

Geolocational Soundwalk as Ecological Choreography: Walking and Listening Towards Ecological Awareness

MA Thesis
Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy
Utrecht University

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Abstract

This thesis considers the ecological potential of performing arts with reference to a stimulation of ecological experience of interconnectedness. I then offer a brief overview of two main academic outlooks on performance and ecology. On the one hand, there is a premise of informational models of theatre where ecological contribution is represented by facing the audience with factual information on ecological crisis. On the other, the ecocritical potential lies in producing ecological experiences of ecological awareness. Performances such as these offer the audience ways of attending and perceiving which produce ecological awareness, a term coined by Timothy Morton. Delving into various interpretations of ecology, I sketch out some of its key characteristics, with an awareness of the human's position within the interconnected nature of ecosystems of environments being the main one. Choreography as a definition of things in space and time means refers to performance's way of producing such ecological experiences. The case study *Sandbox* and the form of geolocational soundwalks are an example of ecological choreography because of their use of listening and the mechanics of the medium to produce an experience of ecological awareness. Interconnected characteristics of geolocational soundwalks where its realisation is dependent on geographical location in combination with sound make it an example of ecological choreography.

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Introduction

In order to exist on this planet, we as humans are inextricably dependent on a whole range of other human and non-human actors. The air we breathe, the food we eat, and the climate we exist in are all the result of the complex workings of a set of ecosystems. At the same time, we humans are part of them too. Our actions directly shape the lives of the ecosystem's other participants. Current environmental crisis is in my perspective a crisis of interconnectedness. Moreover, within everyday lives of humankind, I detect a lack of awareness of the interconnected nature of ecosystems we as humans are a part of. In pursuit of changing humankind's outlook on the environmental crisis, I believe that human audiences should be aware of their own entanglement in complex webs of ecosystems. Furthermore, I find that performance practices are a space where, through performance processes, human audiences can momentarily experience a sense of this enmeshment.

This thesis contributes to the debate on ecology and performance studies by introducing the concept of ecological choreography. This concept is used to analyse a specific type of environmental performance: a geolocational sound walk titled *Sandbox*. My argument is that ecological choreography is a performing arts practice which helps its audiences experience interconnectedness which subsequently produces ecological awareness. In this thesis, I aim to show how performances have the potential to make audiences perceive a sense of interconnectedness that was not there before. Moreover, I propose a concept of ecological choreography as a form of organising elements in space and time which makes such perception possible. I demonstrate the application of this concept by looking at a form of geolocational soundwalk as a possible representative. I illustrate this through an in-depth performance analysis of one specific case study, a geolocational soundwalk *Sandbox* (2020) by Irena Pivka and Brane Zorman. My central research question is thus:

How can Pivka and Zorman's geolocational soundwalk Sandbox be understood as a form of ecological choreography?

My sub-questions are:

1. What is the aim of ecological choreography?
2. How does ecological choreography lead to perceiving ecological awareness?

3. How do *Sandbox's* performance elements create ecological experiences?

In recent years, the academic debate on performance and ecology has been spurred on by publication by, among others, Carl Lavery, and Nigel Stewart. Both of them introduce theoretical frameworks in which they argue for physical and sensorial experiences as backbones of effective performances on ecology. In the article 'Dancing the face of place: Environmental dance and eco-phenomenology', Stewart introduces the phrase 'environmental dance' which is an "umbrella term for plethora of dance and somatic practices concerned with the body's relationship to landscape and environment, including the other-than-human world of animals and plants" (32-33). Stewart's explanation suggests that the focus of environmental dance is forming and observing connections between the human body and everything else that surrounds it. His research, conducted within a phenomenological framework, considers various somatic-based dance practices to be environmental dances. By including approaches which are based on engagement and use of human body's senses Stewart's contribution to the academic debate highlights body's experiences as a key element in ecological performance.

Similarly, in his book *Performance & Ecology: What can Theatre do?* theatre scholar Carl Lavery argues that theatre's ecological input lies in what he calls "ecological experiences"(84). For Lavery these ecological experiences lead to "new ways of attending and perceiving" (84) where in addition to factual information about ecological topics humans can familiarize themselves with other non-human elements through physical experiences (81). Both Stewart and Lavery lay the ground for academic thought on performance and ecology where the central focus is on sensorial and physical, or rather embodied experiences of relating to a vast world of non-human presence.

My research in this thesis continues the path shaped by Lavery and Stewart. It is an attempt to expand and contribute to a strain of academic scholarship on ecology and performance and to accompany already proposed concepts such as environmental dance. I propose ecological choreography as an example of a form where embodied ecological experience is produced. If Lavery mainly discusses the result of ecological performances,

with the concept of ecological choreography I aim to describe procedures which lead to ecological experiences. Thus, ecological choreography makes an effort to develop a theoretical framework focused on the mechanics of performance's structure.

0.1 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Approaching my research question, I conducted a qualitative literary research mainly comprised of texts from fields of ecology, environmentalism, acoustic ecology, and performance studies. In addition to building a theoretical framework, I also attended selected performance work *Sandbox*. Although its premiere was an organised event in the beginning of September 2020, its technology and design made it available for me to experience outside of set times on my own in the Spring of 2021. Additional support for performance analysis came from secondary sources documenting the original artwork, including reviews, openly accessible sound recordings, and a part of the script provided by the artists.

I begin the thesis with answering the first sub-question which inquires: What is the aim of ecological choreography? Turning to Carl Lavery I identify that the principal ecological contribution of performance practices lies in producing ecological experiences. These are not created on the basis of factual or fictional information in the form of dramatic texts, but are facilitated through practices which produce “new ways of attending and perceiving” (Lavery 84). A philosopher Timothy Morton introduces a concept of ecological awareness which describes an attention of humans where we are being aware of the complex interconnected nature of ecosystems and worlds we exist in. In search of performances inciting experiences of ecological awareness choreography as an organisation of things in space and time suggested by William Forsythe becomes a framework for thinking about how they can do that. A medium of sound and soundwalking as introduced by Hildegard Westerkamp is an example of a performance practice operating on the premise that the act of listening can heighten humans' awareness of their surroundings.

To demonstrate the application of ecological choreography, I bring into play a specific type of performance: the geolocational soundwalk. Before analysing a selected case study, I look into the form's characteristics to map what makes it such a compelling example of

ecological choreography. Through a summary of the history of the soundwalk as a research practice, I point out its inherent potential of offering sensual ecological experiences. To explain the potential of sound and listening when producing ecological awareness, I discuss supporting theories which are situated within the field of acoustic ecology. This is followed by an explanation how the particular form of a geolocational soundwalk fits the definition of ecological choreography. Its mechanics of interdependence of geographical location and sound where the first one conditions what audio gets played are the key characteristic. Secondly, I demonstrate how the use of audio in a geolocational soundwalk is one of the means of conjuring an experience is another way of raising ecological awareness. In the words of acoustic ecologists, listening can provide an intensive sensory engagement with a space and time and can stimulate a sense of interconnection. Geolocational soundwalk thus can be understood as a form of ecological choreography through an intertwining of its organisation of elements in space and time. Additionally, the same ecological experience of interconnectedness happens through its use of sound as a means of storytelling.

Throughout the thesis, I define the concept of ecological choreography as a form that produces experiences of interconnectedness. In order to do so, I focus on a key component that describes the conscious knowledge of interconnectedness: ecological awareness. In Chapter 1, before I arrive at this concept, I introduce two current theoretical perspectives on incorporating ecology into performing arts practices. The first one represents ecological topics on a semantic level, most often through a dramatic text or other types of story telling. The second one advocates for staging ecology through the means of performance, referring to the experiences and sensations pieces can produce. Following this presentation, I explain why embodied experiences of ecology within performing arts are substantial for eliciting a conversation on ecological crisis of our moment. I begin by outlining scientific explanations of ecology which are focused on studying the interactive and interconnected qualities of environments. I follow by discussing some of the humanist concepts which cover the aforementioned interconnectedness before settling for ecological awareness by Timothy Morton.

Chapter 2 makes the connection from ecological awareness to ecological choreography. I

commence by giving a short overview of how the definition of choreography evolved from description of dance making to denote an organisation of things in space and time. By opting for the adoption of the latter interpretation of choreography, I establish ecological choreography as an organisation of elements (in space and time) which creates ecological experiences. Moreover, I specify that these ecological experiences lead to a perception/a sensation of ecological awareness. Performances that are ecological choreographies achieve this with an organisation of its elements (in space and time) which not only creates such an experience for the audience. They epitomise the principle of interconnectedness within the relations of their elements as well.

Chapter 3 first outlines the field of the geolocational soundwalk by providing a selective overview of already existing works. The aim is to exhibit the field's relevancy and to indicate that the selected case study is not an outlier. Rather, by referring to works from artists like Ellen Reid, geolocational soundwalks prove to be a contemporary trend of multimedia performing arts. The chapter then discusses one case study: the geolocational soundwalk *Sandbox/Peskovnik* (2020), made by Slovenian artists Irena Pivka and Brane Zorman. A performance analysis describes how the work can be understood as a form of ecological choreography. Furthermore, I give an interpretation of its multiple elements such as the content of the audio tracks, the context of the chosen location, and its construction of time. I show that these elements additionally enhance performance's ecological nature as they address topics like more-than-human presence and non-linear time.

In the conclusion, I reflect on my research method. I continue with a discussion on the relevance of my research with a special attention paid to practices of walking. Taking into account the limitations on performing arts imposed by coronavirus measures, I indicate soundwalking's potential to operate even when staging performances within regular performance venues is not possible.

Chapter 1: A Performative Understanding of Ecological Awareness

This chapter begins with an examination of two approaches to ecology and performance that currently shape the academic debate on ecology and performance. Informational models of theatre practice primarily aim to transmit information on ecology, environment and climate change to the audience. Critiquing these models, I explain why the valuable ecological contribution of performance lays in creating ecological experiences. To offer a detailed understanding of this phrase within my research, I first introduce a biological definition of ecology. Some of its main characteristics transfer into common non-scientific interpretations. Within these, I choose to emphasise the interconnected nature of ecosystems as the primary characteristic of ecology. Answering the chapter's sub-question, 'What is the aim of ecological awareness?', I translate interconnectedness to indicate ecological awareness' key component. Performances that produce such awareness for the audience incite ecological experiences of interconnectedness with other human and/or non-human parts of ecosystems.

1.1 Staging Ecology in Performance: Two Approaches

A first approach to staging ecology in performance is an informational model focused on educating audiences about climate change and ecological catastrophe. Introduced by theatre scholars Deirdre Heddon and Sally Mackey in their article 'Environmentalism performance and applications, uncertainties, and emancipations', the term refers to performances focused on educating through storytelling (Heddon and Mackey 173). By educating the audience this performance model operates on what geographer Mike Hulme in a section of the book *Culture and climate change: Recordings* calls a 'deficit model' of communication (Butler et al. 84). Works based on the premise that the public has not yet been informed enough to understand the range and consequences of climate change and thus properly act upon it. Informational model of ecological performance considers achieving a 'broader awareness' about the causes and consequences of ecological catastrophe one of the crucial points of today's world. Offering information through various types of storytelling is supposed to address the audience's deficit knowledge. By presenting new information performances aim

to provoke a certain reaction in the audience. Devastating images painted by the facts can elicit compassion, sadness or an urge to fight. Informational model of theatre practice operates under the assumption that emotional and cognitive response to various types of information is key to audiences taking an active stance against climate change.

Performances which can be classified as informational models of theatre often narrate stories through text, asking the audience for a rational and emotional engagement with staged situations. The storyline or the setting may often talk about ecology, climate change, or environmental action. The nature of the stories is either activist, thus calling for action or change, educative, or tragic, aiming for the empathy of the audience. However, such performances only tap into the rationality of human audiences without engaging them in a physical way. Information about the effect humankind's actions has on other parts of the global ecosystem does not incite embodied connection with the ecosystem's elements. The lack of such connection makes it harder to understand and care for how our actions affect and hurt others. Thus, we are more likely to ignore the effects of our actions. An answer to this deficit is creating embodied experiences of such interconnected relations.

Such embodied experience can be found in performances that surpass the informational model. They use means of theatrical medium to produce 'ecological experiences'. In the introduction to *Performance & Ecology: What can Theatre do?* theatre scholar Carl Lavery describes such experiences as "new ways of attending and perceiving" (84). Combined with factual information on ecology and climate change, Lavery argues that 'theatre's ecocritical potential is located in how the immanence of the medium poses a challenge to human intentionality' (Lavery 4). This is in accordance with the current fundamental concern of theatre scholars which is "no longer to decipher what the theatre text means but focus on what the theatre medium 'does'; in how, that is, its dramaturgical distribution of organic and inorganic bodies in actual time and space create sensations and experiences in the here and now" (Lavery 2). It is important to note the last part of Lavery's quote. For him, the key theme of doing ecology in theatre is the connection between how we distribute, arrange, and compose both the organic (audience, actors, etc.) and the inorganic (scenography, music,

performance space) bodies. Lavery finds ecological experiences within the qualities of performance this arrangement of inorganic and organic bodies produces. The emphasis, his quote suggests, is not on what this arrangement can tell us about ecology, but on how the experience challenges our intentionality and shakes up our actions, self-definition, and self-position. In contrast to informational model of theatre, this type of ecological performance does not only aim to make us more aware or give us more information. It also wants to make us experience the ecology. By this, it addresses the aforementioned deficit of embodied connection.

Examples of performing arts practices which wish to create ecological experiences are numerous. They are usually focused on the attunement of the human body to the environment. An example is the work of Minty Donald in collaboration with a fellow artist Nick Millar described in Donald's article 'Guddling About: An Ecological Performance Practice with Water and Other Nonhuman Collaborators'. Donald uses ecological practice hoping "to become more attuned to our enmeshment with a more-than-human world that is in state of perpetual transformation" (Donald 593). Donald and Millar do that by incorporating water bodies, which are either transported, bottled, or otherwise find themselves leaving their original location. In one of their projects, titled *Watermeets: Nithsdale*, they drank water from a natural stream. By ingesting the stream water, they opened themselves up for biological, somatic and molecular interactions with water. Attunement of the body to the environmental body of water happened through a physical and affective experience of drinking it (Donald 593). Simon Whitehead's practice, introduced in the article 'Bringing It All Back Home: Towards an ecology of place' is on the other hand explicitly "interested in finding ways of making the body more attuned and keyed in to where it is" (Lavery and Whitehead 115). For example, in his works *Dulais*, Whitehead listened and recorded the rhythm of the river Dulais near his home with the use of an electric guitar, which he perceives as a body. Simply tuning the electric guitar and letting it respond to the rhythms of the river was a practice of attunement of the body (in this case through a guitar) to where it is (Lavery and Whitehead 115).

In the 1950s and 60s, Anna Halprin's practice represents an early sketch of attunement of

the body to the environment. At her home in California, the deck for dancing (designed by her husband Lawrence Halprin) reached into the forest surrounding their house. In addition to physical closeness to the environment, Halprin's practice was built on kinaesthetic awareness. Arden Thomas describes how Halprin's body "enters into [a] relationship with the natural world" through body's awareness of its own movement and its response to the surrounding (Thomas 122-123). For Halprin, moving within the environment means responding and connecting with it. Sandra Reeve, a dancer-researcher, furthermore talks about "ecological movement practice", where movement is a way of "being among" and the body engaging in it is "an ecological body" (Reeve 50). These artists and scholars are concerned with making the body more aware of or attuned to the environment, implying that in this attunement, the senses and sensations are the building blocks. Implicitly, they reject the discursive model of informational theatre that I discussed above. Their practices do not reach for words or facts to talk about connections of the body and the environment. Rather, they attune the body by instigating physical experiences such as ingestion of stream water or dancing with the kinaesthetic awareness of the surrounding environment. Instead of the discursive nature of information in the informational model, the information in their practices is sensual and directly physically impacts the entire body.

A useful concept that can explicitly address this attunement comes from Ann Cooper Albright, an improvisation practitioner and dance scholar. In an epilogue chapter, 'Dwelling in possibility', to *Taken by surprise: A dance improvisation reader*, Cooper Albright argues that improvisational practices facilitate "an ecological consciousness"(Cooper Albright and Gere 261). For her, this consciousness is facilitated by a series of somatic exercises which train the body to be open to new awareness and sensations. This training is focused on being attentive to one's surroundings and environment. This helps experience one's body as part of an entire landscape rather than an instrument that views, arranges, or destroys that landscape (Cooper Albright and Gere 261-263). Although Cooper Albright does not describe the exercises in detail, the overarching idea of somatic movement is that the internal physical experience is emphasised; the techniques are designed to enable or train that. Cooper Albright's suggestion of ecological consciousness can be interpreted as the necessity of turning inwards to gain the sensibility to be aware of what is outside. She also suggests that

this type of sensitivity creates a different type of connection or placement within the environment, while not changing anything in our material relation to it. This is in line with the sensorial ideas about performance and ecology that we looked at before. This practice does not make the dancers listen to lectures about the climate crisis or ecosystems and interdependence. Rather, it aims to make them feel it, position themselves differently within their experience of the environment.

An example of ecological consciousness at work are practices of Body Weather and Body/Landscape. Rosemary Candelario refers to Cooper Albright's concept to examine how the selected practices foster ecological consciousness. Candelario writes about them in her article 'Dancing with Hyperobjects: Ecological Body Weather choreographies from Height of Sky to Into the Quarry'. Dancers/people participating are tasked with embodying/moving, while being located within certain natural landscapes such as Grand Canyon. The movement impulse comes from attuning the body to the environment through a series of tasks, which are designed to help them recognise and respond to both internal (bodily) and external (environmental) stimuli. Examples of exercises aiming to heighten the focus on stimulations affecting the body are "a finger guide in which one person leads a blindfolded partner by the pointer finger for a period of time, stimulating the sense of touch by introducing different objects, textures, and impulses to the tip of the finger" (Candelario 49). There are a few key points that Candelario identifies about Body Weather and Body/Landscape practices. For her, "movement practices generated in relation to particular landscapes have the potential to shift participants into interconnected relationships with our environment" (Candelario 47). Recounts from dancers testify that "imagining a body as part of larger geography impacts their ability of sensations of inter-object relationships" (Candelario 54). Through these practices they experience "a shift in relation to the ecosystem", where they become its fellow object, instead of seeing themselves as human insertion. Additionally, Candelario thinks the training also "aims to develop one's awareness" (Candelario 48). She refers to constantly changing relationships of the body in response to challenging exercises. The examples demonstrate how it is not only the content, but the medium/the approach to movement and bodily research, which fosters a development of this ecological consciousness. It is facilitated by placing the body within the environment, while simultaneously activating it through

exercises designed to heighten the awareness. In the examples of Body Weather and Body/Landscape, the attunement, the production of experiences and sensations, the ecological consciousness is an intertwined two-part process. Candelario thus further develops Cooper Albright's idea which now exists as an intentional practice aiming to make a connection with a large environment. The concept is thus taken forward in more detail and is purposefully used within ecological performance theory and practice, whereas before it existed as more of a side-note to improvisational ones.

1.2 Ecology and the ecological as signifiers of interconnectedness

The showcased examples already include exploration of the relations between humans and other non-human beings. However, they are more focused on the concept of the environment as a separate physical place which humans inhabit. When thinking about ecological choreography, I wish to go beyond this distinction of two separate entities. Practices which focus on attuning the body to the environment operate under the assumption that the humankind stands separately against the environment. Distinguishing between these two separate elements omits the complex nature of interactions between them. Although comprised of many non-human elements, the environment together with humans forms an ecosystem reliant on mutual interaction to thrive. Not only are humans dependent on it for survival, our habitation impacts its existence, which in turn loops back to our living. I am interested in the interaction and interdependency specific to ecosystems and suggested by the concept of ecology. Before diving into how performances can stage ecology and the ecological, I define in more detail what exactly I mean when I refer to the ecological in ecological choreography.

Since its conception in the 19th century, ecology refers to a scientific field concerned with interactions among organisms and their environment. Paraphrasing Ernest Haeckel, German zoologist, and naturalist who first coined this term in 1869, we can describe ecology as the scientific study of the interactions between organisms and their environment (Ghazoul 3). Lawrence B. Slobodkin, one of the pioneering ecologists of the 20th century, credited for aiding the field's transformation into modern science, writes about ecology in a publication

intended for a wider audience with the title *A Citizen's Guide to Ecology*. He introduces it as a science that “studies interactions among organisms and between organisms and their environment in nature and is also concerned with the effects that organisms have on the inanimate environment” (Slobodkin 3). Jaboury Ghazoul offers another elementary definition in *A Very Short Introduction to Ecology*. He links ecology to a study of interactions among organisms and their environments, which wishes to describe patterns and understand the processes behind these interactions (Ghazoul 4). The main consensus is ecology's concern with organisms. However, the authors' focus is not solely on organisms, as we study them in the context of their interactions with the environment. Therefore, we cannot think of organisms and environments as separate units in the context of ecology. I interpret the inseparability of organisms and environments, based on their interactions, as interconnectedness. This is a term I derive from the ecology and object-oriented philosopher Timothy Morton.

In his book, *The Ecological Thought*, Morton, writes about ecological thought as “the thinking of interconnectedness” and as “a practice and a process of becoming fully aware of how human beings are connected with other human beings - animal, vegetable, or mineral” (16). He points to a shift away from ecology as a study of organisms and their interactions with the environment. Rather, he also places an intention on the feeling of interconnectedness which implies a mutual and dispersed, not centralised position in a network. Morton's philosophical thought complies with the interpretation of the ecological that I use in my research. More specifically, his idea of becoming aware of humankind's interconnectedness sits at the centre of the theoretical framework of ecological choreography.

If the ecological thought is concerned with thinking of interconnectedness, Morton's concept of “ecological awareness” directly addresses the state of mind. He proposes that to have ecological awareness is to be in a world in which “everything is relevant to everything else, but is also really unique and vivid and distinct at the very same time” (Morton 43). Within this concept he includes both the interconnected nature of organisms and environments as well as the awareness of it. While on the first glance this connects more to the informational model of theatre, which wishes to make people more aware of certain

issues, I propose a different use of this concept.

I wish to link ecological awareness to Lavery's theory of theatre as the medium for ecological experiences through the employment of sensations. Instead of only raising ecological awareness through offering information, I believe that the same can also be achieved through ecological experiences of interconnectedness. In this model, the audience encounters ecological awareness when a performance challenges their self-position. What it offers them, is an embodied/sensory experience a moment of enhanced presence in an interconnected system, designed to make them aware of the interconnectedness of the elements of a performance.

1.3 Three layers of the ecological

The theory discussed above informs the ecological part of the concept of ecological choreography. The first layer is the ecological awareness of interconnectedness, the second is the connection to issues of climate change, and the third is the notion that we presuppose that theatrical medium can be used as means of raising ecological awareness. Here, I look at each individually for the sake of clarity, but it is important to note that I see them as inseparable from each other when used in the context of ecological choreography.

The first layer indicates interconnectedness. In the beginning of this chapter I introduced definitions of ecology as seen by ecologists and scientists. The definitions described ecology as the interactions of organisms and the environment, from which I extracted the concept of interconnectedness. Performances within my theoretical framework evoke an experience of interconnectedness. To describe this I opt for the concept of ecological awareness which indicates that the aim of practices within ecological choreography is raising the awareness of interconnectedness. All of this is encompassed in the first layer of the ecological within my notion of ecological choreography.

While one interpretation of the ecological implies interconnectedness, I also want to introduce a second layer which indicates awareness. This layer represents a connection of

my research to the discussion of performing arts as one of the ways of addressing the ecological crisis. This layer of ecological wishes to raise awareness of degradation and environmental changes as consequences of climate change. The lack of awareness of interdependent relations within the global ecosystem is perceived as one of the causes of the current climate crisis. The second layer of the ecological considers the wish to raise awareness of the interconnectedness as one of the key components in ecological performances. It includes addressing the topics of interconnectedness in combination with ecological awareness instigated by embodied experiences. It is the interweaving of the two layers which is stored within the ecological of ecological choreography. Interconnectedness and awareness of it is crucial for a more intensive relation and understanding of ecological crisis.

The last one of the layers of the ecological is the production of ecological experiences. It is not explicitly connected to what ecological is, as was the case with the previous two interpretations. Rather, it signifies that the concept of ecological choreography is based on the power of theatre to produce ecological experiences. What that means is, that ecological for me does not mean being witness to human tragedies/human stories. Rather, I am looking for performances engaging audiences on the sensory level in order to evoke in them experiences of interconnectedness. To summarise, this interpretation of the ecological represents a way of thinking about (making) theatre and performance, and a way of designing performance processes, which then evoke the previous two interpretations of the ecological for the audience.

While in section one I have shown that practices such as Body Weather and Body/Landscape that are very efficient in evoking ecological consciousness in performers taking part in them, their limitations stem from their nature as a practice. As Candelario writes her articles from her own experience of partaking in the movement workshops, she also quotes other dancers or participants. Thus to have an ecological experience, participating in an extensive practice seems to be a prerequisite. Participants travel to remote areas selected by the people leading the workshops, thus severely limiting accessibility to ones living in areas where a practice like this is being developed, and/or ones being able to afford to pay for the

travel costs and participation fee. Instead of looking for works which are designed as workshops, or condition attendance with fees and travelling far, I look for a form of ecological choreography that is accessible. It can be designed to be performed within cities, villages, parks, and without costs of travelling and spending a fair amount of time away. It need not be expensive, except for a small fee, thus available to a wide and diverse audience. I aim for ecological choreography to be a form one can encounter without necessarily having a huge dedication to exploring ecological consciousness.

I have until now discussed what layers of interpretation are hidden within the ecological of ecological choreography. I have also established that experience of ecological awareness can be facilitated through theatre. The next question that pops up is how this is facilitated. What are the principles, dramaturgies, decisions, or if we borrow the words of Carl Lavery, how theatre's "dramaturgical distribution of organic and inorganic bodies in actual time and space creates sensations and experiences in the here and now" (Lavery 230). How does the distribution of organic and inorganic bodies in space and time evoke ecological experiences? To further develop a theoretical basis that helps answering this question, I now turn to the concept of choreography.

Chapter 2: Constructing Ecological Choreography through Aural Sensations

This chapter starts with a short overview of how the definition of choreography evolved from a description of dance making to a broader notion, namely: the organisation of things in space and time. In this research I build on the latter interpretation of choreography. I thus establish ecological choreography as an organisation of elements (in space and time) which creates ecological experiences. Moreover, I specify that these ecological experiences lead to a perception/a sensation of ecological awareness. My argument is that ecological choreography is a performing arts practice that helps its audiences experience interconnectedness and subsequently ecological awareness. I then introduce the form of geolocational sound walking. I look into the form's characteristics to map out what makes it an example par excellence of ecological choreography. Through a summary of the history of sound walks as a research practice, I point out their inherent potential of offering sensual ecological experiences. To explain the potential of sound and listening when producing ecological awareness, I map out supporting theories which are situated within the field of acoustic ecology.

2.1 Choreography as an organisation of things in space and time

In the previous chapter I explained the three layers of ecological which constitute ecological choreography. What is still missing is the answer to the question of how such time and place-sensitive ecological experiences are evoked. In order to answer this question, I will look into theoretical research on the concept of choreography. Starting from a definition of choreography as an organisation of things in space and time, the second part of this section looks at choreography as a tool for constructing ecological experiences. I also elaborate in more detail the power of the choreographic medium.

The conventional interpretations of the term locate choreography as inseparably connected to dance. Jo Butterworth and Liesbeth Wildschut, editors of the book *Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader*, write in its introductory chapter that "choreography is the making of dance" (Butterworth and Wildschut 1). This outlook is

affirmed by many dancers, choreographers, dramaturges, and theoreticians in submissions to an open call of the Austrian dance web journal *Corpus* that asked ‘What is choreography?’. Raimund Hoghe sees it as “writing with the body”, while for Julia Wehren it means “a set of rules which organise body movement in space and time” (“*Corpus*”). Ana Vujanović echoes that choreography designates “the composition of movement and the system of visually retracing or writing various kinds of movement down, referring to choreography as the craft of dance in general” (Vujanović 2). Although the link between dance and choreography would be useful if I were to focus solely on ecological dance practices, my aim of ecological choreography reaching a wider scope invites a further exploration into what else the term choreography may refer to.

Starting in mid-1990s, in addition to composition of movement, choreography also refers to organisation of things. William Forsythe’s idea of choreography as “organising things in space and time” (“*Corpus*”) lays the ground for this interpretation. Various submissions to a web journal *Corpus* by choreographers like Xavier le Roy and Jonathan Burrows align with it. While Le Roy understands it as “artificially staged action(s) and/or situation(s)” (“*Corpus*”), Burrows thinks “choreography is about making choices, including the choice to make no choice” (“*Corpus*”). Jan Ritsema says that “choreography is thinking about the organisation of objects and subjects in time and space on stage” (“*Corpus*”). What I see here is the absence of its connection to movement and a shift towards a description of the choices and thoughts designing a choreography. With this, the question of what is choreography can thus apply to various phenomena if looked at from a perspective of organisation or choice-making. Such an angle enables me to think of choreography within ecological choreography without making an explicit connection of movement. Rather, I argue that ecological choreography is about how elements of a performance are organised as to initiate ecological awareness.

Although ecological choreography is a new concept that I am proposing in this research, there is already a discussion on ecological choreographic practices. Tamara Ashley, a dance scholar specialising in the research of ecological perception and environmental change, discusses ecology and choreography in her article ‘Ecologies of choreography: Three

portraits of practice'. She explores it through depicting the work of Eeva-Maria Mutka, Tim Rubidge and Nala Walla. In the same vein as authors I introduced in the first chapter, Ashley accentuates that the artists' work can be linked to "a body of somatically informed research by dance artists who have developed methodologies and ways of working that seek to develop more participatory relationships with nature in the creative process" (Ashley 27). Summarising the argument that such practices are committed to particular locations and the artists' unique (somatic) connection to them, according to her, ecological choreographic practice is "place-sensitive, person-sensitive, and time-sensitive" (Ashley 37). Ashley's proposal marks a territory of ecological choreographic practices as a concept with an emphasis on the facilitation of ecological experiences. It does this through performances which cannot be simply transported from one place to another, but are tied to specific locations. This is tightly connected to a sensory experience, thus linking ecological choreographic practices to ecological experiences discussed in the previous chapter.

Ashley's proposal of ecological choreographic practices as processes focused on creating ecological experiences is an important basis for my concept of ecological choreography. Her focus on the sensory experience connects back to the embodied experience of ecology I discussed in the first chapter. There, Carl Lavery argues that theatre's ecological potential lies in creating ecological experiences. Furthermore, these experiences are not to be based solely on discursive information but are more powerful when presented through an embodied experience. Ashley's inclusion of somatic practices as a key part of ecological choreographic practice indicates that the concept she proposes is also focused on embodied models of ecological experience. Ashley also addresses the layer of interconnectedness by mentioning artists' relationships with nature as one of the main components of their artistic practice. Through somatic work, they form an embodied connection with the places they work in. However, the nature of such connection, although time, place and person-sensitive, is not explicitly focused on the interconnectedness of ecological ecosystems. Here, my concept of ecological choreography makes one step forward. Instead of an ecological experience simply being about connection to a place, ecological choreography is about reciprocal and complex interconnectedness between various elements of ecosystems. Furthermore, Ashley's concept refers to artists' practices in relation to the environment they work in. My concept of

ecological choreography, however, describes a form of performances which are focused on producing the ecological experience for audience. Ashley also mainly puts the attention on the somatic experience, while other elements such as sound and physical objects appear as the surroundings to which the body connects. By incorporating a definition of choreography as an organisation of things in space and time, ecological choreography intentionally focuses on the composition of all elements in the performance.

2.2 Listening and ‘listening’

The field of acoustic ecology has long recognised the potential hidden in sound as a medium for sensory engagement. Scholars in this area have created an opus of work which intends to not only document the aural environment but is also deeply concerned with addressing the umbrella of ecological topics. Many scholars of the field conclude that sound carries an ability to stimulate a sensation of interconnectedness to the place and time. In the article ‘Acoustic Ecology and Ecological Sound Art’, published as a chapter in the book *Sound, Media, Ecology*, Australian sound artist Leah Barclay makes an argument that “active listening can make us feel immediately present and connected to our surrounding environment” (Barclay 154). Similarly, Fabrizio Manco recognises in his doctoral thesis ‘Ear Bodies: Acoustic Ecologies in Site-Contingent Performance’ that “sound in its alterity and as an interactive phenomenon of vibration can be understood ecologically, in other words as an interrelation with our perception, our bodies and other systems and environments (Manco 163). Furthermore, the acoustic ecological potential of sound lies in the destabilisation of anthropocentric perspectives. In words of Anja Kanngieser, it can offer “space from which to challenge hegemonic and violent forms of subjectivation” (Droumeva and Jordan 2). Manco looks at sound from a similar perspective, where the potential of the shift in power is to be found in a shifting of perception. For him, listening “could become an understanding towards ethical concerns, as reflections on sound and the world” (Manco 170). Acoustic ecology is both an “interdisciplinary framework for documenting, analysing, and transforming sonic environments” (Droumeva and Jordan 10) and as more of an aesthetic approach where “recordings are predominantly produced for aesthetic listening experiences” (Barclay 160). It builds from the belief in the affective potential of sound, more specifically

in the acts of listening and hearing. With its engagement of the senses, especially hearing, we can introduce it as an artistic practice that actively thinks about addressing the spectator with topics of interconnectedness. Contemporary acoustic ecology and ecological sound art have both moved towards creating aesthetic and creative experiences instead of solely focusing on education and research. Their ability to engage the spectator through aural components predates such research and use of sound in the field of theatre.

Within the theatrical event, sound has been until recently mainly explored from either a technical perspective or as one of the designed elements of the performance. In recent years more attention has been paid to sound's role in the experience of the spectator. Phenomenological research of sound and theatre, which foregrounds exactly how the perception of the senses shapes spectator's reception of the (theatrical) event, suggests a reshaped understanding of attending a performance. If conventional theatre assumes that visual elements dominate spectator's experience, as states theatre composer, sound designer, and scholar Ross Brown in his book *Sound: A Reader in Theatre Practice*, aural phenomenology busies itself with toppling that idea. Not only does it focus on hearing with one's ears but additionally zeroes in on "the ways in which we sense the world around us by means of 'the closely interrelated skin/air senses' "(Brown 214). The spectator's presence is not based solely on the act of looking anymore, as Brown is pointing us towards a participation grounded in a complex matrix of all our bodily senses (such as touch, smell).

Theatre scholar George Home-Cook's affirmation of auditory components presents a frame of thinking about the potential of soundwalk within performance practices. In his book *Theatre and Aural Attention: Stretching Ourselves* he deals with actively assigning sound a role in spectator's attendance of the event. For him, attendance is based upon the same coincidence of senses that Brown refers to. However, while Brown clearly distinguishes between listening and hearing as two differing modes of presence, where the first one represents attention and the second one a distraction, Home-Cook opposes that idea. In his opinion, we must understand "aural attention, alongside other acts of attending, as a mode of 'dynamic embodied attending in the world' where the binaries of activity versus passivity, listening versus hearing, are set in play" (Home-Cook 37). Home-Cook's outlook, which

sees sound as one of the components of embodied attendance, suggests that aural or auditory components strongly influence spectator's experience of a performance. Soundwalk as a theatre event thus offers the participant an embodied attendance because of its use of sound. In comparison to other theatrical events where the primary focus of the work may not lie on sound, soundwalk presents itself as the suitable form of ecological choreography.

Engagement of the senses, or in the example of acoustic ecology focusing on hearing, closely connects to the previous discussion around ecological consciousness. Both areas identify bodily senses and sensations as means for evoking ecological experience in the spectator. Dance scholars like Cooper Albright and Candelario lean on practices of stimulating the body which utilise physical exercises of dance improvisation or somatic practices sometimes situated outside the usual practice studio. Artists dwelling in acoustic ecology concentrate more on the auditory encounter, which does not necessarily exclude the body in its entirety. It does not place emphasis on it as a whole as much as dance practices do. Inducing ecological experience in the spectator thus happens through two differing engagements of the spectator's body. Both of them have in common the intention and attention on how to engage the senses. In contemplating both of these artistic embodiments of ecology side by side I do not only recognise a common understanding of sensorial approach to inciting ecological experience. I also discern an undefined space where my notion of ecological choreography finds its place.

Chapter 3: Geolocational Sound Walk *Sandbox* as Ecological Choreography

In the beginning of this chapter I introduce some of the latest examples of geolocational sound walks. Some of them include topics that do not have any relation with ecology, while others represent both the form and a similar topic to my case study. In the second part of the chapter I present a performance analysis of my case study, *Sandbox*. I both demonstrate how as a geolocational soundwalk represents the concept of ecological choreography as well as what are some other themes which appear in the performance. They address the degradation of public spaces and nature's takeover of them when left alone as well as imagine the future through storytelling of non-human mythical figures.

3.1 Soundwalk as a practice of embodied ecological experience

Ecological choreography thus organises things in space and time to create ecological experiences. They in turn raise ecological awareness of interconnectedness. To look in more detail at how ecological choreography operates, I propose a practice of geolocational sound walking as an example. I explore how its characteristics can be understood as an example of ecological choreography.

The history of artistic practices collected under the umbrella term soundwalk, starts in the 1970s and is connected to ecological research. The term was coined by members of the World Soundscape Project led by composer R. Murray Schafer. The project was formed as a research and educational group at Simon Fraser University. It started from Schafer's wish to draw attention to sonic environments as well as the noise pollution in Vancouver's soundscape (Droumeva and Jordan 5). Focusing on listening and/or recording while simultaneously moving through a place, the soundwalk is a creative and research practice exploring the relationship between participants and their sonic environment. Primarily situated within the field of acoustic ecology, its beginnings were not so much artistic as they were sound-research oriented. The discipline itself looks at the relationship between humans and their environment as mediated through sound. They were dedicated to bringing the

attention of the audience to everyday acts of walking and listening with a special attention on the often ignored moments. Soundwalk primarily existed as an educational and research form.

Only with the appearance of the audiowalk the expansive field of the soundwalk entered the creative field as well. With the audiowalk the focus shifts onto a narrative, while the environmental sounds become a soundtrack. In audiowalk sounds are not limited only to the recordings of everyday soundscapes, but could include texts or stories read by human voices. The story told through these texts suddenly becomes the main focus of the listener, while soundscapes operate as a background, supporting the narrative (Barclay 164). I identify that the evolution of soundwalk into audiowalk also indicates the form's move into performance practices. If soundwalk's aim was to educate and attune its listeners to sonic environments and noise pollution, they were designed with this thought in mind. Audiowalk, on the other hand, wished to tell a story through its use of narrative elements. Moreover, while audiowalk also could direct the listener's attention towards sonic environments, the educational nature of such walks was second to the narrative one. Still, in contemporary performance and audio practices the term soundwalk is used for practices which are similar to an audiowalk.

One of the pioneers of soundwalking practice, Hildegard Westerkamp, contextualises it as an ecological practice as well. Westerkamp, a collaborator in R. Murray Schafer's World Soundscape project, is a scholar and composer in the field of soundscape composition and acoustic ecology. She states that "like all human beings we are listeners and sound makers in this world and therefore active participants in the creation of our soundscapes" (Westerkamp in Carlyle 46). In her words, soundwalking is thus "a practice that wants to bring our existing position-inside-the-soundscape to full consciousness" (Westerkamp in Carlyle 47). The position inside-the-soundscape can be compared to the interconnected position of ecological experiences I have discussed before. Experiences instigated through a soundwalk are experiences of ecological awareness. They emphasise its aural level, thus representing an example of ecological choreography focusing on the sound. The element of sound is here the primary medium of evoking ecological experiences and raising ecological awareness.

3.2 Geolocational soundwalk as a genre of performance

Geolocational soundwalk has been a contemporary trend of artistic practice in the past few years with the rise of platform offering the technology of attending one as well as prominent artists and art festivals creating and curating such works. The recent pandemic of Covid-19 with its imposed limitations on artistic events only pushed the form of soundwalk to the forefront due to its relative accessibility even within pandemic measures. The most prominent platform used both by creators and listeners of geolocational soundwalk is Echoes, founded by Josh Kopeček, after wanting to make a GPS-triggered audio tour of Hanoi. The platform hosts sound walks such as *Entangled Formations* by Anne Cecilie Lie which was first designed specifically for the Prague Quadrennial of 2019. Its new iteration made for the city of Bergen connects the walking landscape of Norwegian city with the soundscape of various bird inhabitants of Prague. By walking through a small part of Bergen, the listener's route mingles with recordings of birds, creating "a non-linear narrative of past, present, and future" ("Echoes"). Similarly, Ellen Reid, a composer recently awarded a Pulitzer Prize in Music, created a soundwalk for various parks around the world. The work title *SOUNDWALK* is available through an app designed by the team behind Echoes and offers the listeners an option to participate in cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Greece. When walking the path presented on the app, listeners listen to music composed to illuminate the natural environment. Another one of the walks found on Echoes is *A Garden Through Time*, produced by 365 Leeds Stories. The work uses geolocational technology to connect audio and various places around Leeds. The narrative touches upon Leeds' history of colonialism and slavery by describing the flora in the city's Bearpit Gardens. In addition to Echoes, another platform dedicates itself to promotion of both soundwalks and geolocational soundwalks. Walk Listen Create or WLC, maintained by Babak Fakhmzadeh, Geert Vermeire and Andrew Stuck, is an online platform which catalogues the publications of artists within the practice. Additionally, they organise Sound Walk September, a yearly global festival which is dedicated to the art of soundwalk. My selected case study, *Sandbox* was amongst the honorable mentions. Alongside a festival and online catalogue like WLC, the aforementioned examples of Reid and Lie, demonstrate that the form of geolocational

soundwalk is a contemporary trend on the rise.

3.3 Geolocational soundwalk as ecological choreography

In the case of a geolocational sound walk both the aspect of listening as well as the element of walking are of equal importance. This makes it a performance format that engages both of the methods of facilitating ecological experience we have encountered so far. On the one hand, through the act of listening to the sound tracks of changing environments the attendee experiences what Leah Barclay describes as “profound interconnection and empathetic responses” (Barclay 157). This happens simply through the act of active listening triggered by the participation in the walk. On the other hand, listening while walking, or moving through the location with a focus on listening helps to “literally to immerse in the place, and to better understand its genius loci” (“Walk Listen Create”). Moreover, in addition to listening as one of the senses, we are taken back to the idea of Joanna Stone and her environmental dance where she introduces a different type of ‘listening’ (Stone 2). For her, this is a bodily practice in the likes of attunement, but for me it is a connection that unites both of the performance elements united in a geolocational walk - sound and walking.

Pivka and Zorman, creators of my case study, think similarly. For them walking is a primary means of exploring a place. They state that “a sound walk employs walking as an “instrument” for listening and sensibilization to fully experience the landscape while simultaneously perceiving its changes” (“Walk Listen Create”). In my case study *Sandbox* listening thus means both paying attention to the sound excerpts of the environment while simultaneously ‘listening’ to it by walking the path with an impression of soundscapes still in one’s ear. An ecological experience of interconnectedness can already be identified in the inseparable link between the two modes of listening which in the case of a geolocational sound walk cannot be thought of separately. Rather, they happen in dependency of each other as oral listening aids the body in ‘listening’, while physical engagement with the space (‘listening’) is encouraged precisely because of the soundscape.

3.4 Choreography of simultaneous audio timelines

In September of 2020, amidst a short window of time between the first and the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, Irena Pivka and Brane Zorman presented *Sandbox* (in Slovene *Peskovnik*). This geolocational multimedia performance takes place on a northern strip of Ljubljana's railway station, where a spectator is invited to take a walk along a pre-determined path. This encompassed area has for years been dedicated to a construction of Ljubljana's new public transport passenger centre that would replace two older bus and train stations unfitted for the current (pre-pandemic) flow of travellers and commuters. However, after 10 years of project development, the area remains semi-degraded, while the starting date of construction has been pushed back many times and is yet to be precisely defined. Simultaneously to walking along this path, participants listen to a set of audio tracks via a mobile app Echoes. These tracks correspond to certain location points along the map. This technology of matching sounds to geographic points is the basis for geolocational performances.

The soundscape heard in the tracks was filmed during the first period of lockdown between March and September 2020, when all public life, including public transport systems, in the country were completely shut down. Usually bustling city landscapes had experienced less noise pollution, which invited the authors to tape both this period of lockdown and following gradual transition back to usual with easing of public life restrictions. The captured soundscape is split across numerous shorter tracks, each of them descriptively named by the sounds we can hear in them; for instance Train or Ambient station. These range across two sides of the spectrum. On the one hand, we are enveloped with the repetitive clicking and sliding of trains travelling along the train tracks, or we can hear the melody of arrival and departure announcements from the speakers of the station. These sounds are countered by clips where none of the human-produced noises audibly detectable, as only bird and other critter chirping pops up. In between, two times a human voice intervenes, inserting word-based language into otherwise non-verbal soundscapes. The first short insert talks of a future 'žalik žena', a mythological creature from Slovenian Caryinthian history, which aids farmers and shepherds, as well as offering solace to people in need. In comparison to this poetic text, the second speech insert contemplates the context of the path we are walking from a socio-

geographic perspective, pointing it out as a public space where various capital interests clash. This female sounding voice additionally imagines the place we are inhabiting in a kind of post-apocalyptic future when the only soundscape to be detected will be devoid of humans.

3.5 Place, person and time-sensitivity of geolocational sound walk

Throughout this thesis we have been coming into contact with a variety of performing arts practices which could be described as ecological, through which a repeating characteristic of site-specificity has arisen. In the first chapter we encountered artist Simon Whitehead, whose practice is inextricably connected to various local places, most recently his home landscape of Abercych, Wales. Afterward we came to know practices of Body Weather and Body/Landscape which are based on the participants' attunement to natural landscapes and their subsequent movement based on the stimuli from the location. At the beginning of the second chapter we encountered Nigel Stewart's concept of environmental dance with its several categories. One of them were site-specific dance works, which are "improvised at, or choreographed for, particular indoor or outdoor rural or urban locations;" (Stewart 32). A similar feature, but this time connected to choreography, was Tamara Ashley's recount of three locally based artistic practices which "can be understood in the context of their respective commitments to the cultivation of a location specific ongoing practice as choreography" (Ashley 26). The specificity of place which she alludes to is then captured in the 'place-sensitive, person-sensitive, and time-sensitive' nature of ecological choreographic practice. Although the collection of ecological performance practices connected to a place is vast, we will be travelling forward with Ashley's articulation.

Time, place, and person sensitivity are embedded into the mechanics of the *Sandbox* as a geolocational sound walk. Due to its form in which geographical location itself is a basis for the order and the timing of audio tracks, the first layer of time- and place-sensitivity is comprised of the intersection of the two. The second layer of time- and place-sensitivity arises from the decision to record a specific location through various time points and incorporate the recording into the walk within the same place. Only as the attendee is walking along the train tracks after the lockdown, they are privy to hearing the audible difference

between the soundscape of the public life lockdown and the noisiness of the after. Similarly, transferring the performance to another area would cause a discrepancy between the walking and the listening, which would disturb the intention of the simultaneous audio and physical experience. The audience would be deprived of the key parallel of a soundscape of before (devoid of human produced noise) and after (bustling cityscape) of the train track area which is at the heart of the performance. The third layer of time- and place-sensitivity appears through the creators' choice of the location which hides in itself multiple stories; in periods of 'normality' the closeness of the train station produces a loud soundscape, thus the absence of such sound comes across even more.

Moreover, as mentioned before, the place is at the intersection of an yet-to-be-realised infrastructural megaproject of a public transport hub, but is currently closer to a piece of a 'third landscape'. Defined by Gilles Clement, in his 'Manifesto of the Third Landscape', the term designates "the total amount of the spaces where man leaves the evolution of the landscape to nature alone" (Clement). It refers to spaces which have already been altered or inhabited by humankind but were eventually abandoned to the point where non-human life took over - think of abandoned and overgrown train tracks, forts. The time- and place-sensitivity of such location emerges from not only the unique situation of the place but also through capturing it in this moment of in-between where the image of the third landscape is telling us a story of a landscape after the anthropocene.

3.6 Non-linear time and non-human figures

Sandbox's soundscape moves within non-linear posthumanist time structures as well. By intertwining sounds belonging to humanly constructed parts of the environment such as train tracks, and ones telling us of a short period of time where due to the unusual circumstances of lockdown these noises suddenly disappeared, Zorman and Pivka create a performance for simultaneously thinking about the present and the future, disrupting the linearity of anthropocenic time. Their juxtaposition of two soundscapes which would normally belong in separate environments but are actually recorded at the same location unravel in the ears of the attendee an impression of a circular time. They are simultaneously listening to the past, the

present and the future, since all of the sounds existed before the performance, during its happening, as well as in the future. Or, as Zala Dobovšek writes of the temporal ambiguity of the abandoned landscape: "The dilemma inside of this metaphysical rhetorics, where we do not know if it's illustrating a projection 'forward', or a far-reaching look 'backwards', establishes that distinctive note of experience, which reminds us of nature's and world's cyclicity expanding beyond our [humankind] minute stay" (Dobovsek). While listening to the absence of civilization's noises, to the silence of the nature, the audience are witnessing a soundscape which implicates both a past state of the location they are currently tracing with their walk, as well as its futurity if/when humans no longer inhabit it.

The spoken word which alternates with the sound clips offers a poetic sketch of the circumstances on the one hand, while on the other it introduces the notion of potentiality. At the beginning a voice is remembering how "in the beginning of May, [...] everything felt empty and silent", but how now "the peaceful atmosphere is disturbed by the sounds of the train, the air plane" ("Walk Listen Create"). It describes their walking down the train tracks and over the parking lot, before turning to wondering about what will happen in that spot someday. They wonder if "Maybe/perhaps, someday, there may be a field here. A vast meadow with a view. This space in the city centre, this traffic hub, this sandbox, this space of potential will be overgrown by vegetation" ("Walk Listen Create"). This warped temporality of past and future potential brings to the forefront the interconnectedness of ecology, but does not fall into a trap of designating the human presence an essentiality. Pivka and Zorman find a non-human perspective especially important. They say that "*Sandbox* is not a story about a human and humankind but rather about a humanless world; a grounded universe that evolves in our absence, about flora and fauna and their parallel existence, here all the time, present and mindful, but fully perceived only when human arrogance subsides" ("Walk Listen Create"). Although the parallel time tracks reveal how humans' actions impact the landscape and the environment, a time without it can (and already did) exist.

In the last part, in this looking towards the future and to the past, a figure of Žalik žena appears when a voice enters the recordings. In my interpretation, her character is a metaphor for the ecological I have been talking about until now, as the voice tells us about her

presence. She will be walking in the same spot the spectator is walking and she will be "sharing this sensitivity for co-existence; with the landscape, with vegetation, with an overcrowded dying species" (Pivka and Zorman). Hidden in the sensitivity for co-existence, her image carries a notion of interconnectedness as outlined by ecology which we encountered in the first chapter. The organisms which form an ecosystem are bound together by a precarious web of interactions, each element or organism equally important. *Žalik žena* as a mythological figure does not inherently embody such interconnectedness, however, Pivka and Zorman choose to portray her as a carrier of such sensitivity. Not only is her manifestation a story about a future state of co-existence, by making a parallel of her walking down the same path, the voice opens the space for the *Žalik žena* to be a future iteration of the spectator. While the latter is tracing the route of the Sandbox, the performance invites them to identify themselves with *Žalik žena* who could be walking down the very same path. Such identification opens up the space for imagining the attendee as the one having the aforementioned sensibility. Through this section, the performance gently invites the spectator to listen to the audio landscapes, but does not explicitly place on them the imperative of having to become ecological. Rather, the opportunity to identify or stream towards a *Žalik žena* is suggested, imagining a post-apocalyptic time without humans (as *Žalik žena* is a fairy-like creature). Such portrait of the future may also point to a (utopian) idea of a blurring of the distinction between (the value of) human and non-human creatures.

In the mechanics of the geolocational walk I perceive a manifestation of staging ecology through the means of the theatrical medium. Its mechanism connects short auditory tracks to specific locations on the walking path of the spectator includes an interconnected set of elements as a condition for the event. When the spectator is at the exact location, there is a track assigned to those coordinates, meaning that the overlap of three performance elements culminates in the happening. Simply told, the connection between these three elements exemplifies the principle of interconnectedness taken over from ecology as the change or fault in the execution of one of them significantly alters the performance itself as well as the spectator's experience. Additionally, the design of such performance submerges a spectator in the world of interconnectedness already at the beginning as they are made aware of how their location, their walk and the audio are interlaced with each other. The performance produces

an ecological experience of interconnectedness through an intersection of inhabiting a certain place both through a physical presence and auditory attention. Attendees simultaneously experience an immediate contact with the landscape, which they are hearing (about) within the sound recordings. These are not simply a soundtrack to a walk, which would suggest an imbalance between the two constituent parts of the performance, but intertwine with what the participant is privy to when walking alongside the train tracks. While following this path, they aurally encounter the prerecorded sounds of passing trains that serve as an indicator of the human presence in this landscape. Later, they listen to recordings where this noise is absent and the chirping of birds takes over, which emphasises the state of the landscape when the human activity quiets down. While it is true that the branch of theory about ecology and performance, represented for example by Carl Lavery, who argues for the potential of theatrical medium to produce ecological experiences, focuses on the affect the performance has on spectators' bodies, I argue that geolocational sound walk does exactly that.

Conclusion

My research on the geolocational sound walk as ecological choreography introduces two new concepts into the field of ecology and performance. Firstly, the notion of ecological choreography itself as an idea at the intersection of two distinct fields of ecological performance and dance proposing a term to address, name, or analyse performances that stage/facilitate ecological awareness through organisation of things in space and time in a manner of interconnectedness. Secondly, I explore the form of geolocational soundwalk which is once again positioned at the junction of acoustic ecology and performance. I forefront a connection between the fields, both of them believing in the power of their own medium (aural and performative), to highlight the case study as an example of interdisciplinary performance.

Geolocational soundwalk is an example of ecological choreography due to its characteristics of practical mechanics and the use of sound. Relying on a combination of geographical location and sound excerpts instigated by these coordinates, its audience experiences interconnectedness immediately when encountering the medium itself. The interdependence of its elements is ingrained into the artworks structure and any missteps from the audience which disturb the interconnectedness are visible, revealing the web of complex connections. As this form of soundwalk comes from the field of acoustic ecology, it focuses importance of sound in instigating ecological awareness. The act of listening, scholars of this field argue, is the basis for a heightened awareness of your immediate environment. In combination with presenting topics such as degradation of public space and the return of natural sounds during the pandemic *Sandbox* produces an experience of interconnectedness for the attendee. When listening to sound excerpts and stories about the physical place they are walking, the web of connections between the location, the mechanics of soundwalk as well as ecological topics is revealed. Stories told through sound describe both how human life impacts the soundscape of cities as well as imagining a future with no humans. Both with the medium as well as with stories told *Sandbox* as a geolocational soundwalk produces ecological awareness of all these connections. The embodied experience, which is the ecological contribution of performance, is what makes this soundwalk an example of the concept of ecological choreography.

With an overview of the existing academic debate on ecology and performance I introduced two outlooks on performance's ecological contribution. On the one hand, there are performances which aim to activate audiences through storytelling, relying on people's emotions to spur further action in the fight towards climate change. On the other hand, practices like *Body Weather* and *Body/Landscape* alongside several stage productions are more interested in facilitating ecological awareness or an ecological experience. Theatre scholar Carl Lavery became an important voice in my research with his argument for the power of performance which carries the potentiality of facilitating ecological experience. This became the first strand of thought woven into my understanding of the concept ecological choreography. The first strand of ecological choreography consists of three layers of ecology which summarise the main ideas of the theories from the beginning of the chapter. Ecological experience, which ecological choreography generates, is contained within three interweaving layers. The first one originates in ecology as interconnectedness, the second one in an awareness of ecological change, and the third one being the capacity of the theatrical medium to evoke such experiences. Ecological choreography aims to induce ecological awareness of interconnectedness through a production of attending and perceiving a performance.

In the last chapter I introduced *Sandbox*, a geolocational sound walk, as an example of ecological choreography. I argue that this case study embodies ecological choreography on multiple levels. It engages the attendee through a physical attunement which I connect to two interpretations of listening, both connected to artistic practices aiming to aid the body in experiencing some type of ecological awareness; the first one through aural senses and the second one through movement in a specific environment. The geolocational sound walk as ecological choreography is also time- and space-sensitive. This is one of the other characteristics displaying the interconnectedness as well as connection to the environment. This is caused by the performance depending heavily on happening at a certain timespan in a carefully chosen location to be able to fully correspond to the auditive element. With the appearance of the mythological creature of žalik žena as well as through the narrative text, *Sandbox* introduces notions of non-linear time and the utopian/dystopian future without

humankind. It thus emphasizes human influence in the interconnected systems of the planet. Finally, I conclude by demonstrating that the sole medium of geolocational sound walk is an ecological choreography in itself. It comprises of an array of elements such as geolocational tracking, soundscape, and walking path which are all dependent of each other for the performance to happen smoothly. With this, ecological choreography not only incites an ecological experience of awareness through theatrical content but offers an experience through the medium itself as well. The difference between the former and the latter is that one of them counts on audience's feelings while the other engages them with embodied ways of attending and perceiving.

At this point, many points of further development should be addressed. One of them is the thesis' focus on the human. This is embedded in the vocabulary (using terms such as environment or nature which in themselves denote a separation between the humankind and the non-human. Theoretical framework which stays away from a detailed explanations and connection into ideas of posthumanism. However, through the selection of the case study and its address of the attendee, the relation of interconnectedness took priority over the exploration of human and non-human relationality as I focused more on audience's embodied experience in general without specifically seeing how it could help transcend the human/non-human divide. Referring to another thesis from this MA programme, Babette Kalker's "Rehearsing Relations: The Multispecies of theatre", a connection between her idea of relational attentiveness and my concept of ecological choreography can certainly be explored. Additionally, the second drawback is my focus on one case study. This was a result of my personal preference to write about performances from my local Slovene background which is severely underrepresented in academic debates combined with my aim to study geolocational walks as an emerging form in contemporary performance. Together, these two reasons meant that there was only one performance that met the criteria. However, I see multiple opportunities to expand the number of case studies, as I have demonstrated that geolocational soundwalks are a performance genre on the rise. The dire issue of climate change combined with current pandemic situations where attending a work of art in a closed room with masses of other people represents an ideal moment in time for soundwalking and ecological choreography. They offer an experience which can be attended alone while

simulating embodied experiences of interconnectedness necessary for addressing the climate crisis.

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