and Philosophy Working Group convened a 6-hour conversation to discuss “refugees.” (The result was the multi-authored piece, [“What is Refugee?”](#) that appears in edition 4.1 of the *Performance Philosophy* journal.) To thwart the traditional conference format in which people gather to make assertions about ideas and problems considered ahead of time, we culminated our 6-hour conversation with questions. Two of these questions concerned the issue of naming:

Can naming things clearly do performance philosophy?
Can there be a performance of unnamings?

I wonder if the question at hand about doing PP without specifically naming the activity as such dwells somewhere in-between these questions? Might the resistance to identify an embodied research experience as belonging to such-and-such a discipline or discourse help us all continue to re-think what “counts” as research? Unlike in Academia, where performance research and PP play the game of legitimization and fight for funding by declaring its necessity and usefulness to the academic apparatus, the embodied research on grief and shadow that Joanne facilitated at the WomenSpirit gathering unfolded for no reason other than to expand the thought and bodily awareness of what is possible in the wake of grief. By not naming that work as PP, did she, and by extension I, manage to unname something? Is not-naming equivalent to unnamings? Again, I have no answers—but I think I know the realm in which the questions surrounding this topic dwell.

The “shadow” of grief turned out to be a difficult area to survey. What is the substance of shadow? Can shadow exist independently of light? If not, then what is the nature of the interaction between light and shadow? What kind of instructions are needed to lead people into a productive confrontation with shadow? If participants have little or no experience tuning into the bodily dimensions of grief, then how can you create a welcoming environment for an encounter such as this?

To address these questions, Joanne and I eventually turned to Maria Irene Fornes’s *Fefu and her Friends*. Joanne asked three women to read these lines from Fefu, Cindy, and Christina that appear at the very beginning of the play:

FEFU It's funny. --And it's true. That's why I laugh.
CINDY What is true?
FEFU That women are loathsome.
CINDY ... Fefu!
FEFU That shocks you.
CINDY It does. I don't feel loathsome.
FEFU I don't mean that you are loathsome.
CINDY You don't mean that I'm loathsome.
FEFU No ... It's something to think about. It's a thought.
CINDY It's a hideous thought.
FEFU I take it all back.
CINDY Isn't she incredible?
FEFU Cindy, I'm not talking about anyone in particular. I'm talking about ...
CINDY No one in particular, just women.
FEFU Yes.
CINDY In that case I am relieved. I thought you were referring to us.
(They are amused. FEFU speaks affectionately.)
FEFU You are being stupid.
CINDY Stupid and loathsome. *(To CHRISTINA.)* Have you ever heard anything more...
CHRISTINA *(Interrupting.)* I am speechless. *(Short pause.)*
FEFU Why are you speechless?

CHRISTINA I think you're outrageous.

FEFU Don't be offended. I don't take enough care to be tactful. I know I don't. But don't be offended. Cindy is not offended. She pretends to be, but she isn't really. She understands what I mean.

CINDY I do not.

FEFU Yes, you do. --I like exciting ideas. They give me energy.

CHRISTINA And how is women being loathsome an exciting idea?

FEFU *(With mischief.)* It revolts me.

CHRISTINA You find revulsion exciting?

FEFU Don't you?

CHRISTINA No.

FEFU I do. It's something to grapple with. What do you do with revulsion?

CHRISTINA I avoid anything that's revolting to me.

FEFU Hmm. *(To CINDY.)* You too?

CINDY Yes.

FEFU Hmm. -- Have you ever turned a stone over in damp soil?

CHRISTINA Ahm.

FEFU And when you turn it there are worms crawling on it?

CHRISTINA Ahm.

FEFU And it's damp and full of fungus?

CHRISTINA Ahm.

FEFU Were you revolted?

CHRISTINA Yes.

FEFU Were you fascinated?

CHRISTINA I was.

FEFU There you have it. You too are fascinated with revulsion.

CHRISTINA Hmm.

FEFU You see, that which is exposed to the exterior ... is smooth and dry and clean. That which is not ... underneath, is slimy and filled with fungus and crawling with worms. It is another life that is parallel to the one we manifest. It's there. The way worms are underneath the stone. If you don't recognize it ... *(Whispering.)* it eats you. -- That is my opinion. -- Well, who is ready for lunch?

We could dive in anywhere, but let's start with the series of emotional states and attributes that Fornes weaves together: loathsome, excited, revolted, fascinated. In particular, these women talk through the self-critical appraisal of “I, woman, am loathsome” acquired from internalizing the discourse of husbands and other men. Fefu, deploying some strategic essentialism, says yes. Yes, women are loathsome insofar as the encounter with the loathsome is affectively exciting, unpredictable, and transformative. Evidence for this: what happens on a bodily level when you turn over a rock that you find outside? There, on the dark side of the object, a world of life teems. Worms squirm, nourished by dampness. Fungus thrives. The appearance of this world causes a two-fold movement, both toward and away from the scene. The “away” movement is that of revulsion. The “toward” movement is that of “fascination.” Both are honest reactions, and both movements happen at the same time, thereby causing a kind of split in the self. This split has the capacity to transform “revulsion” from its pejorative and reactionary meaning into the active and activist “revolt!” Fefu sees a way to revolt against the male-manufactured loathsomeness of women by affirming the fascination and forward movement toward the revulsion of the teeming world under the rock.

This metaphorical reading comes into complete focus with the final lines of the excerpt. The smooth, dry, and clean exterior appearance of docile and well-behaved “woman” exists in tandem with the parallel life in the shadow of the stone. If you ignore the shadow reality, then the revolt will manifest as a schism in the self. As a dramatic text, we look beyond the individual statements of the three women united in dialogue toward the totality of the theatrical event. Fornes creates a material feminist critique of essential female identity by dramatizing the ever-shifting and involuting production of identity. Moreover, the multifaced identity of “woman” seems to spring from the ecotone between exterior and interior, the place where light meets shadow, where conscious and rational thought meet bodily and affective excitation.

Joanne didn’t unfold this particular reading of the scene during the workshop. The discourse of materialist feminism was not needed for the work at hand. Instead, she had the participants read the text, discuss how it related to shadow/light as relates to grief, and then enter into a guided meditation during which each woman present visualized a unique rock located in a comforting environment (her garden, a beach, the forest, etc.). Approaching the rock, the women were instructed to tune into the sensations in their bodies as they reached down and turned it over. What do you see there? How would you describe it? How does it make you feel? Is there a specific part of your body that registers this feeling? Are you surprised by what you see? Following a brief written response to this guided meditation, each woman began to embody something of what they found under the rock through subtle movements and gestures. After a couple minutes, the participants let go of the physicality, returned to a “neutral” position and shared with the group what they had found under their rock and how that discovery had impacted them physically and emotionally. The sequence of activities was framed within the topic of grief, such that the event of womanness embedded in Fornes’s text became subsumed within the wider phenomenon of grief and mourning and the often-invisible weight that the workshop participants carry around with them but hide behind their smooth exteriors.

Reflecting on this workshop in the present, I find myself wondering what lies beneath the smooth and dry exterior of Performance Philosophy. What is the shadow world that exists in parallel to our artistic and scholarly productions? What revolting scenes play out in the damp beneath us? Is it birthed from a disgust with academic discourse and administration? Is it yoked to the “imposter syndrome” that many people feel as they contribute to the *fête* of concept production? When I think about this Performance Philosophy Pop-Up experiment, I picture a mushroom popping out from the ground. Beneath the soil exists a rhizomatic network of connections and symbiotic connections with microscopic lifeforms. Wherever we see the above-ground singular manifestations, we would do well to dwell on this underground world so as to incorporate the shadow of PP into our thinking.

And this leads to the final question: What role does grief have in Performance Philosophy? We all grieve. We all bring our grieving selves into our work as performance philosophers. Yet, do we make space to acknowledge and reflect on how grief drives our work and shapes the connections we make, both with living colleagues and with the discourse of those who have died?

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POP-UP PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY (an experiment in spontaneous doing-thinking)

The “pop up” store is becoming quite common in the social landscape of the United States and, presumably, in other parts of the world. Local artists and entrepreneurs will lease a shop for a short time period in order to offer seasonal goods or services, and then they disappear. What might this look like in the world of Performance Philosophy?

Riffing on the Abandoned Practices of Alan Read, Matthew Goulish, and Lin Hixson, I’d like to open a pop-up Performance Philosophy event that will take place on one day in the middle of May. I had created a structure for an event to take place at the recent PSi in Daegu, South Korea, but it never materialized. I had to abandon it. Seeking to investigate the ruins of that abandoned event, however, I am inviting participants to “pop up” around the keyword “network.”

“Network” has been an operative keyword in Performance Studies scholarship for several decades. Due in part to the rise of Actor Network Theory (ANT) in the mid 1980s, and especially the work of Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, John Law, and Annemarie Mol, the notion of “network” has helped performance studies scholarship interrogate the foundational constituents of “subject” and “object,” the relationship between technology and society, and the participation of nonhuman actants in the making of worlds.

Though “network” surely continues to play a relevant role, alternate models of together-ness have also played important roles in our discipline. To name just a few, we have assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari), the *dispositif* or apparatus (from Foucault to Agamben), the knot (all sorts of mathematicians from Gauss to Thurston), edges and the edge-world (Casey), and meshwork (Ingold and Morton).

The questions to which we arrive are these: is “network” a concept/term/spatial-social configuration that continues to serve us in the field of performance studies, or is there a different concept/term/spatial-social configuration that resonates more intriguingly with the complexity of the present? Should we continue to foreground the network or are there compelling reasons for moving along without it?

I invite responses to this question in the form of pop-up panel discussion, impromptu dialogues in coffee shops, introspective interior monologues, flash mobs, doodles, and indeed any other format that can take shape on/around May 15, 2019.

All interested parties should send an email to me (w.daddario@gmail.com) explaining: 1.) What type of pop-up will you create? 2.) How will the pop-up speak to the questions about “network” articulated above? 3.) How will you document the event so that we can share it with the PP organization?

Send emails by April 22, 2019. Any and all questions welcome.

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