

ACCORD

a performance script
by Franziska Windisch

PROLOGUE

A work requires attention
attention for an idea to take hold
attention in the process of making
attention in being given
attention in being received
attention to be remembered

These forms of attention differ from each other
in quality, intensity and duration
but they are all necessary
for a work to come into existence and to remain.
A work depends therefore on a collective effort
in giving attention to the becoming of a specific form.

l.

Let's say this is the work
then those lines would mark its limits.
Everything that lies within
would be declared "the work"
and everything beyond these boundaries
would be named (depending on the situation):

Ground
Wall
Auditorium
Context
Environment
Epoch
Earth
Landscape
Gallery
Life

So far so good
so good so far
you stand there at a distance and you see
lines drawn on the floor:
they form a frame

Imagine those lines moving and widen up
until they are identical with the dimensions of this room
the boundaries became imaginary
in fact, they always were.

We picture them together
not only as a form that occupies this space
but time as well.

And it can, too, be said
that limits have the function to direct and contain
the shifting ways we pay attention
together and apart.

II.

From far away:
leaves moved by wind
what do you hear?

From far away
waves breaking at the shore
what do you hear?

From far away:
a highway at night
what do you hear?

And how is the sound
you are hearing now
different from the sounds
you imagined before?

*“An art ... rests on the dialectics
between the work itself
and the "openness" of the "readings" it invites
A work of art is open only insofar
as it remains a work;
beyond a certain boundary,
it will become mere noise.”¹*

¹ Umberto Eco , The Open Work, p. 100

A work can be thought as an agreement
in the sense that there is a shared understanding
of an area and its (imaginary) inside and outside
of a duration, a before and after
of the roles everyone plays who attends the event
and sometimes of values
and the ways in which they are exchanged

Agreements are like words,
*“collective products of social practices
they are instruments through which human beings
structure and frame the interaction to each others
and to things”²*

Agreements are defining the ways we interact
with and through a work of art

though practiced, they often stay unnoticed,
especially when they have become convention,
claimed and upheld by institutions.

If not, agreements have to be announced within the work.

In either case agreements do rely on efforts made collectively.

This is the concept of the stage.

² Roy Harris, Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein. (London: Routledge, 1988) ix.

III.

a landscape:
what do you see?

a landscape:
what do you think the others in this room see?

a landscape:
how could a composite of all imagined landscape look like?

a sonic landscape.

and now: a stage within that landscape

From where did we inherit and perpetuate
the institutionalised idea of “stage”?

Within the context we are speaking from
we can consult existing remnants,
in ancient texts and architecture
(first vectors of mass communication)

The ruins of antique theatres
along the coastlines of the Mediterranean sea
their stage is always round, the lowest part
the audience is seated in concentric circles built in stone
a form that grants clear lines of sight
to all spectators equally

this architectural structure can be understood
as a counterpart to another form:
the theatrical mask worn by actors in the performances.

Not only a medium to represent a character,
it served to amplify and project the speaker’s voice
the hollow space above the forehead
acts as a resonating chamber³
the round opening at the height of the mouth
mirrors the sound hole of an instrument.

³ Kontomichos, Fotios & Papadakos, Charalambos & Georganti, Eleftheria & Vovolis, Thanos & Mourjopoulos, John. (2014). The sound effect of ancient Greek theatrical masks.

The complementary couple of auditorium and mask
Is a technology for the transmission of spoken words.
a structure for speaking (to many) and listening (to few)

The form of the stage though, must have origins
that lie before the appearance of written text,
before theatres were built as large-scale entertainment structures
and as instruments to reify social hierarchies

In earlier constructions
(before they started to cover the stage floor with tiles)

the ground in the center was bare earth
A hint may lie in its name: Khoros
which comes from the word “dancing”.
The stage as a dance floor

Its round shape probably a remnant
of the circular dances performed in groups
on bare earth, in all villages and towns:
The proto-stage is a communal place

*A terrain of the common*⁴

⁴ Hardt and Negri 2009:173

IV.

There are people in an amphitheatre
They seem to attend an event
The event is happening under the open sky
They attend to what is said, what is done and the in between
To attend is a deliberate act

There are people in a room
They seem to attend an event
The event is happening right now
They attend to what is said, what is done and the in between
To attend is a deliberate act.

Curtain up
Curtain down
An interval

A gap in time or temporalisation
A gap in space
Or what Derrida calls *différance*:

*“..the play of differences,
of the spacing in which elements are related to each other.
This spacing is the simultaneously active and passive production
of intervals without which the terms would not signify”⁵*

Without the interval
without a setback space
everything would stay immediate
no room is left for meaning-making and imagination
agreements, too would lose their function and shared value
that we assign to them

Ultimately a state without intervals and distances
would be a state where the heterogeneous collective imagination
collapses
which is a state of forced hallucination and of war
the space- and timeless stage would turn into the announcement of a
battlefield

So far so good
you stand there at a distance
and you hear
two tunes forming a dyad
an interval

and more:
Accord

Curtain up
Curtain down

⁵ Jacques Derrida - Positions, University of Chicago Press, (p. 21), 1982.

Accord:

For an agreement to be possible
there must be space
to come from different directions
towards one another

Agreements after all, determine both:

the shared ground of experience
(the proto-stage)
the terrain of the common
the ways how to engage in productive relations with one another

And also its outside:

The space to reflect
to hear the echo within, the aftersound.
the space for reading and shaping signs
and to remember.

The spacing required

to open up
towards the other

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