

# BODY TRAVERSED: NON-HUMAN

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This paper deals with the notion of non-knowledge through performative experience. It touches upon the thought process mechanism, the possibility of being outside language, the norm, and the meaning of such experience. The performance entitled *Non-Human* is used as illustration, which means that the study constitutes research in practice. It refers to the notion of *zoe* as the pure, unbounded life force and separates the importance of identity from the being and becoming. It examines the possibility of entering the prereflexive and expressing it, testing its capacity of communication. Is *cogito* the only way to identify ourselves as human?

Keywords: performance, non-human, body, intensity, non-knowledge, Cogito

Being invited to perform at the MM Center, which is the part of the Student Center in Zagreb, an institution burdened with political and management problems, the performer decided to incorporate the context in the performance, adding it as an additional layer, not as the theme but as one of the possible interpretations. Having been involved in durational and fully improvisational performances for a while, investigating the limits of imagination and the performative trust in the abilities of somatic and cognitive mechanisms with an aim to push oneself over the limit, the performer has decided to go *via negativa*.<sup>1</sup> So far, the performer's solo investigation has been based on associations, entering imaginative realms, trusting models of thought, and irrational/subconscious impulses, but in the piece performed at the MM Center the performer has solely relied on their capacities as an organism, and not as a psychological structure. Somehow finding a way to bring oneself to and remain in the state of not having thoughts or associations, the zone of darkness and bareness, *prima materia*, for four hours, the performer made a leap into the unknown, inside oneself, opening the structure of their organism to the Other from within and from the outside. This paper is therefore an attempt to explain this experience and the state of being behind it.

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<sup>1</sup> The term was used by Grotowski (2006: 9-10) to explain the way of working with a performer to make him/her responsive, to treat impulses as actions and free a performer from psychosocial masks and learned patterns.

The piece was performed between two glass walls at the entrance to the MM Centre. In such a location, the organism<sup>2</sup> actually prevented the audience from entering the institution, leaving them in front of it, in the open, during a very cold evening. This organism, devoid of language or any kind of codified gesture, was placed at the entrance, thus questioning the function of the institution, its openness to cultural workers, transparency of doing business, and other standard institutional issues in Croatia. Apart from this, the performance had nothing to do with social activism. The performer called the piece *Non-Human*, relying on the fact that the performer's task was to distance oneself from any notion of reflexivity and thought, these being maybe the most significant characteristics of being human.

Once the performer entered the space, the state of emptiness began. The performer has no idea what happened, there were only two brief moments they became aware of the performance and saw the audience, experiencing a kind of self-consciousness and even shame. Fortunately, the performer found a way not to cling to it, but to reenter this space of a basic organism moving, following its rhythm, the desires of the body, and the energy flow, distancing from oneself completely. This attempt to write about the experience whose primary characteristic is that it comes out of the preverbal is contradictory in itself. The piece was an attempt to enter the deepest characteristics of an organism, become a kind of an energy flow, without the interference of thoughts, be without self-reflexive consciousness and trust the organism to take care of itself, finding its way of being, of moving. Avoiding conceptualization, the performer tried to escape culture, preconditioning by throwing oneself into the place of total experience. In doing so, the performer reached different streams of energies from within, listened and followed it, let the body move as it desired; desire not being motivated by some outer object or object of thought but by raw energy flow, the movement of cells, blood, organs.

Entering such a state is difficult to translate into words, its main characteristic being that it is preverbal, that it eludes and escapes meaning, and that signification will somehow petrify it, leave it lifeless, not being able to represent, explain or recreate it. This paper is therefore paradoxical at its core – it tries to describe and theorize on an attempt to escape thought. Therefore, it can easily suffer from over-interpretation, and it is in danger of translating the performance into what it is not and should not be. Completely aware of this, I will try to reflect on the non-reflexive.

In his 1947 book *Inner Experience*, Georges Bataille writes about the “obscure theoretical appearance” of his writing about the inner experience, claiming that, “One must grasp the meaning from the inside”, explaining that

[i]f we live under the law of language without contesting it, these states are within us as if they didn't exist. But if we run up against this law, we can in passing fix our awareness

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<sup>2</sup> According to [biologyonline.com](https://www.biologyonline.com), an organism is a living thing that has organized structure, can react to stimuli, reproduce, grow, adapt and maintain homeostasis (<https://www.biologyonline.com/dictionary/organism>, accessed 9 November 2021).

upon one of them and, quieting discourse within us, linger over the surprise which it provides us. It is better than to shut oneself in, make as if it were night, remain in this suspended silence wherein we come unexpectedly upon the sleep of a child. With a bit of chance, we perceive from such a state what favors the return, increases the intensity. (Bataille 1988: 14)

Bataille goes on to explain the difficulty of entering the space and remaining in the space without thoughts, as is the case with entering meditation. Here, I believe, the movement made it much easier for me, since my body was accepting and listening to impulses, and moving accordingly. This helped me to stay focused on the internal, the point beyond reflection where the body is just an organism, organizing itself according to its impulses, faithful to its rhythms and energy patterns. Does the rejection of thoughts leave any performative possibility or, even broader, the possibility of and for being? Is there a biological basis to dance on the web of structure where biology extends to expression? What are the preconditions for accessing the preverbal? What was that experience, how did it move, change, progress, what kind of non-knowledge and preverbal insight has it created, if any? What does it mean to enter pure experience of the body, its molecules, to change the conditions of “normal” daily movement, to become an almost non-being, to experience life from beyond words?

In what follows I will try to elaborate on the performance through various theoretical insights, thus explaining the performer’s motivation and interest behind the act itself.

## WEB OF MEANING

For can I, in fact, say that I am this language I speak, into which my thought insinuates itself to the point of finding in it the system of all its possibilities, yet which exists only in the weight of sedimentations my thought will never be capable of actualizing altogether? Can I say that I am this labor I perform with my hands, yet which eludes me not only when I have finished it, but even before I have begun it? Can I say that I am this life I sense deep within me, but which envelops me both in the irresistible time that grows side by side with it and poses me for a moment on its crest, and in the imminent time that prescribes my death? [...] What is this being, then, that shimmers and, as it were, glitters in the opening of the *cogito*, yet is not sovereignly given in it or by it? What, then, is the connection, the difficult link, between being and thought? (Foucault 2005: 353)

In his 1966 book, *The Order of Things, Archeology of the Human Sciences*, Foucault analyzes the development of Western relation towards *cogito*, claiming that 19th century knowledge of the mind was based on its interest in non-thought. Therefore, contemporary search for self can no longer be embedded solely in *cogito*. One is born into a web of meanings, supra-structures of different orders that preexist one’s birth, and because of this, one is never “contemporary” to him/herself. As Foucault mentions, all the aspects of one’s rational life – thought, language, labor – were active long before one came into

life: one enters language as one enters culture, labor, habits that spread around as invisible forces, traverse one's body throughout life. Therefore, is it possible to claim that all these segments of life live through us, through our bodies, leaving little space to produce anything outside of them, us being forever positioned in this system of transversals that move through and around our bodies with humble skills of managing them? Inhabited by such traverses of signification, humans create identities based on complex influences often in the realm of unconscious mechanisms, unconsciously acquired attitudes or ideas or introjects and early conditioning. On the other hand, the human organism is by itself a complex web of chemical, biological, and electromagnetic laws, hidden mechanisms that have a complex, bidirectional relation with the embodied thought processes created to react and interpret the impulses both from within and outside the organism. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson define pre-reflexive mechanisms that never enter consciousness (sustaining homeostasis, metabolism, neurological patterns, etc.) as the cognitive unconsciousness (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 12). Damasio, in his book *The Feeling of What Happens*, calls this layer protoself (Damasio, 1999: 102). Many more neuroscientists and philosophers, such as Richard Schusterman, Shaun Gallagher and Candace Pert, to name just a few, have been dealing with this layer of existence, and this branch of science became prominent in the last decades as the philosophy of embodiment. In his *Phenomenology of the Perception*, first published in 1945, Merleau-Ponty stressed the importance of body intelligence in human participation in the world. As Foucault said, "The modern *cogito* does not reduce the whole being of things to thought without ramifying the being of thought right down to the inert network of what does not think" (Foucault 2005: 353). Nevertheless, as Foucault realized, in this search of the pre-reflexive, there is an embedded contradiction – the act of directing thought to the domain of non-thought in an attempt to find its constantly escaping, constantly eluding essence modifies non-thought itself, and this happens by the mere act of observation.

But what is thought? According to contemporary neuroscience, thought is just the tip of the iceberg, resulting from numerous physiological processes and contact of the human organism with the environment (Damasio 1999: 112). Thought is always about something, provoked by something, be it the environment or inner experience, it exists in relation to the object and has a certain quality (we like or dislike something).

One of the sayings that can often be heard in different mindful practices as well is in psychology is "don't believe everything you think". In Buddhism thoughts are considered the sixth sense, and just as unreliable as the other senses, as Waldron (2010) writes in *Buddhist Inquiry*. In meditation, one has to learn to observe one's thought patterns, distancing oneself from them. On the other hand, our Western identity heavily relies on what we think, how we analyze the world, and how we approach it. In the Western world, wo/man is identified with thought, thought being put on the pedestal of existence. On the one hand, thought is detached from the spirit, which is left to the church to see to, and, on the other hand, thought is detached from the body and has primacy over it, body being uncontrollable, non-permanent and often somehow dirty. It is about that thought

which is distant from the body and the environment that has been the base of Western self-cultivation, that Elizabeth Grosz writes in her book *Volatile bodies* (Grosz 1994: 47–51).

In the conversation between Krishnamurti and David Bohm, both philosophers claim that thought is mechanical and masks its origin by creating the illusion of being the center and identity. So why should we rely on it as the base of our being in the world? Why should we identify with what we think and build our existence on it? Thought creates illusions and prevents the totality of perception.

Krishnamurti: That means thought has created the “me”, and the “me” has apparently become independent of thought, and the “me”, being still part of thought, is the psychological structure. And perception can only take place when there is no “me”. In other words, there is only perception, the one who perceives is only an illusion. (Krishnamurti and Bohm 1999: 88)

If we are continually traversed by language, labor, and other codes of civilization, is there even a possibility of authentic identity or thought that is ours alone? If we place our bodies in this web of meanings and interconnections that behave like rhizomes, can we claim our thoughts to have a center? According to Krishnamurti and Bohm, thought mimics the principle of being physically embedded in the body, the body being the center of perception and experience. Since it insists on the illusion of the center, thought necessarily becomes fragmented and creates the illusion of subject-object separation.

Let’s say I’m thinking about the image of a tree. Now that which I am thinking about seems to be separated from me. It seems the image is over there somewhere and I am here. Therefore it seems that I have created two images, one is the tree and the other is me. (Krishnamurti and Bohm 1999: 58)

Krishnamurti claims that “part of thought is desire, which is contradictory” (ibid.: 71). Thought and desire as its foundation create contradiction and fragmentation, opposition, control and resistance. There are also levels of thought such as concentration, awareness and attention. Nevertheless, all these levels and modalities are still conscious and involve reflection, a sense of identity, and direction. On the other hand, according to Krishnamurti, there is the total perception that involves no thought and choice, and where there is no perceiver, just perception, as the ultimate realization of reality (ibid.: 58). But the question emerges – can we enter the inner place where there is no thought? Is it possible for one to have no thought and therefore to cease to be oneself? The place of consciousness where thought ceases to define the self and define reality? Is it the place of total perception? Perception of what? In his posthumously published book, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty writes:

The only way to ensure my access to the things themselves would be to purify my notion of the subjectivity completely: there is not even any “subjectivity” or “Ego”; the consciousness is without “inhabitant,” I must extricate it completely from the secondary apperceptions that make of it the reverse of a body, the property of a “psychism” and I must discover it as the “nothing” the “void” which has the capacity for receiving the

plenitude of the world, or rather which needs it to bear its own emptiness. (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 52)

In the *Non-Human*, prior to the performance, the performer made the decision to dissolve integrity from within, to establish a connection not with concepts but with the body, letting it move, flow, or pause in the small performative space. Thus, the body was entirely activated, entering the non-place of being, the place devoid of feelings, thoughts. The *Non-Human* was an attempt to dislocate into the space of non-thought, to dive under, deeper than the web of meanings and norms as well as to escape sociocultural connotations and enter the performance from pure emptiness, of having no idea, no precognition. This experiment came from detailed previous research on prereflexivity and preverbal intelligence of the body. In comparison with the performer's previous work<sup>3</sup>, the *Non-Human* was the most radical way of entering the body zone of pure organism, of entering cells and organic flow, of silencing thought, and of relying solely on the body's inherent strategies and intelligence to find its way of being.

According to Krishnamurti and Bohm (ibid.: 80), when one is faced with real danger or encounters real beauty, though stops and the body reacts by itself, engaging its intuitive and preverbal capacities. Similar claims have been made by scientists like Shaun Gallagher (2005: 64), the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002: 171–174), as well as Dorothee Legrand (2006: 105 and 2009: 393–406), who studied in detail the different layers of perception and cognition, proving that rational thought is just one level of operational experience. Gabriele Wulf and Rebecca Lewthwaite (2005: 75–81) claim that the focus on an action decreases the capacity to perform. This indicates the complexity<sup>4</sup> of the body – the body as a primary way to experience the world, and the body as the possible object of scrutiny (the subject and the object of perception). Being the source of perception, the body however eludes perception. Merleau-Ponty writes:

I regard my body, which is my point of view upon the world, as one of the objects of that world [...] I detach myself from my experience and pass to the *idea* [...] I now refer to my body only as an idea, to the universe as idea, to the idea of space and the idea of time [...] Thus "objective" thought [...] is formed – being that of common sense and of science – which finally causes us to lose contact with perceptual experience, of which it is nevertheless the outcome and the natural sequel. The whole life of consciousness is characterized by the tendency to posit objects, since it is consciousness, that is to say self-knowledge, only in so far as it takes hold of itself and draws itself together in

<sup>3</sup> Horror Vacui is a durational (three-hour long) performance performed at different sites which includes a continuously open improvisation with text, movement and voice-work, completely relying on imagination flow and oriented to the communication of the body and space. Other works include more structured pieces, not relevant for this paper.

<sup>4</sup> A similar dual concept of embodiment can also be found in Husserl's phenomenology – *Leib* and *Körper* describe both the *living-and-felt* characteristic of the body – when you touch your left hand with the right hand you can either perceive the act of touching in the right hand or being touched in the left hand. According to Wehrle, this double sensation is the precondition to approaching oneself as the object of thought (Wehrle 2019: 500).

an identifiable object. And yet the absolute positing of a single object is the death of consciousness, since it congeals the whole of existence, as a crystal placed in a solution suddenly crystallizes it. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 81)

In contrast, in the state of flow, of being in the *zone*,<sup>5</sup> one feels connected both to what is performed and to the environment, the experience of the separation of the subject and the object is dissolved, the performer (in the broad sense of the term – the performer of any action) does not analyze every step on the way (Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura 2010: 181–191). As a result, the experience is felt as alive, not crystalized. This consequently leads to a higher performance of any task.

## THE SPACE OF BEING: INTERCONNECTING LAYERS OF REALITY

The rich layer of existence operating on pre-reflexive body mechanisms has its intelligence and information inscribed in them. Entering the domain of the body, we discover hidden rules and mechanisms. By way of illustration, according to Lakoff and Johnson's claims in their book, motor-sensory experience is the source of concepts that, to put it simply, are created when sensory experience and the symbolic domain merge in neuropathways.

So, the body is much more active and wiser, not only regarding its mechanisms but also concerning the environment, with which it is entrained, intertwined and, contrary to the Western paradigm, not separated from. The Western *cogito* created the illusion of separation from the body and the environment, as was previously mentioned. Contrary to the Westerners, who place the definition of the Self in the dimension of time (past, present, future), Eastern philosophy gives priority to the existence in the domain of space. According to the Japanese philosopher Nishida, *basho* (place) is the ground which supports all things existing in *space*. All beings in the world, including humans, exist in the *basho* that they occupy (Yuasa 1987: 38). “The *basho* is a fundamental restriction on beings' existence; without it, no being can exist in the world” (Yuasa 1987: 57). In *basho*, one is traversed by cultural and social forces. To exist in space means to exist in one's body, the body being a vehicle of perception and action, the way we take part in the world. Life is a continual state of *betweenness*, since the body is in continual transition, and so is the environment. Similar to Foucault (2005: 353), Yuasa – explaining Japanese philosopher Watsuji's standpoint – claims that “[o]ne is born in the life-space under various structural interconnections of meanings, and by growing up in them, one can then, so to speak, become a human subject” (Yuasa 1987: 41).

However, space is not only populated with meanings and norms, but also with other micro and macro characteristics, with day and night cycles, seasons changing, revolution and rotation, and other changes on the molecular or subatomic scale. There are also

<sup>5</sup> *Being in the Zone* is a colloquial term used in sports or dance to identify being in the state of flow (for further insight into the state of flow, see Bruya 2010).

countless different processes in the body, creating different rhythms. In his book *Rhythmanalysis* Lefebvre writes about different inner and outer rhythms that are constantly adjusting/tuning themselves, creating a complex harmony of life (Lefebvre 2004: 14). All beings and phenomena tend to entrain their rhythm to the environment, as seen from the following quote:

The power of the rhythmic message within the group is as strong as anything I know. It is one of the basic components in the process of identification, a hidden force that, like gravity, holds groups together. (Hall 1983: 184–185, as cited in Goodridge 1999: 31)

In other words, there is a complex exchange taking place on many layers of existence, some of them happening on the levels of meaning and norms and many others on the level of vibration, chemical, and electromagnetic exchange, but they all have a similar impact on the cultivation and structuring of both the self and the environment. According to Yuasa, referring to the Japanese philosopher Watsuji (Yuasa 1987: 40–41), all relations of forces happen in space, between different entities. That intersubjective space, the so-called *betweenness*, is where meanings interconnect. It is a living, dynamic space.

Therefore, the subject is never fixed, it is more of a multiplicity than identity, it bends and moves, shapes according to forces that surround it and traverse it, naming and interpreting those forces in return, according to its own needs. As autopoietic theories by Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana claim, meaning never precedes the situation, it is created by the organism according to its own needs, perceptions and habits (Varela 1991: 7).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the chair is not the same for the human and for the snail, just like the lake is not the same for a girl in love or one attempting suicide. Even in this simple encounter, the complex interior and exterior web of rhythms and meanings finds its balance.

Deleuze and Guattari claim that both

a social machine or an organized mass has a molecular unconscious that marks not only its tendency to decompose but also the current components of its very operation and organization; that any individual caught up in a mass has his/her own pack unconscious, which does not necessarily resemble the packs of the mass to which that individual belongs. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 35)

According to the authors, “there are no individual statements” (ibid.: 36); every statement I make is a result of the workings of different levels of forces both from unconsciousness and the environment. This is in line with Foucault’s claim that we are in a way lived by norms and codifications (Foucault 2005: 351–353). While Foucault ponders the social, codified level and the domain of the self and thought development, Deleuze is immersed in deeper levels, where subatomic forces of the microcosm or subconsciousness bare the

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<sup>6</sup> The term autopoiesis refers to the ability of the organism to create and recreate itself by using its own parts. The example is the human organism, where certain patterns remain (the function of cells or tissues, for example) but cells themselves die out and are constantly being produced again. The organism interprets its surroundings according to its needs – what is nutritive for one organism can be harmful to another. The quality of the being nutritional is not the characteristic of the nutrient itself, but is interpreted by the organism.

same role in the life and consciousness of the human as the social mechanistic materialistic approach. Interconnectivity, a complex intertwining of the preverbal, subatomic/sub-conscious, the rhythmical as well as the semantic, the social, all create a web of existence, all interchanging, influencing each other on levels that are unreachable to the pure *cogito*.

All those inner and outer forces shape the situation in which Life takes place. On some level, meaning is created, on the other, micro and macro rhythms are being entrained, finding their balance or remaining in arrhythmia. From subatomic and molecular, to mechanical and social structures, to technology and the geological life of the Earth, life is active, multiplying, blooming, and being destroyed or decomposed each second. All these plateaus intertwine, influence, and inform each other. Their continual traversals are defined as rhizomes in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987: 7–10). Connections between rhizomes are not fixed, they continually change, interconnect, and shape new relations between different forces and entities. Each element ceaselessly varies and alters its distance to others; it is continuous dynamism, the dance, in which the layer of signification is just one of the aspects of one of the species.

Is it possible for human to enter this space of traversals? To open the bodymind for being just Life, not identity, to accept and listen to what is there, even if you do not understand language? Is it possible to bring oneself to such a state of flux when one becomes sensitive not to the level of signification, but to somehow descend to the bottom of the organism and listen to what happens on the level that is not yet affected by words and signs? To descend into what seems empty because signs are too large to enter and where what happens is too small or too fast to be caught in the web of words?

Considering the notion that social norms, historical and psychological patterns are lived by us, justified, defined, explained and judged by the essence of thought itself, the performer tried to escape, to enter otherness, to find the space of becoming, of being open to other structures, below, and beneath, to let the body transmit other energies, much closer to life itself than to thought, closer to biology, to cellular structures, connecting to whatever comes, on whatever level of energy, making oneself transmuted by this flow. It presupposes abandoning the identity of the performer, of the wo/man, the artist, even of a human, in the broadest possible sense. Emptying one's mind of signification and letting the organism find its movement, the performer has become many things, of which none has its name in language. It is about letting the space of the body become the Other, to transform, and to get beneath everyday codification.

According to Yuasa, the Japanese philosopher Nishida defined the state of *basho vis-a-vis nothing* or the *self as basho*. In everyday *basho*, one lives in the domain of the ego, as a conscious subject. This plateau of existence, to use the Deleuzian term, presupposes living is an inauthentic or aberrant way of life, while the authentic mode of living means transcending the ego and everyday life. It means going to the "bottom of the *basho*", that is abandoning everyday ego-consciousness for "consciousness to immerse itself in the bottom of consciousness" (Yuasa 1987: 61). According to Nishida, ego-consciousness,

which is part of bright consciousness, has an invisible bottom layer, the dark *cogito*.<sup>7</sup> To reach authentic Life, one must look, descend in such a *basho* to

the passive-active structure of the body in its relation to the world-space... To inquire into this is to face the interiority of the self itself. In other words, by regarding the ordinary understanding of the relationship between mind and body as inauthentic and insufficient, one inquires existentially into the true way of understanding this relationship. It is then that consciousness immerses itself in the bottom of consciousness existentially into the true way of understanding this relationship. It is then that consciousness immerses itself in the bottom of consciousness. (Yuasa 1987: 61)

According to Yuasa, when entering dark consciousness there is the capacity of “unifying all acts of consciousness, such as thinking, willing, emotion, and perception in their differentiating development” (Yuasa 1987: 62), or in Nishida’s words, it is a “unifying force at the bottom of our thinking and willing”. It transforms the self by total immersion into one’s interiority, moving from the body as a function to the authentic body. The *Non-Human* entered this dark layer, but without sustaining the quality of observing itself, characteristic of bright consciousness.

Similarly, in his complex work *Corpus*, Jean-Luc Nancy (2008) writes about *Areality*, defining it as an antique word, signifying the nature of an area. But *Areality* also suggests the lack of reality, suspended reality. It is the site where changes take place, and the architectonics of bodies articulate in “the greatest power of existing” (Nancy 2008: 43). Nancy refers to Plato’s cave and the definition of *soma* as the prison of the soul. But the “power of existing” here is in the recognition of the cave-body as “the space of the body *seeing itself from within* [...] or seeing itself as its own matrix, with neither mother nor father, the pure darkness of autofiliation (Nancy 2008: 43).

Therefore

[t]his body retreats into its own depth – to the depth of Sense – just as sense withdraws all the way to its mortal depth. This body forms very precisely what astrophysicists call a black hole, a star whose dimension is such that its gravity withholds its own light, a star that extinguishes and collapses on its own into itself, opening, in the universe, at the center of the star and its extraordinary density, the black hole of an absence of matter (and an “end of time,” the inverse of a “big bang,” a dimension of the world’s cessation within the world itself). (Nancy 2008: 75)

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<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Husserl claims that there are two different layers of synthesis – active synthesis, where “Ego functions as a productively constitutive”, which includes manifold meaning-making processes during which the products of reason are created, and passive synthesis, i.e., a kind of “lower”, material and experiential level of our contact with the world, which is the base of the higher, active synthesis (Husserl 1982: 77–80). Mark Losonczi writes about Husserl’s empty intentionality, defined not as negation, but as an autonomous dimension of potentiality of consciousness. This dimension is not static and its primordial openness underlies any communication. According to the Losonczi, Husserl does not understand empty intentionality as an internal feature of consciousness separated from the world, but, on the contrary, as openness toward the world (Losonczi 2017: 529–544).

## DESCENDING TO NOTHINGNESS

*Here*, in the where of nowhere, and nowhere else than this “where” without elsewhere, *the spirit* emerges, infinite concentration in itself, the *breath* or *wind* that alone fills up holes. (Nancy 2008: 75).

The body, as the site for interconnectivity and our only way to take part in the world is also the site where systems and the social order, the rational, the egoistic meaning-making machine and the free flow of various forces collide. Contrary to the functional body, separated from the mind and the environment, Deleuze uses Artaud’s term *Body Without Organs*<sup>8</sup> to describe the possibility of body restructuralization, by stressing intensities rather than the function of the organs (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 150–153). By escaping the utilitarianism of the body as a site of production and signification, by discovering other potentials of its complex and subtle structure, it is possible to perceive other aspects of the world, to make the boundary of the body less defined and more porous for other forces to enter.

A body without organs is not an empty body stripped of organs, but a body upon which that which serves as organs (wolves, wolf eyes, wolf jaws?) is distributed according to crowd phenomena, in Brownian motion, in the form of molecular multiplicities. The desert is populous. Thus the body without organs is opposed less to organs as such than to the organization of the organs insofar as it composes an organism. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 30)

Writing about deterritorialization, designification and destructuralization of the body, the authors affirm the level of the preverbal, of the no-name, a deep state of freedom from shape and form, with no function, based in the matter itself, or in their words “the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical free singularities” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 43). Opening to another possibility of becoming (becoming-animal is more about allowing something other to take place and less about generating the Other, it is more about being porous and listening to what is already there, without censorship, but with recognition without naming). “The desert is populous” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 30) and so is the body, and so is the space of unconsciousness, which, on some level, is the same thing. Entering deep inside the body without organs means descending into it, to discover vibrations and preverbal inscriptions, its cellular or even deeper structure, descending to the bottom of what there is. The body hides many secrets, from chemical to biological, and all of them have their codes, language, and domains. For example, according to Bhakti Niskama Shanta’s text in the *Communicative and Integrative Biology*, there are ten times more microbial cells on and in our bodies than there are human cells.

<sup>8</sup> The term is originally used in *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947), a radio play by A. Artaud (Artaud 1974: 18).

That means that we're 90 percent microbial and 10 percent human. Apart from our own body, as a site of identity, we have to acknowledge all Other life on and in our bodies, as well their qualities. We cannot deny the individuality of all those microbes, by stating that their individuality is a mere illusion (*maya*). In the healthy body of a multicellular organism, every individual cell, despite having its own individuality, is meant to work for the welfare of the whole body. (Shanta 2015: 3–4)

In every human being, even on this micro level, there are also others, other voices and qualities, still recognizable, but hidden. So where does my statement come from, then? Can my body be the site for others to speak? Microbes, dream-like creatures of subconsciousness, cells and chemical codes inscribed in them, forces, organs, rhizomes, all escaping signification in their continual movement, roar. In the process of the destructuralization of the body, one has to abandon the idea of function, purpose, insight, habit, be free from the sign and knowledge, recognizing the body's language, not adjusting it to the language of thought, which is yet another threshold to cross. This power of experience, given by the body extension, by the non-knowledge itself, in a way twists the notion of the body-prison, twists the cultural fear of viscera and flesh, recognizing the body as a much deeper source than its base for economic function. The urge to control and explain, as a byproduct of everyday consciousness, here reverses into a will to play with what escapes control and definition, and is therefore immortal.

So, knowing this, is it still sensible to ask if there is a body essence? Or is it an essence of life, not labeled and characterized, that goes through me, my body, below thought? An unbounded and undefined stream of life that flows through the human organism that has no purpose, reflection, and is a goal in itself? A kind of intensity, life magic, obeying its own laws? Is it possible to reach it and perform with or within it, obeying nothing but rhythms, and not the preestablished rules or expectations?

According to Rosi Braidotti, Deleuze affirms life on the unfamiliar, unnamed forces, “a sort of spiritual and sensory stretching of our boundaries” (Braidotti 2002: 147). This is not nihilistic negation, but familiarization with the possibilities of the other, of the body, of becoming. Braidotti introduces Plato's division into *bios* and *zoe*, where *bios* is rational, cultivated life, whereas *zoe* is its “second best”, life in itself, without human rational control.

This obscenity, this life in me, is intrinsic to my being and yet so much “itself”, that it is independent of the will, the demands and expectations of the sovereign consciousness. [...] This scandal, this wonder, this *zoe*, that is to say an idea of Life that is more than *bios* and supremely indifferent to *logos*, this piece of flesh called my “body”, this aching meat called my “self” expresses the abject/divine potency of a Life which consciousness lives in fear of. (Braidotti 2002: 132)

According to Braidotti, “life just is”, it escapes the empire of law. Stream of life forces go through existence while thoughts create narratives, an illusion of an ordered world. As the neuroscientist Vermeule claims, the left hemisphere of the brain creates a narrative *post festum*, creating and explaining events according to our habits, beliefs and preconceptions

(Vermeule 2015: 471). Consciousness and self-representation are conventions created to enable social and economic exchange, and are arbitrary as such. Braidotti goes a step further, claiming that the self is a reflection of micro fascism that feeds “a vampire-like economic system based on stock and exchange, accumulation and profit” (Braidotti 2002: 133). She asks “[w]hat if consciousness were, in fact, an inferior mode of relating to one’s environment and others?” (Braidotti 2002: 136) and not the most evolved way of participation in the world, as we are learning to think? Therefore, there is no creativity without looking deeper, without abandoning the narcissistic cultural scope, without finding another way of becoming.

To abandon consciousness, reflection and *cogito* would therefore be the ultimate leap in life experience, doing so for the act itself, leaving any reason, function or purpose behind. Such was the idea of experiencing *Non-Human*.

## THE PLACE OF NON-THOUGHT

From experiencing this zone for four hours for this piece, the performer does not remember much, or anything; only two brief moments when the performer became aware of the performance and the audience, then immediately escaping into the new habitat, the dark place of the body. At one moment, the performer felt a strange kind of light presence nearby, which might have been from the exhaustion of the body. Or not.

Most of the time the performer felt nothing, the four hours passed very quickly, the performer remembers no pain or tiredness, although the body was exhausted (the next day the performer could barely move), and as the audience commented, the body moved in very unusual ways. For the performer, it was important to enter the mode of existing beyond language, to communicate with the self before it is the self, to enter the deep *cave*, aimless, the non-restrictive space of the body, broaden its limits, free from concepts and categories of thought. As the audience testified, this decision made the body form strange “unnatural” shapes, twist in unusual ways. Some audience members saw embryonic movement, others a shamanistic ritual, others still a strange monster moving in front of them, but almost all could feel strong energy transfer.

Several days after the performance the performer felt somehow expanded, as if the body became energetically larger, it was like having a real body and some other, much broader body, an invisible structure around the performer that could expand at will. It is somehow useless to rationalize this experience, and I am writing this fully aware that this is probably too elusive a subject for a scholarly paper. Nevertheless, because of the intimate need to somehow rationalize, and by doing so, legitimize such experience (even more, to give it a credibility and even an excuse for making it public), the performer decided to find another, scholarly, justification/explanation in order to understand what happened. The fact that the performer felt a need to rationalize the experience speaks about the norma-

tive primacy of thought over experience, and even testifies to the feeling of inadequacy of experience viewed from the prism of the habit of thought.

*Non-Human* was an experiment both of the body and of energy, an experiment in the expansion of consciousness triggered by curiosity and exploration of different possibilities of becoming.

To know thyself is an ancient imperative. But can we know ourselves before we abandon ourselves? What else is there?

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## (IZVEDBENO) TIJELO U PRIJELAZU

Rad se bavi temom ne-znanja kroz izvedbeno iskustvo. Dotiče mehanizme procesa mišljenja, mogućnosti bivanja izvan jezika i normi te moguće implikacije takvog iskustva. Primjer je performans *Neljudsko*, što znači da se radi o istraživanju u praksi. *Neljudsko* se oslanja na termin *zoe* shvaćen kao čista, nesputana energija, te se izdvaja od identiteta kao modaliteta bivanja i nastajanja. Otvara mogućnost predrefleksivnog polja i njegova izražavanja te propituje mogućnosti komuniciranja istog. Je li mišljenje jedini način bivanja čovjekom?

Ključne riječi: performans, neljudsko, tijelo, intenzitet, ne-znanje, cogito