

# INHERITING DANCE

AN INVITATION FROM PINA

Edited by Marc Wagenbach and the Pina Bausch Foundation

[transcript]

PINA

FOUNDATION

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## PRACTICES OF TRANSLATING IN THE WORK OF PINA BAUSCH AND THE TANZTHEATER WUPPERTAL <sup>1</sup>

GABRIELE KLEIN

Pina Bausch posed questions during rehearsals. Typically she raised more than one hundred per each new piece in a life's work encompassing approximately 50 choreographies. She posed her questions in German or in English. The dancers sought answers with their bodies, with their voice, with materials and props. They wrote down the questions in their own rehearsal notes, sometimes in their "native tongue", in Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, or Korean, along with the things that occurred and had occurred to them in reply. The rehearsals were recorded on video. The video and the notes served as a reminder and an aid during rehearsals for when Pina Bausch decided and told the dancers which parts of that they had created she wished to see again.

During the international co-productions, 15 in total created by the Tanztheater Wuppertal, ranging from *Viktor* in 1986 to the final piece "... como el mosquito en la piedra, ay sí, sí, sí..." ("...like moss on a stone...") in 2009, the company realised something for which there was neither an expression nor a discourse at that time – and which is now disputed, ideologically charged and politically contested: Artistic Research. The company in 2013 consisted of 32 dancers, (18 women and 14 men), from 18 different nations, and is thus itself also a microcosm of different cultures. They travelled to the co-producing cities and countries, to Rome, Palermo, Madrid, Vienna, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Lisbon, Budapest, Sao Paulo, Istanbul, Seoul, Japan, India and Santiago de Chile. The dancers gathered impressions, sometimes while wandering around and by random discovery, at other times at events that had been organised for them in advance. All the while, Matthias Burkert, musical collaborator since 1979, and Andreas Eisenschneider, responsible for music since 1995, searched archives and browsed in record shops and antique dealers, looking for ... well, any kind of local music they could find. Some of those on the trips recorded their impressions in photos and on video. And some of these photos reappeared in the programme brochures.

<sup>1</sup> The article is based on a lecture which was held during the dance congress *Bewegungen übersetzen – Performing Translations*, June 6–9, 2013 in Düsseldorf, Germany and related to the research project *Gestures of Dance – Dance as Gesture. Cultural and Aesthetic Translations in the Work of the Tanztheater Wuppertal*, funded by the German Research Foundation.

This small insight shows that the process of artistic rehearsal was and is a permanent and complex process of translation between language and movement, movement and writing, between different languages and cultures, and between different media and materials. With the Tanztheater Wuppertal, Pina Bausch developed a multifaceted artistic working method: Posing questions, improvising, researching. And it was translated repeatedly by different choreographers as well as by theatre directors worldwide. Precisely these translations, and I avoid the word “imitations”, confirm the pioneering achievement of this process-oriented working method. The process aligned itself with the company members, their subjectivities and their specific everyday perceptions by becoming a starting point, thus legitimising itself as an initial positing. The multicultural background of the dancers of the Tanztheater Wuppertal, admittedly also a feature of other dance companies, is of special significance, precisely due to this working method. Since cultural translation is from the onset a fundamental principle in collaborative working methods involving people from different cultures, Pina’s method underscored and reaffirmed processes already at work.

In the last few years cultural translation has become an expression that has attained an important role in the language games of advertising and the media. However, the use of the term is also popular in relation to political matters. The reason is obvious: “The term is politically correct and promises a secure investment in the creation of cultural capital”<sup>2</sup>. If the term is now being applied strategically to politics, education, media and the market, how can it still be made fruitful for artistic processes?

This question concerns dance in particular given the phrase that has dominated dance discourse for a number of years: dance is translation. This general hypothesis is seductive, convincing and overloaded, all at the same time. It is seductive because it elevates dance to the role of the leading metaphor of cultural translation and thus declares it to be the leading metaphor of culture. It is convincing because translation processes can be found everywhere: translations between dance bodies, between dance cultures, between language and movement, between different media, between theory and practice, and between politics and aesthetics, for example. It is overloaded because in this broad interpretation of the term, translation can be everything. The metaphorical openness thus removes the contours of the term translation, making its boundaries no longer discernable.

In order to circumvent this problem and, in particular, to get closer to the dance-aesthetic practice, this article does not ask *what* the cultural translation of dance is, but rather *how* the translation occurs. This *how* is directed at the act of translating, at its practices and its performances. It is a praxeological interpretation that tries to approach the movement practices and choreographic procedures of translation.

This approach is itself an attempt at translation, namely to find a theoretical language for aesthetic practice. The fact that this translation attempt meets its limits and must necessarily fail due to the impossibility of translating between aesthetic practice and discourse is inherent to the fundamental idea of translation.

The text is divided into three sections:

1. Dancing as translating
2. Translating as practice
3. The politics of translating

<sup>2</sup> Birgit Wagner: “Kulturelle Übersetzung. Erkundungen über ein wanderndes Konzept”, in: Anna Babka, Julia Malle (eds.): *Dritte Räume. Homi Bhabhas Kulturtheorie. Kritik, Anwendung, Reflexion*, Vienna: Turia und Kant 2012, p. 29.

## DANCING AS TRANSLATING

Translation is a term that is itself a translation, namely from Ancient Greek (*hermeneuein, metaphrasis*) and Latin (*transfere, translatio*)<sup>3</sup>. It is endowed with an imagery of “carrying from one side to another” or “crossing over”. This draws attention to the fact that translation can never be “one to one”, that it can never represent the transportation of a supposedly authentic meaning, just as Tango Argentino, for example, can neither be transferred authentically to other cultures nor placed on stage as “art” because it is a popular dance culture. Raimund Hoghe quoted Pina Bausch during the rehearsals for “Bandoneon” as saying, “If one were to desire such a thing, then one would not have understood anything about Tango”<sup>4</sup>.

*Translation is always a negotiation and mediation between things that are different. Translation should therefore be seen per se as a cultural and media practice.*

Yet translation is not defined solely in terms of difference theory as a cultural and media practice. It is also always confronted with a paradoxical relationship between identity and difference. The paradox is that the translation actually removes the difference, in other words, the translation should correspond with the original, and yet at the same time identity can only emerge through difference. This paradox is a genuine part of translation, though at times attempts are made – also in dance – to dissipate it in one direction or another. There are countless examples of attempts to suspend the difference in the history of the reconstruction of dances, i.e. attempts to reconstruct a choreography to its original as with historical translations instantiated by Nijinsky’s *Rite of Spring* or Kurt Jooss’ *Green Table*. And there are attempts to create identity as difference. This has happened with forms of re-enactment, which are at times framed within formats such as Lecture Performances (like Martin Nachbar’s work *Urheben/Aufheben* (2008), in which he addresses Dore Hoyer’s *Affectos Humanos*) or also pieces that deal – associatively or from the perspective of subjective experience – with “dance heritage”, like the *Nussknacker* by Antje Pfundner (2012).

Walter Benjamin, wrote the “The Translator’s Task” (1923), as essay that refers to theories of cultural translation that find their starting point in a “cultural turn” in translation studies<sup>5</sup>, and in the establishment of “postcolonial studies” and “translation studies”<sup>6</sup>. He solved the paradoxical problem of identity and difference by attributing two tasks to translation: creating difference while at the same time testifying to “suprahistorical kinship”<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, translation is not about decoding the sense of what was meant, but rather a translation “touches the original fleetingly and only at the infinitely small point of meaning, in order to follow its own path.”<sup>8</sup>

It would appear that Pina Bausch recognised and played with this paradox of identity and difference. Indeed, she almost made it into a central topic of her artistic work with the Tanztheater Wuppertal. For instance,

3 See Dieter Mersch “Transfere/Perfere. Übersetzen als Praxis”, Lecture, Hamburg University in the series “In Transit. Mediales Übersetzen in den Künsten” (“In Transit. Media translation in the arts”), winter term 2012/13, unpublished manuscript.

4 Raimund Hoghe, Ulli Weiss: *Bandoneon – Für was kann Tango alles gut sein?*, Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1981, p. 15.

5 Karl-Heinz Stoll: “Translation als Kreolisierung”, in: Andreas Gipper, Susanne Klengel (eds.): *Kultur, Übersetzung, Lebenswelten. Beiträge zu aktuellen Paradigmen der Kulturwissenschaften*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008, p. 177–201.

6 Doris Bachmann-Medick: “Übersetzung in der Weltgesellschaft. Impulse eines ‘translational turn’”, in: Andreas Gipper, Susanne Klengel (eds.): *Kultur, Übersetzung, Lebenswelten. Beiträge zu aktuellen Paradigmen der Kulturwissenschaften*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008, p. 141–159.

7 Walter Benjamin: “The Translator’s Task”, (translated by Steven Randall) in: *TTR*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1997, p. 156.

8 Benjamin, *ibid.*, p. 163.

she addressed this paradox in the context of age by having some dancers take the same roles over a number of decades, such as in *1980*, a piece that was revived in 2012 with almost the complete original cast. Or, for example, by having dancers from earlier generations teach their dances to current members of the ensemble for revived pieces. This was the recent case with *Auf dem Gebirge hat man ein Geschrei gehört* (*On the Mountain a Cry was Heard*) from 1984, a revival realised after Pina's death, and thus structured only using the collective knowledge of the dancers, and with the help of media translations (videos, notations). Another example is *Kontakthof*, a piece performed by adolescents, the elderly, or dancers from the company, where the choreography always remains the same, thus giving the choreography a different hue each time through the differences in the actors.

Dance-related cultural translation is Janus-faced: it would be meaningless and random without the assumption of an admittedly fictional, kinship between dance cultures and dance languages. At the same time, however, it requires a differentiation between the cultures and languages. The latter can be seen in the uncertainty and the principle impossibility of translating movement, i.e. in the testimony of its breakdown and failure. This becomes evident in practice as dance follows "its own path".

*Dance-related cultural translation can therefore be described – in line with Alexander Garcia Düttmann – as a translation of the untranslatable. The productivity of the translation, its poetic and political potential, lies precisely in the (im-)possibility.*

The cultural translations that are specific to the international co-productions of the Tanztheater Wuppertal can also be understood in this sense. Many critics complained that they recognised few genuine, or even clichéd elements of the co-producing country in the productions. However, contrary to their expectations, the primary intention had never been to put "the other culture" on stage. "Presumptuous", was how Pina Bausch described this suggestion in one of her rare interviews. When striving to "grasp" the other (and grasp is meant here in the literal, physical sense), she insisted on the one hand on the difference of the cultures, a difference that she considered to be due to the limits of understanding. On the other, she highlighted that which is common to all, and tranverses all cultures. For example, when accepting the Kyoto Prize in 2007 she said:

Of course there are many cultural differences, but are also always commonalities (...).  
It is about finding a language (...) which makes something that has always been there noticeable (...) It is wonderful when things come together, with all of these different people, in this one evening, then we experience together something unique, unrepeatable.<sup>9</sup>

Just as translation is a foundation of culture, the untranslatability between cultures and languages also forms a basic condition of human culture: cultural processes should themselves be understood as translation processes to the same extent to which translation can be seen as the transformation of the cultural.<sup>10</sup>

*Translation itself is therefore culture, just as culture is a permanent translation.*

According to this interpretation, cultural translation is not a special cultural process. It neither points to a starting or an end point, nor does it take place in the relationship between original and copy. Rather, the idea of culture as a unit emerges, from this perspective, only retrospectively in the act of translation, as outlined by Barbara Johnson in her book *Mother Tongues*<sup>11</sup>, in which she deals with Benjamin's text and emphasises his hypotheses. From

9 Pina Bausch: *Etwas finden was keiner Frage bedarf. The 2007 Kyoto Prize Workshop in Arts and Philosophy*. [http://www.inamorif.or.jp/laureates/k23\\_c\\_pina/img/wks\\_g.pdf](http://www.inamorif.or.jp/laureates/k23_c_pina/img/wks_g.pdf) [correct at Nov 25, 2013].

10 Peeter Torop: "Translation as Translating Culture", in: *Sign System Studies*, 30, 2 (2002), p. 594–605.

11 Barbara Johnson: *Mother Tongues. Sexuality, Trial, Motherhood, Translation*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

12 Homi K. Bhabha: *Über kulturelle Hybridität: Tradition und Übersetzung*, Anna Babka, Gerald Posselt (eds.), Vienna: Turia und Kant 2012.

this perspective, the term “German Dance Theatre” also appears to be a step that creates a national notion. It is a step that is highlighted only in hindsight, in the differentiation e.g. towards history (expressional dance on the one hand and contemporary dance on the other) or in the normative differentiation towards other aesthetics (postmodern dance, conceptual dance).

*Accordingly, it is the translation itself that unmasks a unity of culture as imagination.*

Cultural translation therefore does not mean an understanding of culture, or the building of bridges between cultures, or their merging. Instead it refers to “cultural hybridisations”. The term “hybridity” was introduced by Homi Bhabha, similarly to the inflationary expression “third space” he proposed when discussing “cultural translation”. Subsequently, this term has become greatly overloaded and ideologically charged. In his Viennese lectures in 2007<sup>12</sup>, Bhabha drew attention to the fact that the hybrid subject cannot only be greeted euphorically as a cultural globetrotter, an artist or intellectual, in other words as a subject that creates hybridity through (permanent) border crossings.

*Rather, cultural translation is always a movement at the boundary, both directly and metaphorically.*

In his essay “Names of Place: Border”, the philosopher Massimo Cacciari demonstrates that the border is always both things: *limes*: i.e. the border area, the wall, the parapet, but also *limen*: the contact zone, the intermediate space, the place of encounter. The border is therefore necessary in order to facilitate contact and touch. Bhabha locates the perspective of crossing borders in the experience of colonialism. In line with Sloterdijk, it can also be anchored in the kinetic concept of modernity, which has declared movement, transgression and progress as its leading metaphors. The dream of boundlessness connected to these concepts of colonialism and modernity is, if taken to its logical conclusion, totalitarian.<sup>13</sup>

*If translation takes place at the border, this border marks both a separation and a connection of the cultures.*

Especially in cultural practices, what is decisive is how the experiences of boundaries are treated. It is not least for this reason that Waldenfels argues (in following with Derrida and Levinas) for an “ethos of a regard for boundaries (Grenzachtung) and infringement of boundaries (Grenzverletzung) (...). This means that one crosses the threshold to the other without suspending the boundary or leaving it behind.”<sup>14</sup> – “One is never installed within transgression, one never lives elsewhere. Transgression implies that the limit is always at work”<sup>15</sup>, says Jacques Derrida.

The hypothesis of the research project<sup>16</sup> is that the co-productions of the Tanztheater Wuppertal are borne by this “ethos of a regard for and infringement of boundaries”. They do not exhibit the “strange”, are not, therefore, ethnological shows, travel guides or folklore, as claimed by some critics who turned away in disappointment. They do not make accusations (for example, not even with regard to human rights infringements in co-producing countries like China or India), they do not rise up, they claim no cultural authority. The translations of that which is perceived during the research trips lead to some scenes that draw attention to the everyday culture of the cities and countries – such as funeral rituals in *Palermo Palermo*, massage rituals in a Turkish bath in *Nefés*, or bathing scenes in *Água*, the co-production with Sao Paulo.

13 Wolfgang Müller-Funk: “Transgression und dritte Räume: Ein Versuch, Homi Bhabha zu lesen.” In: Homi K. Bhabha: *Über kulturelle Hybridität. Tradition und Übersetzung*, Anna Babka, Gerald Posselt (eds.), Vienna: Turia und Kant 2012, S. 81.

14 Bernhard Waldenfels: *Der Stachel des Fremden*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990, p. 39 (italics in original).

15 Jacques Derrida: *Positions* (translated by Alan Bass), London and Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981, p. 12.

16 Cf. footnote 1.

However they are also reflected more subtly in the choreography: in the hard cuts in *Rough Cut*, the co-production with Seoul, where the everyday rhythm of the South Korean metropolis is translated into a scenic and musical dramaturgy. Or they are noticeable in the underlying meditative mood in *Ten Chi*, the co-production with Japan, which ends in an ecstatic dance by all. Or they become tangible in the cloths waving silently and gently in the breeze in *Bamboo Blues*, a co-production with India.

These aesthetic translations illustrate that translation not only refers to transferral, or crossing over, but also to positing, each of which is an essential element of translation.

*Translation always begins with a positing.*

It is, as described by Dieter Mersch, “always ‘another start,’ an act that must constantly begin again”.<sup>17</sup> – “One must always begin again from the start,” said Pina Bausch. What do the dancers notice in other countries? What do they choose to translate during rehearsals? What is taken and transported into choreography? All of these steps contain different posittings.

## TRANSLATING AS PRACTICE

In order to describe the act of translation, it is necessary, as claims the thesis of this article, to concentrate on the practices of translation. How does translation take place and how can the aesthetic practices of translation and their performative effects be examined? The approach that this article wishes to outline is a praxeology of translation. This school of thought makes it possible to expand the definition of translation beyond its latent attribution to include all cultural transformations (e.g. text/image; music; theatre/performance, dance/film, etc.).

A praxeological approach poses the question of how these complex cultural processes of exchange and negotiation take place. It therefore concentrates on everyday and physically bound practices that underlie cultural translations. The term “practice” here should not be confused with that introduced to philosophical debate by Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx, when referring to the sensory or representational activity of humans. Practices, rather, are “meaningful, regulated bodily movements, which depend on a related implicit incorporated knowledge” and are often “routinized patterns of behaviour using artefacts (...)”<sup>18</sup> They are based on a complex collective knowledge. This should be understood not so much as know-what but instead as a know-how knowledge, “less mentally known/conscious than ... a knowledge incorporated by means of physical exercise”<sup>19</sup>. Bodies are therefore not prerequisites for practices, or, to put it another way: a body does not conduct or carry out practices, but rather “the body is inherent in the practices”<sup>20</sup>. Practices of translation show themselves in their situatedness, in other words in their materiality and physicality – in contrast to a semiotic approach that is oriented towards the systems of signs and symbols of dances. The practical ability and implicit knowledge of bodies is demonstrated in these practical situations. Therefore, for example, the bodies of the dancers of the Tanztheater Wuppertal, trained in daily ballet sessions and with specific research methods, have developed a practical ability that the dancers can call upon in the research phases. This is based on knowledge gained from experience, which is implicit knowledge in so far as the ability is not reflected in the situation.

17 Dieter Mersch: “Transferré/Perferré. Übersetzen als Praxis”, *ibid.*

18 Andreas Reckwitz: “Praktiken und Diskurse: Eine sozialtheoretische und methodologische Relation”, in: Herbert Kalthoff, Stefan Hirschauer, Gesa Lindemann (eds.): *Theoretische Empirie. Die Relevanz qualitativer Forschung*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 2008, S. 188–209; p. 192.

19 Reckwitz, *ibid.*, p. 45.



Thus activities and actions come into focus: the practices of warming up, of training, of improvising, of researching, of noting and recording, of composing, of choreographing, etc. This ensemble of practices is organised along collectively shared, practical forms of knowledge, which, as bodily and implicit knowledge, also always generate difference. In this way such, the working methods of the Tanztheater Wuppertal and thus the practical know-how are more than simply different to those of other dance groups. In addition, the carrying out of the practices themselves produces other bodies and subjectivities. Practices of translating movement should therefore be understood as a combination of physical and mental activities, whereby the mental aspect of practice is registered, ratified, confirmed and observed.

From this perspective it is also more explainable that the translation of movement should not be understood primarily as an intentional act, as a process by which the meaning of movement is transferred. Rather, and this is one hypothesis, the translation of movement can be seen as a “doing dance” (not as an acting dance). It is a direct physical process that is generated practically by means of work on the form. “A [dance-related, G.K.] act must be set in motion. It demands an impulse and a centre for endowing it with meaning. This is why we address it with ‘why’ and ‘what-for’ questions. A [dance-related, G.K.] practice, on the other hand, is always ongoing, and the question is merely what keeps it going and how ‘one’ or ‘people’ practice it. How can it be done?”<sup>21</sup>

This now places the focus beyond the bodies of the dancers to contain within it the relationship of the practices to the material artefacts: e.g. to the spaces, materials, props, stage scenery or costumes. A praxeological perspective circumvents the dichotomy between a subject and object world by taking into consideration the involvement and effect of artefacts in the bodily practices of translation.<sup>22</sup>

Pina Bausch was also a pioneer in addressing the relationship between material artefacts and dance-related practices, in making it physical and thus finding for it an aesthetic form. Rolf Borzik designed stage sets and costumes from 1973 until his death in 1980, and played a significant role in the aesthetic of the Tanztheater. He saw the stage as an “action space”, with his designs based on a spatial dramaturgy that understood the space as an “agent” that interacts with the dancers, as a space that contains risks for the dancers and provokes resistance. One example is the peat on the stage in *The Rites of Spring*, which makes the dance floor unpredictable for the dancers because it is always different regardless of where in the world the piece is performed. Another example is the carnations stuck in the ground in the piece by the same name (*Nelken*), which served to inhibit and unsettle walking. Yet another is the collapsed wall in *Palermo Palermo*, which forces the dancers into many jumps and balancing acts. And finally, the water on the dance floor in *Vollmond*, which makes clothing wet and heavy, thus changing the movements of the dancers as well as their appearance. All of these material artefacts of the stage – earth, water, leaves, stones – are not solely representations of nature. Their use is not limited to re-presenting or exhibit something. Instead, and above all, they create something. They change movements, generate smells, provoke sounds – they make different movements. They are translated to the bodies of the dancers. Here, dance bodies and material seem to be connected to each other inseparably. And it was precisely this, the physical exposure of bodies to things, which perhaps constituted the political radicalness of Bausch’s aesthetic.

20 Stefan Hirschauer: “Praktiken und ihre Körper. Über materielle Partizipanden des Tuns”, in: Karl H. Hörning, Julia Reuter (eds.). *Doing Culture. Zum Begriff der Praxis in der gegenwärtigen soziologischen Theorie*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2004, p. 75.

21 Hirschauer, *ibid.*, p. 73.

22 Cf. Bruno Latour: *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

## THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATING

Until now, this article has attempted to outline the relationship between movement and translation mainly using three prepositions: translation through, translation into and translation as movement. All three of these references are characterised by a metaphorical openness and a poetic potential. All three references predestine the term translation to the description of artistic processes, especially as translation itself is always something aesthetic, and therefore also always, in following with Jacques Rancière,<sup>23</sup> something genuinely political.

Also with regard to the political, cultural translations are always exposed to ambivalence, and in conclusion the text draws attention to this. On the one hand, they contain a political and emancipatory potential, as translations represent ways of negotiating differences, and contain the potential to overcome hegemonic conditions. On the other hand, there is the corresponding aspect of cultural translation: establishing authority, making something one's own, stabilising and updating hegemonic relationships, and this is the hegemonic aspect of translation that is sometimes ignored in the debate about cultural translation in the arts. Whether a painting by Vermeer, a piece of music by Bach, a play by Shakespeare or the *Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky, in all works of art that have been established globally as art, it is always also about the establishment of cultural authority. Or when popular dances from other cultures, such as Tango Argentino, son, salsa, rock 'n' roll are re-formed by German dance clubs into the corset of the European dance culture. Or, for example, when hip hop is adopted as "street art" in the context of contemporary dance, our view is not limited to the paradoxical relationship between identity and difference, and the political two-facedness of the boundary that is simultaneously a separation and an overcoming. In this process of inclusion and exclusion the hegemonic side of translation also manifests itself. But even here there is an intrinsic productivity<sup>24</sup> for new choreographic forms and dance styles have also emerged in and through these political practices of inclusion and exclusion via translation.

The politics of translation reveal themselves in the practices, in the acts of negotiation. Conversely, the practices of translation point to the political dimension of artistic practice and the political place of art.

*Translation also here means "not merely a blending, but the strategic and selective appropriation of signification, creating a space for actors".<sup>25</sup>*

Precisely here we see the relevance of setting up the translation of movement as an empirical project because a praxeology of translating provokes us to understand acts of negotiation as a practice of the political at the boundary between aesthetic practice and discourse.

The discourses that must be "translated" into aesthetic processes exist always with a qualification: the translation of the untranslatable. They miss the mark, they place something other, and they cannot be identical to aesthetic processes. This irrevocable alterity between the aesthetic and the discursive practices means preserving a boundary, i.e. on the one hand defending the intrinsic meaning and intrinsic logic of the aesthetic, and on the other working on the practices of discursive placements. Here, too, translations are a practice of negotiation.

23 Jacques Rancière: *The Politics of Aesthetics: The distribution of the Sensible*, ed. and translated by Gabriel Rockhill, London and New York: Continuum, 2004.

24 Dieter Mersch, unpublished manuscript, *ibid.*

25 Homi K. Bhabha: *On Cultural Hybridity*, *ibid.*, p. 13.

## WILD GARDENS. ARCHIVING AS TRANSLATING

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GABRIELE KLEIN / MARC WAGENBACH

### HISTORY BREAKS DOWN INTO IMAGES, NOT STORIES. WALTER BENJAMIN<sup>1</sup>

#### WHAT TO ARCHIVE?

The Pina Bausch Archive consists of an abundance of various different materials: More than 7,500 videos of performances, volumes on rehearsals and different research phases of the Tanztheater Wuppertal throughout the world. Originals, copies, copies of copies, fragments of individual recordings. Complete performances – often recorded with a home video camera in a dark theatre space somewhere in the world. Or film clips. Documentation about the work of the Tanztheater. Reports. Television coverage. Advance notices. Volume after volume. Format after format. Picture after picture. Since the early 1970s. The volumes exist as open reel video formats, as U-matic, Hi8, VHS, Digibeta or as digital files. They are filmic attempts to document the present – to historicise it. To document the genesis and performances of a choreography by Pina Bausch, in order not to forget. Rehearsals, premieres, revivals, guest appearances. Media and dance history in one case with 102 volumes. All of them fragments of an artistic process of creation over more than forty years. Collected with the goal to carry on. Not to stop.

Archiving. Protected processes with sensitive materials. Archives. Protected places of written records and the lore of rehearsal processes: Pina Bausch's manuscripts and collections of pages. Her countless white, perforated A4 pages, on which she noted a scene with pencil during its process of creation, giving it a name, in each case up at the top of the page, fixed with paperclips, so that it could be altered constantly. Interim statuses. Momentary snapshots. Always unfinished. Reworked and put together anew the following day.

1 Benjamin 1989: 67.

Pina Bausch collected production materials based on her pieces in chronological order. Driven by the desire to be able to stage a piece again. To revive it. To keep it alive. They are registries of time, inventories of a materiality of things, fixations of processes: technical stage directions, lighting plans, copyright lists, stage manager recordings, documentations of sceneries, costumes, props. Information on the consistency of turf, on quantities of water, on the colour of flowers. Descriptions of a close network of various actors and relationships on the stage. A positioning system of emerging atmospheres.

Dancer's jottings. Notes by generations of dancers on their positions on stage. Role descriptions. Notes of their own impressions, on squared or lined paper with pen, pencil or crayon, with a typewriter. In various different versions. With little sketches or descriptions in words: details of spaces, information on gaits, lists of sequences. Each time different. Radically subjective. Personal focal points.

Programmes and posters – from Wuppertal or of guest appearances worldwide in 28 languages from 47 countries. Information on the casting of dancers, opera singers, musicians and conductors. Tales of global performative and receptive practices of the choreographic work: from the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, to the BAM in New York, the Teatro Alfa in São Paulo, Sadler's Wells in London, the LG Arts Center in Seoul, the Teatro Argentina in Rome, the Zellerbach Hall at UC Berkeley, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Saitama Arts Theater in Tokyo. Reference points of past events, which become seismographs within an enormous network of memories, moods and impressions.

Pina Bausch. The archivist. Press folders. Countless critiques, reviews, and interviews worldwide. Since the late 1950s she herself collected reviews of her performances as a dancer and of her first works of choreography in her press archive. She filed, stuck and labelled page after page. Meticulously. Practices of a biographical self-description. Techniques for organising the materials that she herself invented. Archiving was part of her choreographic working process, an essential element of her work. It was an attempt to retain the momentary and the transient, to be able to remember, in order then to once again create an artistic present. Fragment after fragment. Detail after detail. Situation after situation.

Photos. There are more than 30,000 photos in the various different collections of the Pina Bausch Archive. In colour, black-and-white, as slides or negatives. Press, rehearsal or performance photos. Or photos from the research trips to the 15 co-productions of the Tanztheater Wuppertal, or private photos by Pina Bausch. Photos of honours and awards ceremonies. Photo, the stilled pictorial memory of an artistic process of creation.

The archive collects documents that mark a translation between the private and the public sphere, between brief momentary snapshots and Bausch's constant artistic working process. Her life.

So, how should an archive be set up?

## ARCHIVING DANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Two central functions are generally ascribed to archiving. It should contribute to the “afterlife” (Warburg) of the present, and also satisfy a claim to completeness. Neither of these expectations can truly be fulfilled in an archive that collects the material on the working methods of a dancer and choreographer. Not only because Pina Bausch’s work is so extensive, but above all because the archiving of dance-related and choreographic material is subject to a fundamental transfer, namely that the materials of movement and of choreography are *translated* into word and image – and in the process follow the abstract order of the archive. But, only in and by means of the translation into other media is the continuation of Pina Bausch’s work possible. Thus the archive always operates in the paradox of identity and difference<sup>2</sup>. It aims to maintain the artistic work of Pina Bausch in the present and to be identical to it. At the same time, archiving always generates something else in the media transfer – like this book, which in turn documents the process of archiving.

In that respect it is only logical that the Pina Bausch Archive not only wishes to store that which is past, but above all wants to focus its attention on the multifaceted and dynamic nature of archiving, pulling the process of archiving itself into the foreground. This process not only highlights the object in the medium of its recording, but also demonstrates that the archive does not aim primarily to be the representation of something that is past, but is rather a matter of performance. An archive is always different, depending on how the material collected there is inspected, ordered, stored, researched, sought for, found and interpreted. An archive is therefore also something moveable. It consists of an ensemble of archiving practices and it constantly re-emerges anew in the practices of dealing with the archived materials.

The idea of the performativity and movement of archives is accompanied by another instance of archiving: at the cost of the demand for universality and completeness, aspects of the unordered, the unfinished, the multifaceted, the absent and the hidden attain greater significance. These are aspects that not only accommodate the phenomena of dance and movement, but which also represent the method of working for which, among other things, Pina Bausch was renowned. These are the work in progress, the diversity and incomplete nature of her “pieces” as well as the posing of questions that demanded answers from the dancers, which they in turn documented, thus adding further perspectives on the rehearsal process to the video recordings, music research, costumes and notes by Pina Bausch. In that respect, the Pina Bausch Archive gathers materials in which not only the records are important, but also the manner in which the choreographic processes are recorded. The archive is therefore a place of *translation of the second order*, as the record – in images, writing, sound and text – is itself already a central element of the choreographic creation<sup>3</sup>, which is now compiled anew in a further step of archiving.

Processuality and participation are therefore not only terms that characterise the artistic working methods of Pina Bausch, but also principles that distinguish the archival work. Like the “pieces” themselves, which found their strength only in the choreographic and scenic composition of the individual images and solos developed by the dancers – in combination with scenery, music and costumes –, the archived material also attains its contemporary reference only by means of specific policies of displaying and making visible. And in the process, the archive, understood as the order of classifying, documenting and archiving, can only ever be contemporary in part, never a representation of the whole. It is, rather, a space of possibilities, a place where the hidden is sought out, an archive of the absent – of the ensemble of practices that characterise practical dance and choreography: researching, rehearsing, improvising, recording, composing, choreographing, training, performing, reconstructing, reviving.

2 For a more detailed treatment of the concept of translation, see the contribution by Gabriele Klein in this volume.

3 On the connections between choreography and records, see Klein 2011: 14–77.

An archive is always confronted with expectations and fears. Which materials will see the light of day? What will be made public? What remains hidden? Who can get an insight? Where and how can archived material be seen? Can an archive keep the *œuvre* of Pina Bausch alive? Can dance and choreography be archived at all? Can artistic skills be archived? Will it ever be possible to understand the specific competencies of the dancers of the Tanztheater Wuppertal by means of archived material? What status does archived material have in relation to the culture of remembering on the part of the participating dancers, costume designers, musicians, set designers, stage manager, etc.?

“The archivization produces as much as it records the event,” wrote Jacques Derrida, thus expressing a fear that he associated with the political critique of the “so-called news media” (Derrida 1996: 17). The mass media, rather than merely showing an event, actually creates it in the first place by putting it in the spotlight.

It is a fear shared by those who emphasise the contemporaneous and fleeting status of dance, and who presuppose the co-presence of the actors in a theatre and dance event. Only by these means, its contemporaneousness and presence, can dance be understood. In this view, dance history could only be accessed via the history of the bodies of the dancers and their audience. It would be inscribed in the bodies as a lived experience and thus bound directly (and solely) to the communicative memory.

Archiving, in contrast, marks chains of transference. It is an achievement of technical and cultural transfer, an attempt at de- and re-contextualising. It occurs consciously and at the same time subconsciously. Archiving, understood as the translation of the untranslatable<sup>4</sup>, creates instable networks of uncertain memory and makes the archive a “swimming memory” (Schlingensief 2009: 146).<sup>5</sup>

4 See the contribution by Gabriele Klein in this volume.

5 Christoph Schlingensief: *So schön wie hier kanns im Himmel gar nicht sein. Tagebuch einer Krebserkrankung*. Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) 2009. With reference to Erik Kandel, Schlingensief speaks of a “swimming memory”: “Kandel is the discoverer of this protein, which has an important function in memory. This thing, he says, is the explanation for the fact that the memory swims and we never remember something in exactly the same way. Perhaps columns of numbers, but not stories, experiences. Something different always emerges.”

## DIGITAL ARCHIVING

What happens when collective memory disintegrates into fragments? When information is divided among various different circles of people and storage media: from servers and hard drives to dancers, assistants, stage technicians and administrators? How can the performance of a “piece” by Pina Bausch be translated into digital media?

What happens to the materials when they are compiled and digitised, and countless compressed and uncompressed data files are generated from them? When they become data formats, removed from all sensorial production contexts?

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the cultural and scientific discourse about archives and practices of archiving became increasingly relevant, as it also did in the field of dance.<sup>6</sup> It is no coincidence that this happened at a time in which digital media took on an essential function in storing and processing data. On the one hand, digital media bear the hopes and visions of new forms of archiving and, with these, new concepts of institutionalising archives. These hopes are drawn from the capacities of digital media to transport and store large amounts of data quickly, and to make data available digitally all over the world. On the other hand, the possibilities provided by digital media also provoke anxieties. If the archiving of digital data has become easier, if the archive is no longer a physical place but instead provides “access” from everywhere, then the question as to whether the material to be archived should be selected and by whom is not the only urgent problem. Digital media have also made both the control and abuse of data easier. Thus digital media presents power, control and abuse, issues that accompany archives in any case, in a new light.

However, the debate about archives has become pressing for reasons beyond the *technological* developments displayed in the digitisation of analogue image and textual media. Its *cultural* relevance is derived from apparently contradictory phenomena. For instance, from the musealisation of society that accompanies the speed of digital communication, from the question of what is considered a national and local legacy in the context of globalisation, from the capacity of human memory in relation to digital memory storage, or from the debate about the meaning of a culture of remembering in an age of fleeting and fast-moving information.

The Pina Bausch Archive in particular faces great challenges with regard to the generation of a cultural legacy. There are no previous models for archives of 20<sup>th</sup> century choreographers, which means that the Pina Bausch Foundation is performing truly pioneering work here. Further, the ensemble itself is also a globalised group with dancers from more than 20 nations. It has toured over 40 countries and was and remains bound locally to Wuppertal, the “everyday city” (Pina Bausch). Finally, the Tanztheater Wuppertal encompasses a total of three dancer generations, so that the dancers themselves are “living archives” who have always passed on their experience and memories from generation to generation, and continue to do so. The archive also collects material that records the rehearsal and research processes of 40 years of cooperation. In other words, it contains sensitive and confidential material that not only documents the specific working methods of the Tanztheater Wuppertal, but also captures the improvisations of all dancers in images and words. These forms of communicative memory are now placed in relation to structures of a cultural memory in the context of archiving processes. Here, too, questions of authenticity, authority, truth and power arise.

6 Cf. e.g. Baxmann 2008, Thurner, Wehren 2010, Brandstetter, Klein 2013 and Hecht 2013.

## ARCHIVING AS TRANSLATING

Digital archiving is a special process of media translation. It contains within it the general media-related proposal that media not only “transports” things but also, at the same time, brings them to bear. This general theory raises the question of *how* the “transport” takes place and *how* processes of generation take place digitally. It is thus a question concerning translation and a concept that has, until now, been attributed primarily to language-theoretical relevance, but which has been reinterpreted by the cultural sciences in recent decades<sup>7</sup> and also gained significance in the field of media science. The process of translation is thus reflected, for example, in the concept of (intra- and intermedia) “transcriptivity”<sup>8</sup>, which represents a “symbolic operation of reciprocal intermedia transcription, inscription and transference” (Jäger 2004). Or also in the concept of “remediation”<sup>9</sup>, which emphasizes the fundamentally cyclical dependence of media on each other, in which they imitate, surpass or otherwise repeatedly reference each other and in the process both stabilise and undermine the limits of individual media. Ultimately, the concept of media translation is anchored in the idea of the recursiveness of methods<sup>10</sup>, according to which, in the course of a recursive self-processing, an intrinsic logic emerges in media transformations<sup>11</sup>.

If we follow this approach, *archiving digitally* not only involves the coordination of the *technical* processes of digitalising data. Rather, this process itself becomes a *cultural* process that occurs between digital and physical worlds. Furthermore, digitization is a performative process, to the extent that “reality” is not illustrated by the transfer into digital models, but instead by creating something new.

Each layer of material requires its own strategy of conservation as well as a fitting digital description. Material is collected, recorded, digitised, catalogued – firstly, what is seen is captured. Word for word, error for error, sentence for sentence. Collections of material by different authors. Written by Pina Bausch, but also by generations of assistants, employees and dancers. But is that all? What else must be described? How can a filigree network of actors, things and practices in constant motion, such as a “piece” by Pina Bausch, be described in a digital environment? Production processes? Surfaces of materials? Or textures of costumes? How can we approach the description of a stage design? What props should be included? Water bottles, rubbish, food?

A “piece” is an artistic work, but it is only ever created through the perception of the audience, and it is often a different matter here. Is it possible to digitise feelings? Smells generated by the turf? The hint of a gentle breeze caused by the water on the stage? How should this kinaesthetic sensibility be digitised? What is the function of this data? How is it passed on, specifically? And what do we do about contradictory information, from different actors, in programmes and on posters?

How can *strategies of translation* be found, in order to get closer to this highly complex matter of archiving a “piece” by Pina Bausch, and by these means be able to understand and describe a heterogeneous inventory? This can happen with the help of the analysis of processes, the question of routines, of practices of artistic production and reception. Here, archiving and the creation of historiography go hand in hand. For example, how are production processes generated in Pina Bausch’s work? What function do specific reference systems such as video, storyboards, or notes by dancers have within the process of remembering a “piece”? How do audiences remember a “piece” all around the world and in different historical phases, e.g. *The Rite of Spring*, which has by now been performed for over 35 years more than 250 times in over 37 countries?

7 Cf. the contribution by Gabriele Klein in this volume.

8 Cf. Jäger 2004a: 69–79, 2010: 301–324 and 2004: 35–73.

9 Cf. Bolter, Grusin 2000.

10 Cf. Luhmann 1997.

11 Cf. Jäger 2005: 45–64.



But questions about the limits of digital translation are also appropriate. What can these materials not do? How to describe this “hole”, this “empty space” in the information that happens only by means of a direct transfer from dancer to dancer, from body to body? How can that be *translated*? What does it mean to collect different reference systems and at the same time to know that it won't be enough? All of these are key questions of *best practice* in digital archiving. They arise from the interest in preserving the performative legacy of Pina Bausch at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in passing it on so that something new can emerge in performative processes.

Perhaps the principle of failure that is intrinsic to media translation becomes apparent above all in the transfer of dance and choreography, in the discussion about a performative legacy, albeit in the knowledge that the translation always remains only a reference and indicates that which is absent, that which is not there, not present, but which was there and will perhaps be there again. Something that can only be.

Archiving presupposes the description and reflection of working processes. Seeing, for example, where *movements* originate. How they came about. In rehearsals or on stage? In Wuppertal or somewhere else in the world? How do performative networks emerge on the stage? Analyses in quick motion. When does something happen within the rehearsal process? Which materials are generated as a result? What, for example, did the production locations look like? These questions touch on transfers. They are the positioning of time and space, translation strategies for a digital environment.

Accumulated knowledge. Existing knowledge. At the same time ordered and disordered. Permanent questioning. Taking stock. The search for a language of its own, a cultural form in the digital: an *ontology*.<sup>12</sup>

When, for instance, did Pina Bausch give a “title” to the “answers” of her dancers to questions she had posed? What steps preceded it? And how can we relate to it all the white pages covered in pencilled writing and held together with paperclips? Position them in a specific time?

The “titles” became processes. The processes became sequences. And the sequences became pieces. Always altered. Fragmentary. They are choreographic translations *of the first order*: attempts to note processes, practices, movement.

In the digital environment, the “titles” by Pina Bausch became *structures* of digital information, patterns for the descriptions of sequences, allocations of theatrical situations. They are translations *of the second order*: tracing processes in order to transfer, to transport them into something different, into digitally-generated forms of *processuality*.

<sup>12</sup> See the essay by Bernhard Thull in this volume on the development of a Pina Bausch Archive Ontology (pbs) – a descriptive tool for the description of performance in the context of developing a digital Pina Bausch Archive.

## ARCHIVES AS MEETING PLACES

Digital archives find their anchor not only in the digital space. They are always a composite of digital and physical spaces, of technology and culture, of virtuality and materiality, of absence and presence.

These interactions have become obvious since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hybrid transgressions have emerged since then, due to the rapid and global mobilisation of the Internet. In the context of everyday mass media culture, strategies of archiving and staging oneself have become dominant cultural techniques. Digital information has proven to be omnipresent, especially in urban metropolises. The *self-image* is recorded meticulously on smartphones and other devices and posted simultaneously online: contemporary strategies of an autobiographical *self-historicisation*.

Archives are always places of remembrance, but also of the present and future. How can digital archives be designed as new spaces of communication and reception? To put it another way, how can an aesthetic experience be shaped in conjunction with digitised materials? These questions touch upon the *relocalisation* of “pieces” in the form of digital information. Archives are places of encounter between the digital and the physical, between the past, present and future, between different materialities. Here, in these hybrid transgressions, the archive displays itself as a translation *of the third order*.

The desire for physical meeting places, for *laboratories of memory*, describes a contrary position to the debate propagated on all sides about an *unrestricted* networking of digital data, to a dissolution into the digital “flow space” (Castells), to a non-discussion of the *places of digital experience* (Potthast 2007). But in which cultural or spatial contexts is information received? How and where do they become central coordinates of an aesthetic experience when dealing with digital material?

Archiving is a never-ending process of the digital conservation of information. Accordingly, archives are places in which translation processes can be stimulated, in which *remembering* can be experienced as an active and creative process, as a practice that prompts the shaping of dance legacy in the first place, the search for the new and the continuation of processes. Or their forgetting. For if the insight has been gained that dance, in particular, exemplifies the unquenchable yearning of the archive, that neither the artistic practice nor the artist Pina Bausch can be represented, in other words, that art has no place in the archive, and if the position of the archive as uniform, complete and unambiguous is recognised as a phantasm, then the archive has a chance in the future: by seeking to archive the creative work of Pina Bausch and the Tanztheater Wuppertal in the interrupted and absent, in the transitive and transitory, in the unfinished and the oblique. Dance archives are not places that testify on artistic creativity or verify it as “art”. Their quality is not based on elaborate classification systems, but rather on openness, on open systems, which allow us to address anew the treasure of the knowledge stored there repeatedly. This provides the prerequisite for the fact that the Pina Bausch Archive does not become an end in itself, but instead a living place in which historiography is shaped as a process of present creative discovery, of re-formulating, of re-translation, translation *of the fourth order*. Such historiographic translation is not merely a method of documenting but rather, like archiving, part of dance history itself. The documents about a “piece” by Pina Bausch do not write its history alone. More revealing is how they are dealt with. Put another way, the continued existence of the “piece” is made possible only by translation.

In this respect, the productive, forward-looking treatment of tradition exists less in the definitive conservation of documents than in a permanent visualisation, less in a final storage than in the alternating, differing reinterpretation, and thus less in *preserving* than in *moving*.

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