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## No solutions: The research score as a medium of artistic research

## Introduction

My artistic research explores the epistemic potential of a particular performance training practice, the so-called Manipulations. The Manipulations are one of the core practices of “Body Weather”, a comprehensive approach to performance training that was initiated by Japanese dancer/choreographer Min Tanaka in the late 1970s. During the 1980s, Tanaka’s collaboration with an international and interdisciplinary group of artists developed Body Weather into a systematic approach to performance training. From 1985, the group was based on the Body Weather Farm in the small village of Hakushu in the Japanese countryside and, directed by Tanaka, toured worldwide under the name Maijuku Dance Company. In 1993, ex-Maijuku members Frank van de Ven and Katerina Bakatsaki founded Body Weather Amsterdam as a platform for training and performance research. From 2002 to 2009, I actively participated in the platform as a dancer and member of the performance project *Something Here That is Not There*, directed by Bakatsaki.

Since 2011, I have been conducting artistic research within the framework of the doctoral programme of the Performing Arts Research Centre at the University of the Arts Helsinki. This chapter discusses the progress of my doctoral research by focusing on the evolution of my main research

practice, the so-called research score. It begins with a brief sketch of the Manipulations and outlines the adaptation of this duo practice into the solo practice of the research score as a means to think through the impact of the Manipulations on the practitioner. It then examines the question of whether the research score can be considered a method of embodied reflection, and discusses the limitations of reflection as a means of knowledge production. I conclude the chapter by suggesting that the research score enables a transition from a mode of reflecting *on* artistic practice to reflecting *with* artistic practice, and by speculating on its potential to mediate a shift from a representationalist epistemology to an alternative posthumanist performative model.

## The Manipulations

The Manipulations is a hands-on practice that draws on diverse Eastern and Western somatic practices, such as yoga, shiatsu, acupuncture and physiotherapy, and is conducted in a duo with a giver and a receiver. The practice consists of approximately 90 touch-based operations structured into a sequence numbered 1 to 7, and typically takes about 1.5–2 hours to accomplish. In my understanding, the Manipulations is not a dance technique, but a pre-performative practice that alters

the body’s physical and mental conditions for movement by changing the proprioceptive and tactile-kinesthetic perception of the body in relation to itself and to other (human or non-human) bodies.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1: The Manipulations, video still, Joa Hug and Ema Nik Thomas (courtesy of the author)

Throughout my active years as a dancer and performer with Body Weather Amsterdam, I practised the Manipulations extensively. In my view, a substantial part of the knowledge potential of the Manipulations resides in the possibility for practitioners to examine, and reflect on, the process of altered perception from within. Against this background, one of the aims of my doctoral artistic research has been to reconsider the Manipulations as a practice of *knowing*, and to articulate in writing what I take to be the bodily knowledge that is potentially engendered by this practice.

1. For more elaborate descriptions of the practice of the Manipulations, see Joa Hug, “Writing with Practice: Body Weather Performance Training Becomes a Medium of Artistic Research,” *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* 7 (2) (2016): 168–189; and Joa Hug, “Modes of Knowing in Body Weather Performance Training,” in U. Enderlein (ed.), *Zwischenleiblichkeit und bewegtes Verstehen: Intercorporeity, Movement and Tacit*

## The research score

A major challenge at the beginning of my doctoral research was how to approach methodically such a (written) articulation. One of the main practical methods that I came to rely on is the so-called research score. The research score is my adaptation of the original duo practice of the Manipulations (Nos. 1 & 2) into a solo practice. In the solo version of the research score, the receiver explores how to recreate the sensation of being given the Manipulations without an actual giver. The recreation of being given can be approached through various strategies: for example, by imagining the touch of the giver and the direction of the weight entering the body; by activating the memory of the sensation effected by a previous touch-manipulation; by diligently reproducing the form of the movement; by a combination of all these – or by another strategy altogether.



Figure 2: Research score, video still (courtesy of the author)

*Knowledge* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016), 367–380. For a video documentation of the Manipulations, see Joa Hug, “Body Weather Manipulations No. 1 & 2,” *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training Blog* [online], accessed 14 June 2016, <http://theatredanceperformancetraining.org/2015/11/body-weather-manipulations-no-1-2/>.

There are no simple solutions to the problem of recreating the sensation of receiving the Manipulations. In fact, there is no solution at all. It is impossible to recreate by oneself a sense perception that is identical to a sense perception one has when one's body is actually moved by another person. The challenge is not to get stuck in this conundrum but rather to keep negotiating the desire to recreate a specific sensation with the impossibility of this endeavour. The point is not to achieve the impossible, but to reach *towards* it and to embrace the inevitable experience of failure as a pathway towards a more differentiated and sophisticated understanding of one's own body.

On top of this perceptual inquiry into recreating the sensation of being given the Manipulations, the research score adds one more layer of investigation that moves significantly beyond the scope of observation typically employed in the Manipulations. This additional layer is to simultaneously attend to the process of thinking and to instantly document the thoughts that arise while reflecting on a word or concept chosen beforehand. The documentation happens *within* the practice of the research score, not afterwards. It is accomplished either by writing or by speaking out aloud the thoughts that come to one's mind. In the latter case, an audio recording is made and transcribed afterwards.



Figure 3: Research Score, video still (courtesy of the author)

Combining two lines of inquiry, the research score interweaves an investigation into the process of perception with an observation of the process of thinking, towards a systematic and embodied approach to thinking through the Manipulations. As previously mentioned, it should be pointed out that the combination of tasks in the research score implies that a successful and permanent solution is impossible. It requires an absolute readiness from the practitioner to constantly negotiate his/her mental and physical effort, without a sense of completion, but rather incessantly oscillating between the various points of attention and observation, while at the same time reflecting on how the overall situation is evolving. The research score is thus an open-ended investigation that poses problems for which there are no fixed solutions.

of the pre-reflective, non-conceptual content of art. It thereby invites "unfinished thinking." Hence it is not formal knowledge that is the subject matter of artistic research, but thinking in, through and with art." See Henk Borgdorff, "The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research," in M. Biggs and H. Karlsson (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2011), 44.

2. See Henk Borgdorff, "The Mode of Knowledge Production in Artistic Research," in S. Gehm, P. Husemann and K. v. Wilcke (eds.), *Knowledge in Motion: Perspectives of Artistic and Scientific Research in Dance* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 73–79. In a more recent contribution, Borgdorff argues that "... artistic research seeks not so much to make explicit the knowledge that art is said to produce, but rather to provide a specific articulation

### Reflection as a method of knowledge production

If a core task of artistic research is the production of knowledge,<sup>2</sup> then this raises at least two questions: first, an epistemological question about the nature of this knowledge, and second, a methodological question about how this knowledge is created and how it can be articulated. In the field of dance research, these questions have been extensively discussed.<sup>3</sup> One of the notions that has been proposed in the pursuit of articulating the knowledge created in and through dance is the concept of "bodily knowledge". Dancers, Jaana Parviainen states, know "in and through the body".<sup>4</sup> Following Michael Polanyi,<sup>5</sup> Parviainen argues that *reflection* plays a key role in the process of transforming the dancer's tacit knowledge into bodily knowledge. Through shifting the focus of attention to the body's lived experience and by reflecting on its tactile-kinaesthetic sensations, the dancer gains the bodily awareness and the epistemic openness that allows for his/her tacit knowledge to become explicit. It is this bodily knowledge that enables dancers to reflectively choose how to move. Reflection is thus crucial not only for creating bodily knowledge but also when making decisions about how to access this knowledge in and

through bodily movement.<sup>6</sup>

However, the idea of reflection as a method of knowledge-making carries certain problems and complications. Elizabeth Anne Kinsella has analysed the notion of "reflection" from the perspective of educational research,<sup>7</sup> following Donald Schön and his ideas about the *reflective practitioner*.<sup>8</sup> The actions of practitioners, Kinsella explains, are always structured by tacit forms of knowledge. These tacit structures not only shape how the world is *perceived* but they are also actually a way of *making* the world. Therefore, like Parviainen, Kinsella argues that it is crucial for the practitioner to become aware of these tacit structures and frames, in order to reflectively make choices. However, she points out that it is not always possible to make tacit structures explicit, and even if practitioners were to succeed, these descriptions would always remain *constructions*.<sup>9</sup>

The problem of these constructions, Kinsella writes, is that they "are partial and represent attempts to impose stasis on the dynamic process of knowing-in-action".<sup>10</sup> Therefore, she explains, any attempt to produce knowledge by reflecting on the tacit content of an experience is always a way of constructing *knowledge* imposed on the process of *knowing*. Kinsella proposes the concept of "embodied reflection" as a mode of

3. See Anna Pakes, "Original Embodied Knowledge: The Epistemology of the New in Dance Practice as Research," *Research in Dance Education*, 4 (2) 2003, 127–149; Anna Pakes, "Art as Action or Art as Object? The Embodiment of Knowledge in Practice as Research," *Working Papers in Art Design* 3 (2004), 1–9; Jaana Parviainen, "Bodily Knowledge: Epistemological Reflections on Dance," *Dance Research Journal*, 34 (1) (2002): 11–26; Leena Rouhinen (ed.), *Ways of Knowing in Dance and Art*. (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 2007); Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann and Katharina v. Wilcke (eds.), *Knowledge in Motion: Perspectives of Artistic and Scientific Research in Dance*. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007).

4. Parviainen, "Bodily Knowledge," 13.  
5. Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (London: Routledge, 1967).  
6. Parviainen, "Bodily Knowledge," 17–21.  
7. Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, "Embodied Reflection and the Epistemology of Reflective Practice," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 41 (3) (2007): 395–408.  
8. Donald Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987); Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Temple Smith, 1983).  
9. Kinsella, "Embodied Reflection and the Epistemology of Reflective Practice," 397–400.  
10. Ibid., 401.

reflection that “arises through the bodily, lived experience of the practitioner and is revealed in action”.<sup>11</sup> However, she does not elaborate in more detail on how, specifically, reflection and action are bodily intertwined, or how embodied reflection can be enacted without imposing a fixation on the dynamic process of knowing.

Approaching the notion of “reflection” from a phenomenological perspective, Dan Zahavi raises the following questions: “Does reflection give us access to the original experimental dimension or is there, on the contrary, reason to suspect that the experiences are changed radically when they are reflected upon? Is reflection, in reality, a kind of falsifying mirror or telescope that transforms whatever it makes appear?”<sup>12</sup> According to Zahavi’s interpretation of Husserl’s writings on this subject, the answers to these questions lie *between* understanding reflection as mirroring experience, on the one side, and taking reflection to be a distortion of experience, on the other. Situated in this middle position, he conceives of reflection as *modifying* and *transforming* experience. The task for phenomenology, he suggests, is to systematically investigate the impact of reflection on the experience reflected upon. Phenomenological reflection takes this task on by *reflecting on reflection*. From this perspective, reflection is always a form of *meta-reflection*.<sup>13</sup>

It is not an issue for Zahavi that reflection transforms and alters ex-

perience. On the contrary, for him the whole point and the cognitive value of reflection is precisely this, *transformation* and *alteration*, otherwise there would be no need for reflection.<sup>14</sup> At its best, he explains, reflection does not distort the components and structures of the experiences reflected upon, but “discloses, accentuates, explicates and articulates those structures and components that are implicitly contained in the pre-reflective experience”<sup>15</sup> in order to make them appear more clearly. Nevertheless, also for Zahavi there are limitations to reflection. Not everything that is pre-reflectively experienced can enter our consciousness by a shift of our attention. Reflection can never fully grasp and articulate the pre-reflective content of experience, but will always remain incomplete and open-ended.<sup>16</sup>

Earlier in the chapter I referred to the research score as an embodied approach to reflection. During the first phase of my doctoral research, I applied the research score in order to explore and reflect on the tacit knowledge created in and through the Manipulations.<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere I have provided elaborate accounts of what I take to be the bodily knowledge that is engendered by practising the Manipulations. In a nutshell, I have outlined this knowledge in terms of two forms of *know-how*: (i) knowing how to alter the process of perception; and (ii) knowing how to affect and be affected.

As my discussion of Kinsella and Zahavi has pointed out, one needs to be well aware of the limitations of

reflection as a method of knowing. The written descriptive accounts of the knowledge engendered in and through the Manipulations that I have provided so far are inevitably partial and reductive. Not all of the tacit knowledge of a practice can be made explicit; what remains is an inexhaustible residue, an excess of what can actually be verbally articulated. The knowledge claims that I have made can be critiqued as constructions that impose a linguistic fixation on the process of knowing in and through the Manipulations. By reflecting on this practice, I have transformed and modified it. However, as Zahavi points out, this is not the problem but a necessary and desirable outcome of reflection; transformation and alteration *are* precisely the cognitive values of reflection.

#### Small shift (i)

In the course of my study with and into the research score, I observed two small shifts in the practice that may have a significant outcome.<sup>18</sup> The first shift is related to the writing of an essay about the first phase of my doctoral research.<sup>19</sup> Writing this essay required me to scrutinise in detail *what* it was that I actually did when practising the research score, and *how* I did it. This task prompted me to shift and expand my focus slightly from an analysis of the Manipulations towards a closer examination of the research score. As a consequence of

this shift in attention, the practice of the research score *itself* came to the fore as the primary epistemic object of my investigation.

In the above-mentioned essay, I allude to Walter Benjamin’s ideas about the task of the translator<sup>20</sup> and propose considering the research score as a *translation* of the Manipulations. According to Benjamin, it is impossible, and not even desirable, for the translator to provide a *literal* translation of an original. Instead, he writes, a good and successful translation is one that *touches* on the original.<sup>21</sup> In a similar manner, the research score is not a literal translation of the Manipulations. As already indicated, it is impossible to exactly and *literally* re-create the sense perceptions of the Manipulations through the research score, and any attempt at such a literal translation is bound to fail.

With Benjamin, I suggest that the research score is a translation that *touches* on the original practice of the Manipulations. In touching on the Manipulations, the research score is at the same time faithful to the original practice while *also* betraying it. It betrays the Manipulations by turning a duo form into a solo practice that inevitably fails to identically recreate the original experience. And yet the research score is faithful because it reiterates one of the core principles of Body Weather performance training: the strategy to (re-)create, by memory

11. *Ibid.*, 396.  
12. Dan Zahavi, “Phenomenology of Reflection,” in A. Staiti (ed.), *Commentary on Husserl’s Ideas I* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 184.  
13. *Ibid.*, 186–187.

14. *Ibid.*, 184–188.  
15. *Ibid.*, 187.  
16. *Ibid.*, 188, footnote 2.  
17. See footnote 1.

18. I can only briefly sketch these shifts here. A more elaborate account forms part of my written dissertation project.  
19. See footnote 1.  
20. Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator” [first printed as an introduction to a translation of Baudelaire, 1923], in *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn, ed. and intro. by Hannah Arendt (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), 69–82.

21. Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point, with this touch rather than with the point setting the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity, a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux.” See Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” 80.

and imagination, an experience made in the past (i.e. in the training) that is then re-enacted in performance, for example in a scored improvisation.

Is the research score a method?

In May 2015, in the process of creating a lecture-demonstration for a conference on dance research,<sup>22</sup> I conducted a series of research scores reflecting on and with the word “method”.<sup>23</sup> The question that I was concerned with at the time was whether the research score was becoming a *method* of reflection:

What’s the difference between practice and method?

Am I practising a method or  
Am I turning a practice into a  
method?

Does it have to do with the intention underlying the practice, the  
doing

Whether something is “practice” or  
“method”?

(Excerpt from research score on  
/with “method”, 5 May 2015)

So I’m reflecting on method  
With a method of reflection

(Excerpt from research score on  
/with “method”, 6 May 2015)

A method of folding sensing into  
reflection ... and reflection into  
sensing

All this with minimal effort  
And with a maximum of receptivity  
and listening

22. Nordic Forum for Dance Research [online], accessed 1 July 2016, <http://nofodrvk2015.akademia.is/>.  
23. All transcripts presented in this chapter were made from audio recordings.  
24. Borgdorff defines method as ‘a well-considered, systematic way of reaching a particular objective’. See Borgdorff, ‘The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research,’ 50.

Not one over the other but one  
with the other  
[...]

Not a method of  
Finding solutions  
But a method of

Taking a problem to its

To its core ... or to its edge ... to its  
extreme

Observing what happens

Reflecting as it happens

Reflecting on and in action

(Excerpt from research score on  
/with “method”, 7 May 2015)

In the series of research scores on /with “method”, it is apparent how the research score itself has become an object of (self-)reflection. The question was whether the research score was turning into a *method*.<sup>24</sup>

In my reflections on the research score I am ambivalent: on the one hand, I still question whether the research score can be considered a method; on the other hand, I am quite outspoken that the practice I conduct to reflect on method is indeed itself a method of reflection. As we will see below, I will call this idea into question. For now, however, I want to highlight that the research score, in the course of the first shift, detached itself from its previous function as a practice to think through the Manipulations and started to stand on its own. In Benjamin’s terms, as a translation of the Manipulations, it was on its way to becoming a practice that speaks its own language.<sup>25</sup>

25. ‘It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work.’ See Benjamin, ‘The Task of the Translator,’ 80. Note that Benjamin speaks of translation as a *re-creation* of the original.

### Small shift (ii)

The first shift coincided with a second shift that happened when I began to practise the research score as a way of reflecting on and with notions that I encountered in my conceptual research studies. When preparing a contribution for another conference on the methodology of practice-as-research, in the autumn of 2015,<sup>26</sup> I conducted a different series of research scores reflecting on and with a variety of notions: “struction”,<sup>27</sup> “embodied knowing”,<sup>28</sup> “embodied reflection”,<sup>29</sup> “reflection”,<sup>30</sup> “diffraction”<sup>31</sup> and “unfinished thinking”.<sup>32</sup>

The diversity of concepts that I chose to reflect on indicates my efforts to develop the conceptualisation of the research score from different perspectives. What came to the fore over the course of the second shift was that by being able to relate to a diversity of concepts, the research score proved to be a versatile tool to reflect on possibly *any* notion that I came across in the realm of my theoretical studies. What happened accordingly was that I began frequently to lie down in my study at home to practise the research score in addition to the more usual way of “dryly” thinking through ideas and typing them into my computer while sitting at the desk.<sup>33</sup>

To sum up, in the course of the two shifts, the research score evolved from an embodied approach to think through the Manipulations into a consistent practice of embodied reflection on its own terms, deployable as a means of reflecting on and with *any* notion of current interest. In the poetic language of Benjamin, the research score was now set on a “straight path to infinity [...] thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux”.<sup>34</sup>

From reflecting *on* practice to  
reflecting *with* practice

It seems to me that the evolution of the research score into a consistent and versatile practice of embodied reflection enables a small but potentially significant shift in the mode of reflection: from reflecting *on* practice to reflecting *with* practice. Based on my own practice of the research score, I would say that the difference between reflecting *on* and reflecting *with* largely depends on how, mentally and physically, the relations between the two parallel lines of the perceptual inquiry and the observation of the process of thinking are enacted. As a rough guide, the more attention is given to the *concept* and the process of thinking, i.e. the more the concept is focalised, the more the practice of

26. Gesellschaft für Tanzforschung Society for Dance Research [website], accessed 1 July 2015, <http://www.gtftanzforschung.de/>.

27. Jean-Luc Nancy and Aurelien Barrau, *What’s These Worlds Coming To?*, trans. by Travis Holloway and Flor Mechain (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 42–58.

28. Mark Johnson, ‘Embodied Knowing Through Art,’ in M. Biggs and H. Karlsson (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2011), 141–151.

29. Kinsella, ‘Embodied Reflection and the Epistemology of Reflective Practice.’

30. Zahavi, ‘Phenomenology of Reflection,’ 177–193.

31. Karen Barad, ‘Posthumanist Performativity: Toward

an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,’ *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28 (3) (2003): 801–831.

32. Borgdorff, ‘The Production of Knowledge in Artistic Research,’ 44–63.

33. In the course of 2015, I practised the research score to reflect on and with, among others, the notions of ‘place’, ‘time’, ‘participation’, ‘third space’, ‘potential’, ‘method’, ‘cut’, ‘tacit knowledge’, ‘thinking’, ‘training’, ‘not-knowing’, ‘touch’, ‘struction’, ‘embodied reflection’, ‘diffraction’, ‘unfinished thinking’, ‘specificity’, ‘emptiness’, ‘relation’, ‘exhaustion’ and ‘articulation’.

34. Benjamin, ‘The Task of the Translator,’ 80.

the research score leans towards a mode of reflecting *on*. In the mode of reflecting *with*, on the other hand, the concept is kept more at the periphery of the attention as just another *relatum* in the field of experience. The challenge is to constantly renegotiate the balance between conceptual and non-conceptual modes of experience, to oscillate between sensing and thinking, without allowing one mode to become dominant over the other.

The shift from reflecting *on* to reflecting *with* practice may seem small and subtle. But I intuit that it has a significant outcome, since it points to the possibility of an altered relationship between artistic practice and conceptual reflection in which neither is subjected or subordinated to the other. The research score opens up the possibility to closely interweave practice and reflection and to (re-)configure the relations between the two in a mode of *co-creating* and *composing-with* the other on an equal footing.

Co-existence  
Method of thinking  
To build in a delay  
To not speak out the thought right away, but  
To let it  
Sink a bit deeper ... stay a bit longer  
Keeping it liquid ... liquefying the thought  
The thinking  
To give affect a bit more time to do its work  
To test the concept's affectability

To circulate the concept through the series ... of the Manipulations

Redistributing the concept  
Taking it into different places ... of attention  
So the concept gets in touch  
With the whole body, and potentially the whole of outside the body  
So think the concept through the body  
Touching it, mobilising it ... checking its weight  
Its texture and density ... its quality  
Taking it to the limits, the periphery of  
The conscious  
The sensible  
Allowing it to pass through the limits into the unconscious and the unknown  
Allowing it to pass through  
To have its own journey  
Not owning the concept, it's a collective property  
It travels to do its work  
[...]

(Excerpt from research score on /with "method", 12 May 2015)

What would be the epistemological consequences of shifting, or expanding, the mode of reflection in the research score from a mode of reflecting *on* towards a mode of reflecting *with*? The issue, it seems, is whether the advanced version of the research score still fits into an epistemological model that presupposes a separation between a reflecting subject and an object of reflection, between a knower and a known.

Rounding up: from "reflection" to "diffraction"

Karen Barad has launched a powerful critique of a representationalist

epistemological model that assumes an ontological gap between a knower (someone representing) and the known (that which is represented), which is then mediated by the representation of (propositional) knowledge.<sup>35</sup> She calls for an alternative, post-humanist and performative model, one that does not make a separation between a subject and an object of knowing, and in which the observing knower is not *exterior* to the observed phenomenon. In her account, objective knowledge is rather "a matter of *exteriority within (material-discursive) phenomena*".<sup>36</sup>

Changing the ... grating ... the diffraction grating ... or changing the mode of Reflection to diffraction  
Imagining thoughts going through the body ... wavelike  
Attention taking  
Taking thoughts ... through and out of the body  
The body becoming permeable for thoughts outside itself  
Diffracting thoughts as they enter  
Through the touch  
Becoming part of the meridian system  
The circulation of the blood  
The breath  
And also getting in touch  
With other agents  
Affecting and being affected  
Rendering the body affective  
And by rendering ... one's own body affective  
Allowing other bodies to become affective, too  
The form of the Manipulations as a means or medium for something else ... not an End in itself

Co-presence ... of ... matter and thought  
Thinking matter  
And thought  
As a distributed process  
An intra-action  
Not an inter-action between  
A word and a thing ... an object or a phenomenon  
As an inter-action we tend to see ourselves as isolated agents  
Of thought  
And yes we enact  
And we are accountable for that  
What we enact and how  
And what we activate and what we de-activate  
Representation ... performativity ... it's not either one or the other  
The question is if there is a third  
[...]

(Research score on/with "diffraction", 27 October 2015)

A knowing subject, according to Barad, is not outside or exterior to the known object or phenomenon, but is itself an integral, yet separable, part of the phenomenon that it aims to understand – an exteriority within. Therefore, instead of referring to the process of knowing in terms of "reflection", she proposes the notion of "diffraction". Diffraction, Barad writes, "troubles dichotomies, including some of the most sedimented and stabilized/stabilizing binaries, such as organic/inorganic and animate/inanimate. Indeed, the quantum understanding of diffraction troubles the very notion of *dichotomy* – cutting into two – as a singular act of absolute differentiation, fracturing this from that, now from then."<sup>37</sup>

35. Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 801-831.  
36. *Ibid.*, 825; emphasis in the original.

37. Karen Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart," *Parallax* 20 (3) (2014), 168; emphasis in the original.

What, in the context of artistic research, might be the implications of this onto-epistemological shift from a model of representation to a post-humanist performative model, and with regard to the research score as, supposedly, a method of embodied reflection? At this moment in my research I cannot be certain, but it seems to me that the research score mediates<sup>38</sup> an oscillation between both models, making their differences felt and sensible: the difference between a system of representation in which a knower reflects *on* the known, and a post-humanist performative model in which the knower is an integral part of the phenomenon s/he tries to understand, diffractively articulating the doing-thinking *with* concepts and phenomena while at the same time allowing it to be diffracted by them. Would it be conceivable for both models to coexist, or are they mutually exclusive?<sup>39</sup>

Sensation reflecting the intensity  
of ... memory and imagination  
Reflection as ... part of a system of  
representation  
Articulation as part  
Of a performative model  
That is more adequate  
To the needs of performance-as-research  
or practice-as-research

38. Esa Kirkkopelto has argued that artistic research transforms an *artistic* medium into a medium of *artistic research*, thereby changing its function. Whereas an artistic medium enables a change, a transition from one state to another, a medium of artistic research goes beyond that: "A medium is not only a path, a 'method', a transition from one place to another, but also the material and technical ground on which that place is traced, a place for placing a happening. A medium of artistic research not only enables a change, but makes it happen in a certain way, according to the conditions set by the mediating material or technique. The medium inscribes itself into the change by the singular way the change takes place.  
[...] As an artistic medium changes into a medium of research [...] then the mediating transmission takes place between the known and established levels of perception and discourse and the unknown ones,

Where the articulation happens  
With practice through practice or  
in practice  
And it's not an articulation about  
practice  
Where modes of doing and reflecting  
coincide  
Have an encounter  
Diffracting each other  
Maybe artistic research needs to  
be able to oscillate between both  
models, the representational model  
and the performative model  
Depending on the context of its  
enactment  
Is it the studio? Is it the classroom?  
Is it  
A lecture hall? A conference room?  
A conversation ... on the street?  
Or whether one needs to take a  
certain distance  
Stepping back  
Broadening the focus  
The research score  
Can be a practice  
That houses both models  
Reflection and diffraction  
Different kinds of languages  
Different kinds of thinking  
through ... maybe knowing ...maybe  
unknowing

(Research score on/with "reflection",  
13 July 2016)

which through this process are becoming perceptible and articulable. Due to the medial nature of the change, it remains conditional. Insofar as the medium can carry out a movement towards the points unknown and display its operation, it cannot ever fully accomplish the transition it communicates; it remains suspended between two stages; it can only suggest the transition by repeating itself endlessly and anew." See Esa Kirkkopelto, "Artistic Research and its Institutions," in *Artistic Research: Yearbook 2015* (Stockholm: Swedish Research Council, 2015), 49–50.

39. Barad points out that "reflection and diffraction are not opposites, not mutually exclusive, but rather different optical intra-actions highlighting different patterns, optics, geometries that often overlap in practice". See Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction," 185, footnote 2.

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