

On the 'Beyond-ness' of the Subject. Critical Thoughts on Epistemological Paradigms in the Realm of Posthumanism

panel

Contemporary writings in speculative realism and new materialism are circling around deontologising attempts, thus displacing the dedication to the subject as epistemological authority. Examining these approaches, we can detect e.g. an increasing occupation with conceptions of immersion with post- or non-human matter, animals, or the like. The suggested panel thus discusses from a philosophical, performance and dance studies perspective exemplary cases of the occurring dilemmata deriving from a beyond-ness of the subject by testing the philosophical use of terms coming from the sphere of arts, namely dance, as well as relating to feminist reformulations of non/humanity in performance.

Susanne Foellmer

Choreography as Posthuman Loophole?

Recently, representatives of posthumanism are developing ideas on how to shift our view from prevailing sole perspectives of the subject as epicentre of knowledge production towards e.g. the agency of objects. However, as (still) human authors are involved, the question arises how to bridge this paradox when adopting a post-subjective perception of the world. Accordingly, the term "choreography" is predominantly used by new materialism's protagonists (e.g. Coole/Frost, 2010), promoting ideas of arrangements and apprehensions that are freed from an anthropocentric access to experience. However, one can ask to what extent notions borrowed from the field of dance are utilized rather uncritically in order to let the material matter, and how exactly such a 'choreographic' should be understood. Thus, this paper casts a critical view on the implementation of those terms, and suggests to situate choreography in the interstices of materials and subjects, hence constellating such relations in the first place.

Bio:

Susanne Foellmer PhD, is Reader in Dance at Coventry University, Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRe). Main research areas embrace aesthetic theory and concepts of the body in contemporary dance, performance, and the Weimar Era, relationships between dance and 'other' media as well as the temporality and historicity of performance. Publications a.o.: *Valeska Gert* (2006), *Am Rand der Körper* [On the Bodies' Edge] (2009), "Choreography as a Medium of Protest", in: *Dance Research Journal*, No. 48(3), Dec. 2016. Since 2014 she has been directing the DFG research project *On Remnants and Vestiges. Strategies of Remaining in the Performing Arts*.

Mariama Diagne

"correlational dancestep and a speculative dea ex machina"

Choreo/Scenographic terms as tactic for thoughts in contemporary philosophy

As an explicable tactic philosopher Quentin Meillassoux finds the term "correlational dance-step" (*After Finitude*, 2006/2008) to depict the philosophical dogma of metaphysics when speaking of its (transcendental) understanding of the relation between subjects and objects. The dance-step marks modern philosophy as an anti-realism, which has to be differentiated from contemporary notions of the *désabsolution* (speculative materialism/realism). Within the discourse of speculative realism, a variety of feminist perspectives and manifests on accelerated thoughts (like Xenofeminism or Cyberfeminism) was published in *dea ex machina* (2015) edited by Helen Hesters and Armen Avanesian. From a dance and theatre studies perspective terms as "dance-step" and "dea ex machina" serve as metaphors, provoking a closer investigation of bodily movements that are inherent to these philosophical ideas. Consequently, this paper seeks to identify scopes where these terms could be gently intertwined with dance theory and practices, to unfold a promising dialog with thoughts by movement researchers.

Bio:

Mariama Diagne is a dance scholar and staff member (Institute for Theatre Studies) at the Centre for Movement Studies (Prof. Brandstetter) at Freie Universität Berlin. Her schooling as a dancer (DTH, New York City) was followed by studies in media, theatre, music (Bayreuth) and dance theory (Berlin) and led to her PhD thesis on the specific staging of antic myths (Orpheus) in Pina Bausch's Tanztheater. Further research interests focus on re-reading dance history by re-writing its aesthetic and ethic threads from the 19th century until today. As researcher, she assists the jury of the Pina Bausch Fellowship Program.

Karina Rocktäschel

Performing the Non-Human. About the different versions of Posthumanism

The Australian artist *Stelarc* is a well-known performer and thinker of a posthuman age. In performance theory he is the prime example of a genre called “cyborg theatre”, a term deeply connected to Donna Haraway’s influential *Cyborg Manifesto* from 1984. But, mostly forgotten, the essay of Donna Haraway is not just a description of a posthuman era, it is also an affirmation of a feminist political act.

In my speech, I want to critical reflect on the work of *Stelarc* and on some strands of posthumanist theory, showing that both are still too busy with turning towards the human as their prime interest of study. On the contrary, feminist performance art and also dance have both been counterexamples to show how the turn away from the human can open up affective spaces to question the human-nonhuman relationality and what its effects are.

Bio:

Karina Rocktäschel is a scholar in Theatre Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. She is about to finish her Master’s thesis on the “Aesthetics of non-human living beings” which deals with posthumanism, posthuman ethics and performance art. Karina has been working as student research assistant at the Department for Theatre Studies, FU Berlin, since 2014. Since then she has also been working for the German-English performance collective *Gob Squad*.