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**‘Dare to stutter, dare to stammer’:
Towards an alternative understanding of the knowledge of
the dramaturg**

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As a dramaturg, dare to stutter, dare to stammer, create a poetic language in stammering. In a postdramatic context, this kind of failure can be very productive.

Christel Stalpaert, "A Dramaturgy of the Body" (2009)

Abstract

This thesis explores the connection between the dramaturg and alternative types of knowing that go beyond theoretical knowledge and derive from its practical aspects. Drawing from the field of epistemology – the branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of knowledge – it uses the concepts of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge to examine their potentiality for understanding the knowledge employed in the practice of the dramaturg. Along with a theoretical framework based on epistemology, the research draws on ethnographic fieldwork and on the examination of dramaturgical practices. To support my views, I use material from formal one-to-one interviews with Maaïke Bleeker, Sigrid Merx and Konstantina Georgelou (Chapter 1); from my involvement with dance dramaturg Merel Heering (Chapter 2); from the formal interviews I conducted with dramaturg Kate Adams; and from the examination of the dramaturgical practice of André Lepecki (Chapter 3). Moreover, a reflection on the political dimensions of giving visibility to these different types of knowledge of the dramaturg – practical, tacit and embodied – is discussed (Chapter 4) based on the intervention in ‘the distribution of the sensible’ (Jacques Rancière) and on the participation to today’s ‘knowledge economy’.

My intention is to create an environment that can liberate the dramaturg from the role of the objective observer and knowledgeable theoretician that functions as the mind of the process; and instead it can open up space for the dramaturg as a practitioner that makes use of and values the subjective, sensorial and embodied components of knowledge. Therefore, this thesis suggests that foregrounding a discussion of the dramaturg through the lens of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge can lead to a reposition of dramaturgy from theory to practice. A reposition like that, on the one hand can have an impact on the way that one conceives of both the role and the education of the dramaturg and on the other hand can establish a more open, pluralized and sensitive practice of dramaturgy.

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Acknowledgements

I would like you to take a moment and imagine me: I am in my 18m² studio in Utrecht sitting in the floor with a bunch of books and papers around me and a cup of coffee in my hands; at that moment I look like I'm drowning in a 'sea' of research. Or I'm sitting in the library of Utrecht University with an expression of satisfaction on my face looking like I'm writing the most important thing in the world. Or in the yard of my summerhouse in Pelion under the hot Greek sun of August, I am pushing myself to finish this damn section – the conclusion – in order to dive into the sea as soon as possible.

These are only some of the 'snapshots' of my journey during the writing of this thesis. As in what follows, words like 'embodiment' and 'sensorial' will often be repeated, I wanted to start this thesis by sharing with you a niche of my embodiment. As everyone who has written an academic thesis knows, it is not at all only a mind process. Your body really goes along with your mind or sometimes against it: it gets tired or it gets excited; it forces you to stand up and take a walk or to change the way you are sitting. Your body sometimes knows better what you need, what will actually help your writing. In fact, your body will let you know many things if you are open to listen it.

During this journey, I was also continuously surrounded by other bodies and I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to some of them. First and foremost, to my supervisor Laura Karreman for all the inspiration, support, knowledge (and emails) we exchanged during these months. Her input not only to this thesis but also to my growth as a researcher is more than valuable. It is impossible for me not to thank my so-called 'buoy' in Utrecht, Elena Novakovits, for being constantly there with her stickers (and not only). Many thanks goes also to Anastasia Barka and Anne Smeets for sharing this journey, loosely but essentially. Last but not least, I want to thank my partner Eleni for understanding and supporting me beside the 2,922 kilometers that separate us and my parents, Kostas and Aristeia, for always encouraging me to follow my desires and my intuition.

So, this is it. I will only share a last image with you and then this thesis will continue with your embodiment while you are reading it. Here I am: closing the screen of my laptop, getting up and dancing because now "We are getting somewhere".

Introduction

0.1 From dramaturgy to knowledge

If I take a step back and reflect on the notion of dramaturgy in my current professional and academic environment, an interesting paradox occurs. There is a common belief that the dramaturg has to do with theoretical knowledge and a number of metaphors illustrates this: the book of knowledge, the mind of the process, etc. However, at the same time, one finds it difficult to clearly define and articulate the role and skills of the dramaturg – let alone transmit them – as it also includes other types of more intuitive and unarticulated knowledge. It is not incidental that dramaturgy was not part of the academia for such a long time and, even now, the few university programs on dramaturgy face contention regarding how it should be taught. By observing this paradox, a number of questions arise: What does dramaturgy have to do with knowledge? Does the practice of the dramaturg exploit, develop or demonstrate particular kinds of knowledge? Are there types of knowledge that are distinctive for the practice of the dramaturg? What does this knowledge include and exclude?

A quick look at the recent literature on the practice of the dramaturg reveals that a discourse on the connection between the dramaturg and knowing is already taking place. Phrases such as “the vessel of knowledge”,¹ “the guarantor of objective knowledge”,² or “the one who is supposed to know”³ are used in order to give presumptions of what a dramaturg is; presumptions that underlie the connection between dramaturgy and theory and intellect skill or capacity.⁴ Writers and dramaturgs such as André Lepecki (‘Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy’), Bojana Cvejić (‘The Ignorant Dramaturg’), Christel Stalpaert (‘A Dramaturgy of the Body’) critically address these presumptions in order to bring an awareness to their political implications; to challenge

¹ Christel Stalpaert, “A Dramaturgy of the Body,” *Performance Research* 14, no. 3 (2009): 123.

² Bojana Kunst, “The Economy of Proximity,” *Performance Research* 14, no. 3 (2009): 83.

³ André Lepecki, “Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy,” in *Dance Dramaturgy. Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement* edited by Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2015) 52. Note that all the three of them use these expressions in order to describe the figure of the dramaturg they want to challenge and not because they agree with it.

⁴ Myriam Van Imchoot in “Dance Dramaturgy: Speculations and Reflections,” ed. Scot DeLahunta, *Dance Theatre Journal* 16, no. 2 (2000): 22.

them and propose a different understanding of the dramaturg: an understanding that focuses on the one hand, on the embodied dimension and the presence of the dramaturg in the studio and, on the other hand, on the notion of ignorance and errancy. In this way, they bring to the foreground different types of skills and knowledge that the dramaturg has that go beyond explicit knowledge.

Driven by this discussion, in this research I combine this discourse of the dramaturg with a recent trend in performance studies to theorize performance and embodied practice in terms of knowledge. In this regard, scholars use epistemology – the branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of knowledge – in order to discuss the field of performance. Part of this debate, and an important source for this thesis, is scholar Anna Pakes, who, in her article “Knowing through dance-making. Choreography. Practical knowledge and practice-as-research” argues about choreographic knowledge and the knowledge embedded in Practice-as-Research, by discussing the notion of practical knowledge through writers such as Gilbert Ryles, David Carr and Aristotle.⁵ In the same line of thinking, Ben Spatz in his book *What a body can do* develops an epistemological framework in order to analyze embodied practices and to examine how technique can be considered as knowledge.⁶ Another important voice in this debate is Laura Karreman’s PhD “The Motion Capture Imaginary: Digital Renderings of Dance Knowledge”, in which she examines motions capture in dance as part of the discourse around dance knowledge and draws attention to the “tacit knowledge” of dance.⁷

Against this backdrop, in this thesis I propose to explore the knowledge of the dramaturg through the notions of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge – all three coming from the field of epistemology. Thus, the main question upon which this thesis is based is how one can articulate an alternative understanding of the knowledge of the dramaturg based on its practical aspects. What I aim to show is that using these three notions can help us to approach dramaturgical knowledge with an understanding that goes

⁵ Anna Pakes, “Knowing through dance-making. Choreography. Practical knowledge and practice-as-research”, in *Contemporary Choreography. A Critical Reader*, ed. Jo Butterworth and Liesbeth Wildschut, (Routledge: London and New York, 2009): 11.

⁶ Ben Spatz, *What a body can do* (Routledge: London and New York, 2015).

⁷ Laura Karreman, “The Motion Capture Imaginary: Digital Renderings of Dance Knowledge” (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2017): 55-92.

beyond language and theory and challenges the dominant Cartesian paradigm of a mind-body split.

Before I continue with the structure, I would like to clarify what I mean when talking about ‘the dramaturg’ in this thesis.⁸ Firstly, it is important to mention that there is a cultural and geographical specificity in my discussion: the European landscape of dramaturgy as emerged during the 1990s started by Marianne Van Kerkhoven’s ideas “On dramaturgy” and influenced by Hans-Thies Lehman’s *Postdramatic Theatre*.⁹ Moreover, I choose to use the term ‘the practice of the dramaturg’, by which I mean a process-led dramaturgy in which the dramaturg interacts in the studio with performers, makers, choreographers, technicians, producers, etc. They all engaged in a creation where (to use Marianne Van Kerkhoven’s definition) “the meaning, the intentions, the form and the substance of a piece arise during the working process”.¹⁰ Hence, my focus is on the present time of a work’s creation and on dramaturgical processes that unfold within a work’s making.

Furthermore, the absence of an attribute like ‘theatre’ or ‘dance’ in front of the word dramaturg in the title is a conscious choice. The propositions I make in this thesis about dramaturgical knowledge are relevant to all kinds of dramaturgs in a post-dramatic era, be it dance, choreography, theatre or performance dramaturgs, and no matter the specific aesthetics or styles of performance. However, the dramaturgical practices that I draw on as cases for my research come from the field of dance and choreography. This is partly because dance is the field in which I am currently working (and thus where my ethnographic research is done) and partly because the dance dramaturg does indeed provide fertile ground for discussing knowledge. In dance, the tension between choreographers as “mute doers and dramaturgs as bodiless thinkers”¹¹ that control the work from a logocentric point of view and its political dimension is more visible. Moreover,

⁸ In this thesis when referring to the dramaturg with a pronoun, I chose to use the feminine one because this is my own gender. Exceptions are made when discussing the views of a male dramaturg (Lepecki for example) where I am using the masculine pronoun. Therefore as a general guide for the pronouns, I am following the gender of the writer.

⁹ Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. Karen Jürs-Munby, (Routledge: London and New York 2006).

¹⁰ Marianne Van Kerhoeven, “On Dramaturgy,” *Theaterschrift* 18, no. 5-6, (1994): 12.

¹¹ Bojana Cvejić, “The Ignorant Dramaturg”, *Maska-Practical Dramaturgies* 16, no. 131-132 (2010): 41.

historically it was through the dance dramaturg that the landscape of dramaturgy changed and, as a result, a significant part of the contemporary discourse on dramaturgy takes place in the field of dance.¹²

0.2 Methodology and structure

My motivation for this research stems from my personal urge to examine in depth the practice of the dramaturg that I am currently being trained for. This thesis builds upon an ongoing research that started with my Bachelor's dissertation that examines dramaturgy as a practice in four different dance creation processes and continued through my internship, where I was occupied with dance dramaturgy in diverse modalities. As a result, some of this thesis' arguments are based on my own observations and reflections. In this sense, one can say that one of my methods is an ethnographic fieldwork approach. Dance scholar Betina Panagiotara in her article "Working on Research: An insight into methodological approaches" argues that ethnography is a valuable methodology because "it enables personal experience to be incorporated into the research as a reflective process that provides an insight that acts complementarily to other research methods".¹³ Additionally, Ellis, Adams and Bochner argue that ethnography is an approach that "acknowledges and accommodates" the voice and influence of the author, instead of ignoring it.¹⁴ That is

¹² For dance dramaturgy-related discourse, see indicatively: Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (eds.), *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, (Palgrave Macmillan: London 2015) · Katalin Trencsényi, *Dramaturgy in the Making: A User's Guide for Theatre Practitioners*, (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) · Jo Butterworth and Liesbeth Wildschut (eds.), "Dance Dramaturgy: structures, relationships, contexts", in *Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader*, 2nd edition, (Routledge: London 2017): 182-230 · Synne K Behrnt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking", *Contemporary Theatre Review* 20, 2 (2010): 185-196 · Bettina Milz, "Conglomerates: Dance Dramaturgy and Dramaturgy of the Body", International Research Workshop: Dramaturgy as applied Knowledge, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 2008 · Myriam Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy", *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 13, no. 2 (2003): 57-68 · Andrian Heathfield, "Dramaturgy without a Dramaturg", in A. Écija, M. Bellisco and M.J. Cifuentes (eds.), *Rethinking Dramaturgy, Errancy and Transformation*, Centro Párraga, Centro de Documentación y Estudios Avanzados de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid 2011 · Scott deLahunta (ed.), "Dance Dramaturgy: Speculations and Reflections", *Dance Theatre Journal* 16, no. 1 (2000): 20-25.

¹³ Betina Panagiotara, "Working on Research: An Insight into Methodological Approaches", *Choros International Dance Journal* 7 (Spring 2018): 23.

¹⁴ Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams, and Arthur Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview", *Historical Social Research* 36, no. 4 (2011): 273-290.

exactly why it is a relevant method for research on performing arts, especially when the focus is on the process of creation.

In the case of this thesis, as the starting point was the dialogues on dramaturgy that took place in the context of the Master's Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy, as part of my methodology I conducted formal one-to-one interviews with Maaïke Bleeker, Sigrid Merx and Konstantina Georgelou. All three are in my academic environment and are involved with teaching and doing research on dramaturgy. At the same time, to support my views I am using my contact with dance dramaturg Merel Heering that resulted from my internship with her. Lastly, I also use as a source the interviews I had with dramaturg Kate Adams for the needs of my BA thesis. Along with the ethnographic approach, I also draw on theories and concepts both from the field of dramaturgy and epistemology to construct my theoretical and analytical framework.

In Chapter 1, I focus on the notion of practical knowledge as an aspect of epistemology that came to challenge the dominant propositional knowledge. I start by discussing the dominant understanding of the figure of the dramaturg that already contains a tension related to knowledge because of the dramaturg being – historically – the theorist/intellectual of the process. The chapter continues by arguing about the practical aspects of dramaturgy, as they became visible through the interviews I conducted with Maaïke Bleeker, Sigrid Merx and Konstantina Georgelou. It then examines practical knowledge in the field of epistemology through the concepts of *knowing how* (Gilbert Ryle) and *phronesis* (Aristotle) as discussed by David Carr and Anne Pakes. It concludes by proposing that practicing dramaturgy includes a large amount of 'knowing how' that comes through the action of 'dramaturging' and thus the intelligence of the dramaturg is also in the doing. Part of the knowledge relies in the way that the dramaturg acts in the studio and it is a knowledge that can be developed only in and through practice.

Chapter 2 zooms into a specific notion of practical knowledge, namely tacit knowledge. 'Tacit' literally means silent, as it is the part of practical knowledge that defies verbal expression and is communicated instead through performance, actions and skills derived from personal experience. After a brief navigation into the concept's history in epistemology, I then examine what comprises the tacit component of the dramaturg's knowledge. Using examples, observations and reflections from my ethnographic fieldwork

(mainly from the practice of Merel Heering and Bleeker's interview), I propose that there are three main elements in the practice of the dramaturg that can be considered as tacit knowledge: thinking in terms of a process, creative sensitivity and relationality. Thus, my main argument in this chapter is that tacit knowledge can function as a concept to contextualize the part of the knowledge that the dramaturg brings in the studio that it cannot always be explicitly articulated, either because it is very personal or because it is based on sensory experience.

Chapter 3 goes a step further by suggesting that tacit, knowledge because it is 'silent', opens up space for an embodied knowledge to gain recognition in the practice of the dramaturg. The chapter examines, on the one hand, the concept of presence as a way that tacit knowledge explicates itself and, on the other hand, the well-known metaphor of the dramaturg as the 'outside eye' that promotes a visual and cognitive dramaturgy. Against this view, my main proposition in this chapter is that putting the emphasis on the dramaturg's presence and proximity in the rehearsal room as an experience subject can lead to a move away from a cognition- and language-based practice towards a more embodied one. In order to argue for it, I investigate two dramaturgical practices that explicitly propose a practice that makes use of and values embodied knowledge. The first is the dramaturg and writer André Lepecki and his proposition of 'finding a (new) body' for each process, extracted from his writings. The second is the English Athens-based dramaturg Kate Adams and her conception of dramaturgy as 'the inhabiting of the embodiment of the piece' as collected it through personal interviews.

Lastly, Chapter 4 opens the scope up again into the larger context, functioning as a reflective chapter that touches upon the political dimensions of giving visibility to these different types of knowledge – practical, tacit and embodied – that the practice of the dramaturg entails. To start, I define the notion of politicality following Ana Vujanović's view that politicality is "the aspects of an artwork or art practice that addresses the ways it acts and intervenes in the public sphere".¹⁵ To continue, I examine how the notion of embodied knowledge is political because it critically intervenes in 'the distribution of the sensible', as described by Jacques Rancière. Lastly, I discuss the participation of the

¹⁵ Ana Vujanović, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance", in *Dance, Politics & Co-immunity* edited by Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zuerich-Berlin: Diaphanes, 2013): 181.

dramaturg to today's 'knowledge economy'. I conclude that a practice of the dramaturg that is based on practical, embodied and tacit qualities of knowledge, resists the knowledge economy by repositioning the dramaturg in non-hierarchical relations where the production and distribution of knowledge in the work takes place among all the subjects of the production.

The structure of the thesis follows a kaleidoscopic movement: the three notions that the three first chapters deal with – namely practical, tacit and embodied knowledge – are at the same time very close to each other and very different. Each highlights a different valuable aspect or perspective and all together interrelated to construct my main thought and arguments. However, even in the epistemological discourse where these three concepts are in the centre of attention, their limits, definitions and relations are very blurred on a first view. In my available sources, there are connections between practical and tacit knowledge and between tacit and embodied knowledge but there is not a study that clearly discuss the nuances and interconnections between the three notions. As the primarily territory of this thesis is dramaturgy and not epistemology, a clearer separation between the notions goes beyond its scope and its possibilities.

At the same time, when discussing these notions one has to be aware also of their problems: if tacit knowledge is a type of knowledge that is beyond articulation and if embodied knowledge is explicated through the body, then how can one write about it in the propositional language of academia? This is a question to have in mind not in order not to write about them but to be always aware that even though what these concepts enable us to see for the dramaturgical practice is very productive, it is also epistemological complicated, and hence they need a research that goes beyond this thesis.

Nevertheless, inspired by the discussion of practical knowledge in choreography by Pakes, embodied knowledge in performing techniques by Spatz and tacit knowledge in dance by Karreman and realizing the relevancy of all the three for the practice of the dramaturg, this is a first attempt to bring the three notions together in the context of dramaturgy. Practical knowledge establishes the alternative knowledge paradigm foregrounding the 'knowing how' of the dramaturg based on the notion of action. Tacit knowledge helps us to pay more attention to the personal and sensorial components of the knowledge of the dramaturg that goes beyond language. Last, embodied knowledge

highlights even more intensely the body of the dramaturg as the bearer of knowledge, coming from her presence in the studio. Altogether, I conclude by giving an image of the alternative understanding of the knowledge of the dramaturg that values different types and layers of knowing and thus leads to a more open, pluralized, sensitive and imaginative practice of dramaturgy that is politicized.

Chapter 1: The practical knowledge of the dramaturg

The current chapter, after examining the dominant conception of the dramaturg that fosters the notion of knowledge, continues into observations that foreground a different approach to the dramaturg that focus on the practical aspects of the practice. After that, using the concepts of ‘knowing how’ and ‘phronesis’ from the field of epistemology as discussed by David Carr and Anne Pakes, I explore how the knowledge of the dramaturg can also be conceived as practical knowledge and why examining it through this lens can be helpful for the discourse.

1.1. The dominant understanding of the dramaturg

In order to realize the relevance and importance of a discussion that focuses on the knowledge of the dramaturg, it is necessary to start with an examination of the dominant understanding of the figure of the dramaturg, as it is an understanding that already contains a tension related to knowledge. The underlying notion of this connection is the link of the dramaturg to theory and to intellectual skill or capacity. In that line of thinking, dramaturgs are thinkers that have the privileging of knowledge and thus the intellectual responsibility for the process.¹⁶ When it comes to dance, the dramaturg often also incorporates the privilege of language, being the one that is always capable of grasping things in words.¹⁷ Dramaturg Bojana Bauer in her article “Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance” explains:

The profile of the dramaturg as someone with a background in the humanities, in theatre or performance studies or in disciplines such as literature and musicology, invites one to think of him/her as a theoretician or a critic who puts his/her linguistic and intellectual skills in the service of the practitioner’s performance-making.¹⁸

¹⁶ Imchoot in “Dance Dramaturgy: Speculations and Reflections”, 22.

¹⁷ Stalpaert, “A Dramaturgy of the Body”, 123.

¹⁸ Bojana Bauer, “Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance,” in *Dance Dramaturgy. Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement* edited by Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2015): 33.

Taking a brief look into the historical background of the role reveals part of an explanation for this conception of the dramaturg. Coming from the theatre field as far back as the 18th century, the professional title of the dramaturg finds its place within institutionalized theatre practices in the face of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and his work as a critic from inside the theatre.¹⁹ Continuing through Bertolt Brecht's ideas, the dramaturg becomes someone who is responsible for the hermeneutic analysis of the text and the creation of a concept in order for the director to actualize it in the practice.²⁰ The development and implementation of concepts as the main work of the dramaturg was established by the 1990s, with the development of the additional conception that the dramaturg is most commonly an academic. Influenced by these developments but at the same time slowly becoming independent, the dramaturg entered the dance field in 1979 with the collaboration of Pina Bausch and Raimund Hoghe.²¹ During the Flemish dance wave of the 1990s, the role was not only established but also started to be seen as an instrument of success in the market.²² The introduction of dramaturgy into dance practices “[gave] rises to fears regarding power relations between practice (doing, dancing, choreographing) and theory (thinking and reflecting critically, analytically etc.)”, as Bauer explains.²³

At the beginning of the 21st century, the emergence of post-dramatic theatre and ‘new dramaturgy’ changed the landscape and they brought more collaborative practices to the foreground, in which the dramaturg is also part. In that new era, “dramaturgy is seen as the twilight zone between art and science” as Christel Stalpaert states, “but it still associated primarily with the cognitive function of the brain.”²⁴ Even in this contemporary field, dramaturgs are often thought to offer the right solutions, so that the performance becomes coherent, understandable, or accessible to the audience, all pointing to a

¹⁹ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, (Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1877).

²⁰ For a detail discussion of Lessing's and Brecht's ideas and practices as dramaturgs see Mary Luckhurst, *Dramaturgy: A Revolution in Theatre*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²¹ For a detail discussion on their collaboration see Mare Kate Connolly, “An Introduction to Raimund Hoghe”, in *Throwing the body into Flight: A portrait of Raimund Hoghe* edited by Mare Kate Connolly, (Intellect: London 2013) and Katalin Trencsényi, *Dramaturgy in the Making: A User's Guide for Theatre Practitioners*, (Bloomsbury: London 2015): 213-4.

²² Pil Hansen, “Introduction,” in *Dance Dramaturgy. Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, ed. Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison. (London: Palgrave Macmillan: 2015): 7.

²³ Bauer, “Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy...”, 32.

²⁴ Stalpaert, “A Dramaturgy of the Body”, 121.

dramaturgy as a way of work of the intellectual who ‘knows best’:²⁵ a knowledge that most of the time is labeled theoretical or factual knowledge that comes along with her linguistic skills.

1.2. The practical aspects of the dramaturg

Even though the conception of the dramaturg as connected to theory and the intellect is dominant in the way that the dramaturg is perceived and is historically explained, it does not always correspond to the actual practice of the dramaturg or to the way that most of the dramaturgs themselves understand their practice. The practice of the dramaturg it is not simply a matter of bringing in the theoretical or factual knowledge you have, rather it has other practical aspects that make it much more complicated and difficult to grasp. A way of becoming more aware of that is by examining how the practice of dramaturgy is taught in the university.²⁶

Dramaturg and performance scholar Maaïke Bleeker argues that the practice of dramaturgy does not only involve a fixed set of knowledge and thus it is very difficult to find a way to teach it without saying “this is how you do it.” She draws a parallel between teaching dramaturgs and teaching in art schools, as in both you cannot demonstrate how the practice is done but you can help the students develop themselves as dramaturgs or artists. In her own words:

This is a kind of non-representational thinking about sharing knowledge, where sharing knowledge is not a visualization of the practice, rather, it happens through the doing of things as a result of which the student starts to think and maybe grasp it”²⁷

²⁵ Konstantina Georgelou and Efrosini Protopapa and Danae Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy. Working on Actions in Performance*, ed. Konstantina Georgelou and Efrosini Protopapa and Danae Theodoridou (Amsterdam: Valiz 2017): 76.

²⁶ Being at the moment in an academic environment on a Master’s programme of dramaturgy, namely the MA in Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy at Utrecht University, I realize that conducting interviews with people that teach dramaturgy at an academic level can reveal much about this tension between the correlation of the dramaturg with theoretical knowledge and the actual practice. The act of teaching somebody something forces you to deal with the kind of knowledge that you have to transmit and with how you are going to transmit it. For that reason, I conducted interviews with Maaïke Bleeker, Sigrid Merx and Konstantina Georgelou, all three being lecturers at the MA programme at Utrecht University.

²⁷ Maaïke Bleeker, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Utrecht March 7, 2018.

Following the same train of thought, Sigrid Merx explains how on her dramaturgy course she tries to create frameworks in which the skills of a dramaturg can be trained. Most of the times these frameworks do not meet academic standards and are not related to bringing theoretical literature into practical activities, but instead it is more about helping students to start seeing their qualities and create their own position. Therefore, it is not just about learning to become a dramaturg but about finding out what kind of dramaturg you would like to be by experiencing it.²⁸ According to Merx, these frameworks provide students with an opportunity to learn in practice

Reframe their own knowledge or translate it into something else. It is then that most of the students realize that more important than theoretical knowledge is another kind of intuitive knowledge on how a process works; a process-based knowledge that is much less about the content and more about the process of making.²⁹

Dramaturg and lecturer Konstantina Georgelou also agrees that in order to train a dramaturg you have to create frameworks in which the students can explore the actual practice. As she mentions, as an educator in the university she works towards the direction of

Devising tasks and procedures that can ‘set in motion’ dramaturgical processes for and with others, rather than only identify, situate and explain existing dramaturgical operations. Devising ways to work that are exploratory rather than explanatory.³⁰

According to Georgelou however, many students arrive at university with the idea in their mind that they will understand what dramaturgy is and how they can practice it only by reading books or articles like any other theoretical course. It is only later, they understand that the practice includes other types of knowledge that come from practice in the studio.³¹

²⁸ Sigrid Merx, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Rotterdam March 2, 2018.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Konstantina Georgelou, “In Conversation,” in *The Practice of Dramaturgy. Working on Actions in Performance*, ed. Konstantina Georgelou and Efrosini Protopapa and Danae Theodoridou (Amsterdam: Valiz 2017): 259.

³¹ Georgelou, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Utrecht, March 7, 2018.

What these interviews reveal is that there is a need for engaging with dramaturgy in a practical manner through the experience of being in the studio in order to develop as a dramaturg. At the same time, there is a need for the students –and not only them – to move away from their conception of dramaturgy as an inventory of theoretical knowledge towards a more practical understanding.

It is against this background that the notion of practical knowledge can be proved relevant and valued for the discourse of dramaturgy, providing a new gateway to resolve the tension between the traditional understanding of the dramaturg as the theoretician and, more recently, as a practitioner. As the core of this tension is located around the issue of knowledge, I think that the scientific field of knowledge, namely epistemology, can also help resolve it. Thus, before focusing on the practical knowledge of the dramaturg, in the next section I am going to introduce briefly the position of practical knowledge in the field of epistemology.

1.3. Practical knowledge: knowing how and the concept of phronesis

In the Western intellectual tradition, knowledge has been largely based upon scientific reason and skepticism or ‘justified true belief’. The division between theory and practice can be traced at least as far back to Plato, while it was reinforced during the early seventeenth century in terms of a schism between body and mind by the Cartesian paradigm.³² This conception of knowledge emphasizes the importance of factual and theoretical knowledge over and above other forms and fosters the mind as the locus of knowledge.³³ For factual knowledge, as scholar Robin Nelson marks, verbal language, as a sophisticated system of symbols, has become the dominant way of establishing knowledge as a set of testable and falsifiable propositions.³⁴ One result of this, according to Anne Pakes, “is a contemporary situation in which ways of knowing that refuse or transcend the scientific paradigm must often nonetheless be justified with reference to it, if they are to be recognized as valid.”³⁵ In the context of the performing arts to which this thesis belongs,

³² Robin Nelson, “Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge,” *Performance Research* 11, no.4 (2006): 105.

³³ Pakes, “Knowing through dance-making...”, 11.

³⁴ Nelson, “Practice-as-research and the problem of knowledge”, 106.

³⁵ Pakes, “Knowing through dance-making...”, 11.

this remark is especially relevant as it is not a fact-seeking exercise and does not produce verbal products that are testable.

During the 1960s there was a challenge to the bias of Western epistemology when Gilbert Ryle proposed to distinguish the ‘knowing how’ from the ‘knowing what’, putting the focus on what it is to know how to perform tasks and to act intelligently.³⁶ The classical example of ‘knowing how’ ‘knowing what’ is that of riding a bike: knowing how to ride a bike is different from a theoretical knowledge of how the bike works. For Ryle, the knowledge of how to ride a bike can only be developed through practice: it is an intelligent action in itself. Intelligence is directly exercised thus, both in some practical performances as in some theoretical performances. “Hence, there is no gap between intelligence and practice corresponding to the familiar gap between theory and practice.”³⁷ With this concept, Ryle challenges the dualism between the body and mind as he proposes that embodied action is already knowledge.³⁸ By doing so, he opened the way for the notion of practical knowledge to emerge.

According to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, a way to distinguish between practical and theoretical knowledge is both in terms of what the knowledge is about and of how the knowledge is learned.³⁹ As David Carr explains, “Whereas the objects of theoretical knowledge are something like statements or propositions, practical knowledge is directed towards action.”⁴⁰ For practical knowledge, action is its primary form of expression and can only be in part expressed verbally.⁴¹ As Pakes explains, “when deciding how to act [...] we start from our intentions, balance these against the specific set of circumstances in play, to produce action which takes account of both those purposes and that state of affairs.”⁴² Practical knowledge thus emerges as an awareness of how best to

³⁶ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, (London: Hutchinson, 1949).

³⁷ Gilbert Ryle, 'Knowing How and Knowing That', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series 46, (1945 - 1946): 3.

³⁸ Pakes, “Knowing through dance-making...”, 12.

³⁹ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed on 10 April 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-how/>

⁴⁰ David Carr, “Knowledge in Practice,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1981): 55.

⁴¹ Goranzon Bo, Richard Ennals, and Maria Hammeron, eds., *Dialogue, skill and tacit knowledge* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2006): 55.

⁴² Anna Pakes, “Art as action or art as object? the embodiment of knowledge in practice as research,” *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 3 Available at: https://www.herts.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/12363/WPIAAD_vol3_pakes.pdf.

act, a form of insight embodied in what we do in the world in which the action is the embodiment of knowledge.⁴³ This does not mean, however, that practical knowledge excludes theoretical knowledge. Bringing together practical knowledge and knowing how, John Lesli Mackie argues the following:

Practical knowledge in another sense is knowing how to do or how to make something. This may involve no theoretical knowledge, in which case knowing how consists simply in being able to do or make whatever it may be; or it may involve theoretical knowledge of the kinds used in . . . intelligent making.⁴⁴

In order to bring more light to that understanding of practical knowledge, Carr and Pakes propose to interrogate Aristotle's distinctions between kinds of knowledge, focusing in particular in the notion of *phronesis*. Aristotle, in *Nichomachean Ethics*, distinguishes between different types of knowledge: *episteme* (theoretical), *techne* (productive) and *phronesis* (practical). According to him, practical knowledge is different from theoretical understanding, as the second type is a demonstrable form of knowledge that you can teach. It is connected thus, with scientific understanding and objective knowledge.⁴⁵

In contrast to this, there are two kinds of practical knowledge: *techne* and *phronesis*. *Techne* stands for craftsmanship, being connected to the making of products (*poiesis*). It involves a clear aim with a pre-conceived end that the artisan uses his skills to achieve. *Phronesis*, on the other hand, is the practical wisdom that is connected to the domain of praxis. In contrast to *techne*, it does not have a manipulative or instrumentalized attitude towards processes based on a technical skill, rather it entails a creative sensitivity. As a form of action, the basic characteristic of *phronesis* is that it is not generalized but particular, as Pakes explains:

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ John Lesli Mackie, "A Reply to Jaakko Hintikka," in *Practical Reason*, ed. S. Korner, (Oxford, 1994) as it is quoted in David Carr, "Knowledge in Practice," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1981): 54.

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, ed. and trans. R. Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), as discussed in Pakes, "Knowing through dance-making...", 17-18.

It is a kind of attunement to the particularities of situations and experiences, requiring subjective involvement rather than objective detachment; and it has an irreducibly personal dimension in its dependence upon, and the fact that it folds back into, subjective and intersubjective experiences.⁴⁶

Both the concept of knowing how and that of *phronesis* point to the existence of practical knowledge, a kind of knowledge that has as a basic characteristic that it is expressed in the form of action and takes into account the specificity of the circumstances. At the same time, it is a knowledge that can be developed only through practice and is combined with other types of knowledge.

1.4. The concept of action in dramaturgy

Even though notions of practical knowledge are conventionally associated with ethics and practical philosophy, Carr and Pakes – among others – have argued that they also resonate in the domain of art practice. Following Pakes who, in her article, “Knowing through dance-making. Choreography. Practical knowledge and practice-as-research”, uses the concepts of knowing how and practical knowledge to discuss choreography and artistic research, I propose to view the practice of the dramaturg through this lens. One of the main reasons that the notion of practical knowledge seems highly relevant for dramaturgy is that, according to certain approaches, the concept of action is located in the core of dramaturgical practices.

Danae Theodoridou, Efrosini Protopapa and Konstantina Georgelou in their book *The Practice of Dramaturgy. Working on Actions in Performance*, propose that returning to the etymological and conceptual aspect of the term dramaturgy reveals its relevance with action. Dramaturgy consists of two words: ‘drama’ coming from the Greek verb δράω (to act) and ‘ergon’ (ἔργον) to work. Here, the word ‘drama’ is liberated from the identification of the theatre text that it took during the Renaissance and lies on Aristotle’s definition as ‘things done in theatre’.⁴⁷ Focusing on the etymological concept in saying that

⁴⁶ Pakes, “Knowing through dance-making...”, 19.

⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Kenneth McLeish, (London: Nick Hern Books Limited, 1999): 10.

“dramaturgy basically marks a blending between the terms ‘action’ and ‘work’ [...] [I]t can be interpreted both as ‘actions that work’ and as ‘working on actions’”.⁴⁸

For Georgelou, Protopapa and Theodoridou, working on action has to do with all kind of actions (material and immaterial) that take place during a creative process, from the work in the studio to the format of the collaboration, and it is not an exclusive feature of the dramaturg. In their context, dramaturgical practice refers to a broad understanding of dramaturgy that reveals itself as a way of thinking and acting.⁴⁹ However, as this thesis focuses on the dramaturg, I propose that we can also approach the practice of the dramaturg through this definition of dramaturgy (but remain aware of the fact that dramaturgical thinking goes beyond the figure of the dramaturg). Hence, the practice of the dramaturg is to work on actions and to trigger actions to work.

Bojana Bauer likewise advocates for this idea of dramaturgy that ‘does something’ by also bringing in the foreground the notion of action: “dramaturgy is concerned with action or the capacity for action, in a given dispositif (i.e. an artistic project and its material dispositif”.⁵⁰ Hence, she characterizes dramaturgy as a “pragmatic practice”, in the sense that it is a practice that involves an action based on a sensible way that suits the conditions that really exist now, rather than obeying fixed theories, ideas, or rules.⁵¹

Accordingly, dramaturg André Lepecki presents the task of the dramaturge (and especially the dance dramaturg) as “to attend to all those actions that are constantly being produced, constantly being proposed by every single element cocreating the piece”.⁵² Here, actions are defined in a wide range: objects, temperatures, a time of the day are actions because they act and interact with the dancers. As Lepecki marks:

⁴⁸ Georgelou, Protopapa and Theodoridou, “Working on Actions,” in *The Practice of Dramaturgy*, 74.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Bauer, “Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy...”, 48.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² André Lepecki, “We are not ready for the dramaturge: Some notes for dance dramaturgy,” in *Rethinking Dramaturgy: Errancy and Transformation*, edited by M. Bellisco & M.J. Cifuentes, Centro Parraga 2010,196. Note that this is an older version of the text “Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy”.

In the event of dance, all elements *create* and *are* events. It is a question of understanding their modulation, of picking up adequate or inadequate qualities for the piece to come. The modulation of a gesture; the modulation of a color; the modulation of a poem; the modulation of an object.⁵³

Therefore, according to these dramaturgical approaches, the practice of the dramaturg is contaminated with the notion of action, even when the actions are not always physical. Based on this connection between action as dramaturgical practice and action as the barrier of practical knowledge, in what follows I argue how the knowledge of the dramaturg can be conceived as practical knowledge.

1.5. The knowledge of the dramaturg as practical knowledge

If one looks at the dominant understanding of the dramaturg as described at the beginning of this chapter through the lens of epistemology, the epistemological value of the dramaturg seems close to the dominant conception of knowledge; a conception that appraises the importance of factual and theoretical knowledge and fosters the mind as the locus of knowledge. The dramaturg as ‘the mind of the process’ serves exactly this knowledge paradigm and enhances the binary division of labor and the Cartesian paradigm of mind-body split in a way that “practitioners/choreographers are mute doers and theorists/dramaturgs are bodiless thinkers and writers”, according to dramaturg Bojana Cvejić.⁵⁴

In contrast to this view, approaching the knowledge of the dramaturg through the notion of practical knowledge stands as a proposition to support the conception of the dramaturg as a practitioner and not only a thinker; a person that brings all the theoretical knowledge into the process and thus challenges the dominant conception of knowledge. Following Ryle’s argument on the difference between knowing how and knowing what, as knowing how to ride a bicycle differs from a theoretical understanding of how the bicycle works, the knowledge of practicing dramaturgy includes more than having the theoretical knowledge employed to analyze a piece. In contrast to what a lot of people believe, when practicing dramaturgy in a process, it is not the case that prior theoretical knowledge of what should be done in a piece then put these ideas into practice; neither is the case of

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Cvejić, “The Ignorant Dramaturg”, 41.

conceiving the concept of the work in theory and then illustrating this in practice. Having theoretical knowledge of an issue that relates to the piece can be a great help but it is not enough. Practicing dramaturgy includes a large amount of ‘knowing how’ that comes through the action of ‘dramaturging’. The intelligence of the dramaturg is in the doing; the knowledge is embodied in the way that the dramaturg acts in the studio and it is a knowledge that – like riding a bicycle can be developed only in and through practice.

The concept of *phronesis* might be of a help here in order to clarify this practical knowledge of the dramaturg further. Even though Aristotle uses it in order to discuss moral virtue in ethics, Carr proposed its use and relevancy for the context of contemporary artistic practices.⁵⁵ The focus on practice, the particularity of each situation instead of the generalizations, the central role of the expression of feelings, of sensitivity and subjectivity, are all points at which moral action and creative artistic action converge, Carr argues. In line with Carr’s arguments, Pakes focuses on how *phronesis* is relevant specifically to choreography as “a form of praxis that involves collective production”. The choreographic process thus is an intersubjective context that requires from the choreographer knowledge on how to act in accordance with a creative sensitivity that takes into consideration the particularity of the situation and the personal dimension.⁵⁶

Following this train of thought, the concept of *phronesis* is also relevant for the practice of the dramaturg. If there is one thing that the discourse on the dramaturg agrees upon, it is the particularity and relationality of the dramaturg’s practice. The dramaturg is always “in relation to” somebody else and to a process. Pil Hansen states the following in the “Introduction” of the book *Dance Dramaturgy Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*:

The functions, approaches, and strategies of dramaturgy are dependent on the specific sources of inspiration, movement approaches, and working methods of each individual project. His or her strategies are not considered models or even methods and they cannot be applied directly.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ David Carr, “Further Reflections on practical knowledge and dance a decade on,” in *Dance, Education and Philosophy*, ed. Graham McFee, (Oxford: Meyer and Meyer Sport, 1999).

⁵⁶ Pakes, “Knowing through dance-making...”, 19.

⁵⁷ Hansen, “Introduction”, 7.

The dramaturg must find anew each time in her practice, depending on the specific context of the individual process. As a result, “the attunement to the particularities of situations and experiences” that Pakes describes as the basic characteristic of *phronesis* stands also in the centre of the dramaturg’s practice. She does not plan this ‘new’ approach beforehand but rather while she is acting in the process, taking into account the other agents she is situated in relation to. The action requires subjective involvement rather than objective detachment. Thus, it is a praxis that depends on its ontology on collective production. As such, it demands a creative sensitivity towards the others involved, the process itself and the dynamics of the work.

Bleeker considers creative sensitivity to be one of the most important skills of the dramaturg, which is why she calls it “dramaturgical sensitivity”.⁵⁸ For her, doing dramaturgy has much to do with sensitivity in approaching the practice of making and that sensitivity is considered to have a knowledge of how to act in each process, taking under all parameters into consideration. It is a sensitivity that comes only in practice and it is not possible to turn it into a fact-seeking or testable set of knowledge. It is this creative sensitivity that can also be called practical knowledge. This is something that can also be recognised in Hansen’s ideas, when she argues: “this skill is learned through training and with experience, but it does not add up to expert knowledge; it only comes into existence in response to a collaborative process and thus remains dependent upon others”.⁵⁹

Hence, the dramaturg is not a mere carrier of an objective knowledge that comes through theory, nor is she a mere technician using preconceived skills and rules to achieve an aim. Rather, she acts by using a wisdom coming from the practice and that action itself comprises knowledge that has to be recognized and valued.

⁵⁸ Bleeker, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Utrecht March 7, 2018.

⁵⁹ Hansen, “Introduction”, 7.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show how practical knowledge can be used as a relevant concept for discussing the practice of the dramaturg. Nevertheless, even though it focuses on the practical knowledge, it is important to continue stressing that this approach does not exclude theoretical knowledge or intellectual activity. It advocates however, for a knowledge of the dramaturg that goes beyond this; a practical knowing that consists also of theoretical knowledge and intellectual activity, along with other kinds of knowledge that develop through practice and experience, and are more intuitive and less articulated, like tacit knowledge, a concept that I focus on in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: The tacit component of the dramaturg

Coming from the Latin verb *tacēre* (to be silent), tacit knowledge literally means silent knowledge as it is the part of practical knowledge that defies verbal expression. It is a form of knowledge that is communicated through performance, actions and skills that are not codified and are derived from personal experience, so it is difficult to articulate. The tacit aspect of knowing is a central characteristic of practical knowledge since neither tacit knowledge nor ‘knowing how’ are expressed or taught directly and both are primarily learned in informal settings. Hence, exploring deeper the concept of practical knowledge, tacit knowledge falls under the epistemological framework and its debates as I describe them in the first chapter, generating at the same time new ones. In this chapter, after giving a brief description of the concept of tacit knowledge, I examine the relevance of the concept of tacit knowledge for the dramaturgy discourse. What exactly is this knowledge? And what comprises the tacit component of the dramaturg’s knowledge? In order to answer these questions, I employ an ethnographic approach using examples, observations and reflections, which I draw from my personal experiences in the studio, my contact with the practice of dance dramaturg Merel Heering,⁶⁰ and the interviews I conducted for this thesis with Bleeker and Merx.

2.1. Towards new conception of the dance dramaturg

As already described in the previous chapter, the traditional understanding of the figure of the dance dramaturg connects to the privilege of language “as a theoretician or a critic who puts his/her linguistic and intellectual skills in the service of the practitioner’s performance-making” to remember Bauer’s words.⁶¹ It is a conception that originates from two aspects: Firstly, the long-standing idea of dance as an ungraspable, ephemeral and abstract phenomenon that is difficult to ‘read’ in terms of language.⁶² Secondly, the fact

⁶⁰ Merel Heering is a Dutch dance dramaturg that I follow as part of my internship from February to June 2018. Except from my own observations on her practice, my main source is an interview conducted by the Bachelor’s students of the course “Dramaturgy and Scenography” in Utrecht University in May 2017 in which Merel discussed her approach to dramaturgy that I had the chance to experience while observing her.

⁶¹ Bauer, “Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance”, 33.

⁶² Karreman, “The Motion Capture Imaginary”, 58.

that the dramaturg first emerged in the theatre context and thus can be considered to have a logocentric point of view, an idea that was enhanced during the 1990s when dance dramaturgs were seen as a correlational factor for success for choreographers.⁶³ A set of misconceptions about these ideas combined together generated the understanding of the dance dramaturg as a figure that has authority and control by operating from the position of language towards the inexplicable and ungraspable dance process.⁶⁴

Dance dramaturgs have often advocated against this view. Dramaturgs Christine Fentz and Carmen Mehnert both talk about the failure of words “in trying to put feeling into knowledge, in trying to communicate with dancers and choreographers, in trying to interfere with the movement text of a choreography. The communication is done in colors, landscapes, metaphors and energy levels”.⁶⁵ Based on this, scholar Christel Stalpaert in her article “A Dramaturgy of the body” calls for a loosening of the status of the dramaturg as the expert, as the vessel of knowledge, and instead proposes to admit the following:

That you as a dramaturg, don't have the language, that you cannot perceive, grasp and understand completely [...] and instead dare to stutter, dare to stammer, create a poetic language in stammering. In a postdramatic context, this kind of failure can be very productive.⁶⁶

For Lepecki – one of the first to address the relationship of the dramaturg to knowledge in the text «We're not ready for the dramaturge»: Some notes for dance dramaturgy” – the presence of the dramaturg in the studio creates the tension of “the one who is supposed to know what the work is about”. It is a tension that relates to the readiness both of the dramaturg and for the dramaturg; both of “how can the dramaturg prepare his or her contribution to the work” and of “what is expected from the dramaturg by those who dance and choreograph before his or her scrutinizing presence”.⁶⁷ Lepecki proposes as a solution

⁶³ Hansen, “Introduction”, 5.

⁶⁴ Myriam Van Imchoot, “Anxious Dramaturgy,” *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist Theory* 13, no. 2 (2003): 59-60.

⁶⁵ Stalpaert, “A Dramaturgy of the Body”, 123.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Lepecki, “We are not ready for the dramaturge”, 183.

to this tension that the dramaturg “must engage in an «inexact-yet-rigorous» methodology, not aligned with knowledge and knowing, but with errancy, erring and error.”⁶⁸

Both Stalpaert and Lepecki try to release the dramaturg from being constantly in the position of knowing in a cognitively way and make space for a failure of knowing. This view comprised one of the main motivations of this thesis to start questioning the connection of the dramaturg to knowledge, as I realized that there is a need to find an alternative way of contextualizing this connection. The domain of practical knowledge as I describe it in the previous chapter allowed me to find a new productive context to shed light from a different perspective. Diving into it, the notion of tacit knowledge can also function as a concept that redefines the relation of the dramaturg to knowledge, as it proposes the existence of a different type of knowledge that goes beyond language and is based on sensorial and subjective involvement. What the concept of tacit knowledge can offer to the figure of the dramaturg is the acceptance of the fact that “you as a dramaturg, don’t have the language, that you cannot perceive, grasp and understand completely” is followed by a realization that you have other ways of understanding and knowing that are ‘in work’ and also comprise knowledge for the dramaturg. Thus, instead of seeing it as a – productive – failure, the concept of tacit knowledge redefines the failure of words as a different kind of knowing that the dramaturg has when she enters into the studio that evades control and expertise. In order to understand what this type of knowledge is about, the following section focuses on a brief explanation of the concept of tacit knowledge before I continue to the tacit component of the dramaturg.

2.2. The concept of tacit knowledge

A recent edited volume dedicated to tacit knowledge notes that it is a concept that leads to a set of theoretical and methodological questions in the scope of academic disciplines (like philosophy, sociology, cultural studies and business administration) as well as in diverse practical problems (like knowledge management in organizations or creative practices in the arts).⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid, 184.

⁶⁹ Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund, and David Kaldewey “Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge”, in *Revealing Tacit Knowledge. Embodiment and*

The term was introduced by Michael Polanyi in 1958 in his book *Personal Knowledge*, and further discussed in *The Tacit Dimension* (1966) as a concept that refers to the unarticulated intelligence of skills and experiences.⁷⁰ When Polanyi first introduced it, he did it as “an inquiry into the nature and justification of scientific knowledge” but with the scope of “establishing an alternative ideal of knowledge, quite generally”.⁷¹ By doing so, he argued for a personal knowledge that goes against the universally established, objective paradigm of knowledge and embraced ‘the tacit component’ of knowing. Tacit knowing/knowledge is a subjective, qualitative experience or process that is combined with the parts of knowledge that can be articulated. In order to prove so, he used the example of skills such as riding a bike, swimming or playing the piano:

The premises of a skill cannot be discovered focally prior to its performance, nor even understood if explicitly stated by others, before we ourselves have experienced its performance, whether by watching it or by engaging in it ourselves.⁷²

Even though Polanyi argues about the tacit component of acquiring a skill like riding a bicycle, he also states that having ‘focal knowledge’ of these skills helps to achieve a more complete understanding: “For though no art can be exercised according to its explicit rules, such rules can be of great assistance to an art if observed in a subsidiary way within the context of its skillful performance”.⁷³ According to Polanyi thus, theoretical knowledge and tacit knowledge function together at the same time.

Since Polanyi, the concept has attained several meanings discussed by different scholars and philosophers. Until the 1960s, the philosophical discourse on tacit knowledge has been dominated by a determination to define tacit knowledge in contrast to explicit, discursive or propositional forms of knowledge. In the 1970s, other disciplines, like science studies, entered the discourse and ideas of authors such as Ludwig Wittgenstein started to be discussed by other authors, directing the view into the sociology of

Explication, eds. Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund, and David Kaldewey, (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015): 7.

⁷⁰ Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).

⁷¹ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, iv.

⁷² *Ibid*, 172.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

knowledge.⁷⁴ The Wittgensteinian approach argues that tacit knowledge describes *how* we apply our knowledge in practice by focusing especially on the fact that practice is always tacit because it is based on something that cannot be expressed.⁷⁵ Two decades later, in 1990s, the concept was influenced by the so-called “practice turn” and found its place in practice theory that emphasizes its practical and not only theoretical relevance.⁷⁶

In the context of art practices, the concept of tacit knowledge has lately concerned the discipline of dance studies as part of the ‘practice turn’, focusing on the tacit knowledge of the dance. Laura Karreman for instance, in her Phd “The Motion Capture Imaginary: Digital Renderings of Dance Knowledge” gives an overview of the inquiries that the dance field explores in connection to knowledge in different aspects, such as dance technique, history or notation. Karreman herself proposes to consider dance knowledge as tacit knowledge by using as an example the process of transmission of the choreography of *Rosas Danst Rosas* by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker by a former dancer to a new dancer.⁷⁷ Other writers that approached dance or performing arts with notions close to tacit knowledge are the scholars Catherine Stevens and Shirley McKechnie, that argued about both procedural and declarative knowledge as types of knowledge of the dancer;⁷⁸ and Diana Taylor, with her book *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), who argued for an expansion of the understanding of knowledge through dance.⁷⁹

Taking into account the different uses and meanings the concept takes in diverse disciplines and times, one realizes that tacit knowledge is by no means a homogeneous concept. On the contrary, it is defined in various ways, depending on the context and the kind of issues and problems dominating the particular context. Nevertheless, although tacit knowledge has attained diverse definitions, there are some characteristics of the concept

⁷⁴ Adloff, Gerund and Kaldewey, “Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge”, 9.

⁷⁵ Klaus Nielsen, “The Concept of Tacit Knowledge – A Critique”, in *Outlines*, no. 2 (2002): 6.

⁷⁶ Adloff, Gerund, and David Kaldewey, “Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge”, 9-10.

⁷⁷ Karreman, “The Motion Capture Imaginary...”, 55-92.

⁷⁸ Catherine Stevens, and Shirley McKechnie, “Visible Thought: Choreographic Cognition in Creating, Performing, and Watching Contemporary Dance”, in *Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader*, edited by Jo Buaerworth and Liesbeth Wildschut (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

⁷⁹ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2003).

that remain at the core of it and they are relevant to the tacit knowledge of the dramaturg. Hence, according to Polanyi tacit knowledge relies upon subjective judgments and sensory experience.⁸⁰ According to researchers Richard Wagner and Robert Sternberg, tacit knowledge is “practical rather academic, informal rather than formal” and it is “procedural knowledge”.⁸¹ Additionally, because tacit knowledge is bounded to specific situations it avoids systematization.⁸² Lastly, tacit knowledge is collective knowledge in the sense that it is socially shared because it is the result of agents’ successfully coordinated and co-produced action; “for agents to acquire tacit knowledge, they must be integrated into social practices”.⁸³ Actual tacit knowing is not only present in the riding of a bike but in its use in street traffic among other cyclists or in the playing of a musical instrument with an ensemble. Practices of this sort can be mastered together with others. It is impossible to apply such tacit knowledge outside of the particular praxis. Jens Loenhoff in “Tacit Knowledge: Shared and Embodied” states:

If tacit knowledge ensures participation in social practices, then it does so only because it is a shared and situationally adequate knowledge. This is why this form of knowledge can neither be understood as an idiosyncratic proficiency or individual talent nor be reduced to a subjectively evident physical ability.⁸⁴

What Loenhoff adds here is that the fact that tacit knowledge is collective knowledge, in terms of being shared and of depending on the context, which ensures that it is not a completely subjective and idiosyncratic thing.

Nevertheless, any approach to tacit knowledge is characterized by a basic paradox as Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund, and David Kaldewey highlight in the introduction of the book *Revealing Tacit Knowledge Embodiment and Explication*:

If this is a kind of embodied and pre-reflexive knowledge underlies all of our actions and all knowledge production, then how is it possible to access it –let alone describe it in the propositional language of

⁸⁰ See Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966): 13 and Polanyi, “Tacit Knowing: its bearing on some problems of philosophy” in *Knowing and Being. Essays*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969):163.

⁸¹ Richard Wagner and Robert Sternberg, “Practical Intelligence in Real-world Pursuits: The Role of Tacit Knowledge”, in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 48, (1985): 439.

⁸² Bo, Ennals, Hammeron, *Dialogue, skill and tacit knowledge*, 55.

⁸³ Loenhoff, Tacit Knowledge: Shared and Embodied, 24.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 25.

scholarly discourse? If this knowledge is in fact tacit, then how (and to which degree) can we transform it into explicit knowledge?⁸⁵

These questions foreground one of the basic risks when discussing tacit knowledge, namely that of viewing it as surrounded with an aura of mystery and obscurity.⁸⁶ That kind of view, instead of giving a new perspective to enrich the discourse of the disciplines that use the concept of tacit knowledge, in fact makes it more inaccessible and introverted.

This thesis, being an academic thesis discussing the tacit knowledge of the dramaturg, does face these questions. However, its aim is to use the concept of tacit knowledge to open up new venues of inquiry in the discourse and not to cover it with more obscurity. For this reason, it resonates with Adloff et al.'s approach, which states that it is possible "in a way or another to reconstruct, describe, and analyze the manifold processes by which the tacit reveals itself (or is revealed)".⁸⁷ According to their view, one of the ways that tacit knowledge reveals itself and become tangible is "in manifold forms by the use of metaphors, analogies, feelings and visualizations and in forms of examples that provide a context".⁸⁸ Additionally, according to Robin Nelson, a way that tacit knowledge reveals itself is in the documentation of a process in the form of notebooks, sketchbooks or videos that functions as "a process of making the tacit more explicit".⁸⁹ Thus, the research strategy that this thesis employs in order to access the tacit knowledge of the dramaturg is by using examples, descriptions and reflections.

2.3. The tacit component of the knowledge of the dramaturg

The concept of tacit knowledge, in contrast to the dominant way of depicting knowledge through the lens of technical rationality, "is a concept that is able to contain and value the experiences of professional practitioners and be included and legitimized at the same time

⁸⁵ Adloff, Gerund, and David Kaldewey "Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge", 7.

⁸⁶ Bleeker, in her interview mentions that she tends to highlight the part of tacit knowledge that it can be addressed because otherwise "it will stay a dark, mystique thing that we don't know how to approach". In Bleeker, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Utrecht March 7, 2018.

⁸⁷ Adloff, Gerund and Kaldewey "Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge", 8.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Nelson, "Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge", 113.

in the scientific discourse” as Nielsen states.⁹⁰ Accordingly, this thesis claims that tacit knowledge can function as a concept to contextualize the part of the knowledge that the dramaturg brings into the studio that it cannot always be explicitly articulated, either because it is very personal or because it is based on sensory experience. This knowledge remains however, a basic component of the dramaturg’s work and the concept of tacit knowledge is able to contain and value it. It is a concept that is based on the acceptance of the knowledge of the dramaturg as being practical knowledge combined with explicit or theoretical knowledge.

Even though this approach to the dramaturg from the point of view of tacit knowledge may at first look like a theoretical approach, in fact it through the practice that I was able to detect these qualities in the knowledge of the dramaturg that comprised the tacit component of her practice. Therefore, the observations that follow come from a combination of my previous research on the topic of dance dramaturgy through the examination and/or participation in several creation processes, the interviews that I introduced in Chapter 1, and the practice of dance dramaturg Merel Heering.

The ability to think in terms of a process is the first of the main tacit aspects of the knowledge of the dramaturg. It is a knowing that comes from the experience of having taken part in many creative processes and thus of having been trained to look and talk about something in terms of what it can become, rather what it is currently. Bleeker strongly supports this ability of the dramaturg as a core one and, as she remarks, “it is something that you learn only in doing and you have to have seen a lot of rehearsals to say ‘if we are now here we might be there in three weeks’”.⁹¹ Instead of approaching the rehearsal as a performance, the dramaturg has to be able to understand how the collective thinking that takes place in the process will be developed. Accordingly, dramaturg Merel Heering notes that, as a dramaturg, she tries “to put things into perspective by thinking from the process. What are the longer lines that the maker is looking for? What is the process that we are all into? That also gives you the opportunity to say which questions and challenges lay there”.⁹² Discussing the same thing in a more poetic way, dramaturg Bojana

⁹⁰ Nielsen, “The Concept of Tacit Knowledge”, 10.

⁹¹ Bleeker, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Utrecht March 7, 2008.

⁹² Merel Heering in conversation with a group of students of *Dramaturgy & Scenography* of the Utrecht University, led by Laura Karreman. Utrecht interview taken in May 2017 by: Charlotte van

Cvejić argues that dramaturgy is a speculative practice in the sense that “you place thought as belief or faith in a certain outcome without having firm evidence [...] You learn to do and say “let’s think again”, because you don’t know now, but you will have known by then”.⁹³ This capability of speculation can be considered as tacit knowledge of the dramaturg as it is a specific capacity that one develops through the contact with the practice.

Understanding the thinking in terms of a process as tacit knowledge includes another dimension that one has to consider and has been discussed in Chapter 1, namely creative sensitivity. When in the studio, the dramaturg takes into account the state of the process, what the process needs, and what tensions might be in the air. The ability to sense the dynamics and the atmospheres of the studio, the ability to know what comes when and what is needed when, both for the process and for intersubjective relationships, is an ability that comprises the tacit aspect of the dramaturg. This is the way that Merx primarily approaches the tacit component: as an understanding or knowing of what emerges as a result of “knowing things like when you need to stop talking because the process or the people cannot handle it at the moment or when to cause a conflict because you know is necessary”.⁹⁴ This is not a knowing that comes from a theoretical point of view but rather a knowledge that is based on the dramaturg’s subjective judgment.

Heering also believes that a big part of the craftsmanship of the dramaturg is sensitivity to people and relationships.⁹⁵ For instance, there are some moments that her work in the studio as a dramaturg focuses not to the content of the piece but on the dynamics of the process between her, the choreographer and the dancers; and she has to deal with notions of vulnerability, taking care, etc.:

Beem, Minke Driessen, Marise Hendriksma, Kim van Middelkoop, Hannah van der Mark, Lara Matheij, Lena Meijer, Annejon Okhuijsen, Marieke Pothof, Fleur Scharrenburg, Roos Stuurman, Tiana Spark and Henriette Wachelder. My translation in English.

⁹³ Cvejić, “The Ignorant Dramaturg”, 53.

⁹⁴ Merx, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Rotterdam March 2, 2008.

⁹⁵ Heering, Interview, 4.

I am the one who puts everything on the table. That can be between me and the maker or uncovering a disagreement between dancers. All those things that no one says and they do happen are very decisive for if something can or cannot arise.⁹⁶

For instance, a concrete example that this kind of tacit knowing revealed was when in one of the rehearsals with a choreographer, Heering decided that what was needed on this day was not working on the content of the piece but on the dynamics of the process. Because that day she understood that the atmosphere of the group was not concentrated and ‘safe’, she proposed to do a physical exercise as a group – including her – in order to tune it all together. Her aim was to bring into the studio the notion of ‘taking care’ as an element because it was a process in which all collaborators were men and they faced a difficulty in embracing other dynamics beside masculinity, and that had an effect on the piece also. In these cases, the dramaturg’s tacit knowledge was revealed both because of her ability to understand this need based on her sensory experience and because of her knowledge of how to address and handle it. Through these experiences, she realized that “knowledge is much broader than what you have read or having a lot of references. It is your whole package of experiences and personality traits [...] because you also work emotionally from associations, images and intuition”.⁹⁷

The dramaturg’s thinking in terms of process brings in the foreword again the notions of collectivity and relationality. As I state in the first chapter, the practice of the dramaturg depends in its ontology on collective production, as it is always ‘in relation to’. It is this relationality that should be considered as the essence of the tacit knowledge of the dramaturg. Following the concept of riding the bike, tacit knowing is not in the practicing of the dramaturgy but in the practicing among the other collaborators. The dramaturg participates in the social praxis of the creation process and acts in concert with the other collaborators through an interactive calibration of actions in the particular praxis.

The knowledge described above is both tacit and practical in the sense that it is not made explicit by the dramaturg herself during the process in the form of propositional language but it becomes visible in the way she acts upon it in the studio. Merx mentions that, for her, tacit knowledge has to do more with using your knowledge: “It is not so much

⁹⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 5.

about expressing your knowledge or producing it or convincing others of your knowledge but rather a fact of using it or letting it have an influence on how you act”.⁹⁸

The dramaturg does not describe what the feeling in the studio is at one moment or how she thinks in terms of a relational process but rather acts upon it and thus uses her tacit knowledge in a way that is close to the Wittgensteinian approach. At the same time, it is a primarily personal form of knowledge, in the sense of being subjectively following Polanyi’s approach.

However, what the dramaturg can do afterwards is to try to access this knowledge by reflecting upon it and describing what she did. This description will always be situationally bounded within the specific creative process and it may use other means of articulation, such as metaphors or visualizations, but it will still reveal tacit knowledge that can be put into words. At the same time, to remember Nelson, the documentation of the process in different forms also allows her to find traces of this tacit knowledge that has been ‘in work’ during the process.

Having said this, it is important to stress two points that need some attention. Firstly, to note that reflection may be part of the dramaturg’s process not only afterwards but also when she acts in the studio; it is, however, not necessarily a reflection that takes the form of propositional language or explicit knowledge and it is a different kind of reflection from that which takes place afterwards. Secondly, one has to be aware of the fact that the notions of reflection and documentation are already conventionally connected to the practice of the dramaturg as two of her main tasks/skills. They are often two aspects that are conceived as a way of guaranteeing “the objective truth” of the process that the dramaturg as an intellectual has access to. Seeing them that way, they represent almost the opposite of the scope of this thesis, which highlights the practical aspects of the knowledge of the dramaturg, arguing against the idea of the dramaturg as a mind that controls the process. In contrast to this view, here reflection and documentation are conceived as a way of grasping and making more visible the personal, tacit knowledge that lies in the practice of the dramaturg. The fact that they are becoming public – in the form of a published academic text or an informal notebook or video only in between the collaborators – is a way of bringing them closer to the explicit knowledge that everybody has access, a

⁹⁸ Merx, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Rotterdam March 2, 2018.

recognition that consequently makes the practice more transparent while remaining at the same time remaining sufficiently subjective and specific.

Conclusion

This chapter proposes that the concept of tacit knowledge can function as a helpful framework for discussing the knowledge of the dramaturg. Using the already existing discussion on the connection of the dramaturg to knowledge, it suggests an alternative understanding of knowing that values the subjective, sensorial and relational knowledge that comes from experience but at the same time can be approached from an epistemological point of view. At the same time, the connection of the practice of the dramaturg to tacit knowledge opens up another valuable possibility: a gateway to approach dramaturgy as an embodied practice as according to Polanyi, embodied knowledge is pre-reflexive ‘tacit knowledge’ because it is anchored in the body;⁹⁹ an approach I will explore further in the following chapter.

⁹⁹ Michael Hubrich, “Embodiment of Tacit Knowledge,” in *Revealing Tacit Knowledge. Embodiment and Explication*, eds. Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund, and David Kaldewey, (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015): 42.

Chapter 3: The embodied knowledge of the dramaturg

As part of the main debates of epistemology, the body as the locus of attention has been vividly present during the last decades in philosophy, social and cultural theories and performance studies. The current chapter, after examining the role of the body in the discourse of knowledge and in the discourse of dramaturgy, continues towards an investigation of how one can define an embodied practice of dramaturgy that makes use of embodied knowledge. In order to do so, it focuses on the notions of presence and proximity and draws on the practice of two dramaturgs. The first is the well-known dramaturg and writer André Lepecki and his general approach to the practice of dramaturgy as I extract from his writings. The second is the English Athens-based dramaturg Kate Adams and her practice of dramaturgy in her collaboration with a Greek choreographer as I through personal interviews.

3.1. Tacit knowledge as embodied knowledge and the notion of presence

The shift in the understanding of knowledge in the Western intellectual tradition that notions such as practical and tacit knowledge brought resulted in a re-examination of the connection of the body to knowledge. The long-standing problematic position of the body in academia as the result of the central position of language and propositional knowledge, began to be addressed in the social sciences and cultural studies around 1970. The central stake in this ‘return’ to the body is “the quality of the body as a bearer of knowledge, as a recipient of a disciplinary power of society, or as the repository of a social praxis beyond language and discourse”.¹⁰⁰ The emphasis on the importance of the body and embodied knowledge emerged as an alternative starting point opposed to the Cartesian dogma of *cogito*; and to break the intellectualist positions that foster the concept of the mind as the locus of power and knowledge.¹⁰¹

In the discourse about tacit knowledge, the body occupies a key role as it is considered to be a generator, medium or pathway of tacit knowledge. Following Michael Polanyi in arguing that embodied knowledge should not be considered as propositional

¹⁰⁰ Loenhoff, “Tacit Knowledge: Shared and Embodied”, 21.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 26.

knowledge but rather as pre-reflexive ‘tacit knowledge,’ a number of authors argue about the connection of tacit knowledge with the notions of embodiment and presence.¹⁰² Adloff et al. in “Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge” claim that if there is one thing that all the different examples and definition of the concept have in common is that “tacit knowledge makes possible an immediate presence.”¹⁰³ There is a connection between tacit knowledge and phenomena of presence “i.e. situations of spatial and temporal conspicuousness which are perceived non-reflexively”, because presence is not based on a propositional or explicit knowledge but rather has an implicit dimension and thus presupposes tacit knowledge:

Presence comes into our focal perception from subsidiary tacit knowledge that, in most cases, remains unnoticed and unobserved. Thus, tacit knowledge explicates itself in situations of presence. This explication is normally non-propositional and based on performances and translations rather than on representations.¹⁰⁴

What Adloff et al. propose is that the notion of presence offers a way to reveal and access tacit knowledge that is not based on language but on embodiment. It is in this sense that tacit knowledge can be also conceived as embodied knowledge because presence brings in the foreground the embodied dimension. As the first chapter argued, practical knowledge can be conceived as embodied in the sense that the knowledge is manifested through the action of the practitioner. It is thus tacit, as it is not explicated through language but through the body:

In practical action there is always already a pre-reflexive relationship to the word that is structured by bodily dispositions before such a relationship can be conceptualized. Not consciousness or language but the body operates as the constitutive moments of practical intersubjectivity, for acts of meaning are first enacted in corporeal intentionality and become manifest contents of consciousness only secondly.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² For instance, the collection of texts *Revealing Tacit Knowledge. Embodiment and Explication*, edited by Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund and David Kaldewey addresses the embodied dimension of tacit knowledge through several perspectives.

¹⁰³ Adloff, Gerund and Kaldewey “Locations, Translations, and Presentifications of Tacit Knowledge”, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Loenhoff, “Tacit Knowledge: Shared and Embodied”, 26.

As one can see here, notions of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge are inseparably linked to each other when examining the concepts of action and presence, focusing all in an alternate understanding of knowledge. Connecting them to the central role that presence plays in the dramaturgical discourse, they can help us examine an embodied practice of the dramaturg that makes use of this alternate understanding of knowledge.

3.2. Towards an embodied dramaturgy

In the field of dramaturgy, the body enters the discussion mainly as a challenge to the usual metaphor of the dramaturg as ‘the outside eye’.¹⁰⁶ This metaphor follows “a tradition of thought that since Descartes that has severed the mind from the body and equated the mind with the optical” and reproduces a distinction between doing and thinking as Myriam Van Imschoot explains in her article “Anxious Dramaturgy”.¹⁰⁷ The metaphor implies a metaphysical distinction between the head – with its privileged sense-organ, the eye – and other sensorial intensities. This distinction causes the reduction of the body of the dramaturg only in the eye and promotes a visual dramaturgy that relies only on image.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, the outside eye metaphor, except for the specificity of the dramaturgy discourse, relates also to the common and widespread ‘knowing is seeing’ metaphor in which we understand and talk about knowing in terms relevant of our experience of seeing.¹⁰⁹

Therefore, the ‘outside eye’ metaphor has a lot to tell us about what is conceived as knowledge in the field of dramaturgy, as, according to Mark Johnson, “an analysis of conventional conceptual metaphors in a culture can provide profound insight into what constitutes knowledge within a given community of inquirers”¹¹⁰. Indeed, the metaphor fosters the representation of the dramaturg that I have already described, as a bodiless thinker that mostly uses the mind in her approach to the process without having an embodied involvement and in which the mind functions as the locus of knowledge.

¹⁰⁶ Imschoot, “Anxious Dramaturgy”, 63.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Stalpaert, “A Dramaturgy of the Body”, 122.

¹⁰⁹ Katharina Gerund and Mark Johnson, “Questions to Mark Johnson,” in *Revealing Tacit Knowledge. Embodiment and Explication*, eds. Frank Adloff, Katharina Gerund, and David Kaldewey, (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015): 301.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Opposing this view, over recent years a number of dramaturgs and scholars have strongly rebelled against the ideological reduction of the dramaturg to an eye and to the equalization of knowing as seeing. For doing so, the body has functioned as their main gateway in proposing an alternative understanding of the dramaturg. Writers such as André Lepecki ('Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy'), Bojana Cvejic ('The Ignorant Dramaturg'), Christel Stalpaert ('A Dramaturgy of the Body') have critically addressed this issue and begun a discussion on the embodied dimension of the dramaturg that focuses on proximity and presence in the studio.

It is against the aforementioned background that the discourse on tacit knowledge as embodied knowledge can be proved to be highly relevant and fruitful for the practice of the dramaturg. As is evident above, the elements of presence and proximity are already present in dramaturgy, but so far we have approached the dramaturg through the knowledge paradigm of theoretical and propositional knowledge. Approaching it now through a broader understanding of knowledge can provide us with valuable insights. Hence, where, in the previous chapter, I argue that the knowledge of the dramaturg has a tacit component, in this chapter I go a step further and propose that this tacit knowledge – exactly because it is silent – opens up space for the body of the dramaturg to take over; for an embodied knowledge to gain recognition in the practice of the dramaturg. The concept of tacit knowledge helps us thus, to move away from the metaphor of the dramaturg as the outside eye and move towards a new metaphor that includes the whole body, and consequently to move away from the visual dramaturgy towards an embodied dramaturgy, where the emphasis is on the dramaturg's embodied presence in the rehearsal room as an experience subject. It is exactly this emphasis on which both André Lepecki and Kate Adams focus in their approach to dramaturgy, as I demonstrate in the following sections.

3.3. Finding a (new) body: André Lepecki

André Lepecki started working as a dance dramaturg in the late 1980s, a period in which the dramaturg was establishing his presence in the dance field. Starting first as “a friend-collaborator” in Lisbon, continuing as a “collaborator-at-large” and then evolving into a professional dramaturg – as himself often describes his trajectory – he was engaged with process-based dance dramaturgy in the studio mainly with Meg Stuart and Damaged Good

but also with Vera Mantero, Joao Fiadeiro and Francisco Camacho.¹¹¹ With this decade of work, Lepecki occupies a place in this generation of dramaturgs – including Marianne Van Kerkhoven, Guy Cools, Heidi Giplin and Hildegard De Vuyst – that played a core role in the flourishing of a new understanding of dramaturgy; not only by their practices but also by starting the discourse about dance dramaturgy through a number of symposiums, publications and research projects.¹¹² Although Lepecki stopped working as a professional dramaturg already at the end of 1990s, he continued his dramaturgy by teaching at Tisch School of the Arts (NYU), a position that gave him new perspectives in the field.

Along with the work in the studio, Lepecki has written texts in which he reflects on his practice and proposes a very specific approach to dramaturgy that I will use in this section. Although acknowledging that some of these are texts and ideas that have been expressed almost two decades ago (as is also his practice), this thesis proposes a re-examination of Lepecki's view through the lens of the context of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge. Lepecki's focus on the proximity of the dramaturg can take a new impetus if seen through the notion of presence as described in epistemology. In other words, the common ground between the epistemological discourse and the practice of the dramaturg, as described in the previous chapters, finds its justice/actualization in Lepecki's approach to the embodied dramaturg and thus, make it relevant for the current field.

To start the unraveling of his practice, it is important to understand that, for Lepecki, there is a difference between the dramaturgical procedures, skills and tasks (documenting, processing external sources of inspiration and information, collecting material generated in the studio etc.) and “the task of dramaturging”, which he defines as “a particular activation of sensibility, sensation, perception and imagination towards processes of actualization of the virtual under the singularity of a compositional, and collective process”.¹¹³ The choice of the words “sensibility, sensation, perception and imagination” is of relevance to this thesis as they refer to the subjective and sensorial qualities of the practices described previously. At the same time, it highlights the notion of actualization and the singularity of each process, two of the core notions of practical and tacit knowledge.

¹¹¹ Lepecki, “We are not ready for the dramaturge”, 184.

¹¹² Hansen, “Introduction”, 5.

¹¹³ Lepecki, “Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy”.

The “particular activation”, which Lepecki refers to as part of his definition of the task of dramaturging takes place in the studio, with the dramaturg as close as possible to the process. Proximity is one of the basic features of Lepecki’s approach. He proposes that the dramaturg might see him or herself as someone who has a memory of the process and can draw on that memory creatively, because otherwise, as a distanced observer, there is the danger of just giving feedback at a structural level.¹¹⁴ This memory is not only a reflective memory but also an embodied memory that comes from the experience of the dramaturg in the studio. As he comments:

If you are close you’ve got to remember not only the people off stage but you are also going to remember the movie that all went together to see after the rehearsal and there was this great thing, and why don’t you bring that in, or the thought that someone else had, or the dream I also had, that could be put in this scene.¹¹⁵

It is thus, the dramaturg’s proximity to the studio that allows her or him to use their body “as a memory of praxis” of these moments.

Pil Hansen argues that Lepecki’s emphasis is on “the dramaturg’s embodied and perpetual proximity in the rehearsal room as an experiencing subject and collaborator instead of the objective observer and knowledgeable critic”.¹¹⁶ What Lepecki actually suggests is to focus on the presence of the dramaturg in the studio, a focal point that reveals different aspects one can examine. Approaching from the position of the conventional figure of the dramaturg, his or her presence in the studio brings along a number of anxieties related to the questions of knowing that I address already in the first chapter. The symbolic aura of the dramaturg as “the one who is supposed to know” arrives in the process along with him or her and creates tensions. Lepecki’s main inquiry is thus:

What is the relationship between the physical presence of the dramaturg in the studio and the tensions this presence may create in relation to those who are supposed to hold knowledge over the work being created?¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Lepecki in Turner Cathy and Synne K. Behrntd, *Dramaturgy and Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 157.

¹¹⁵ Ibid 161.

¹¹⁶ Hansen, “Introduction”, 8

¹¹⁷ Lepecki, “Errancy as Work”, 52.

Answering his own inquiry, Lepecki explains that what the dramaturg 'is supposed to know' is what the work-to-come truly is about, what the work-to-come wants and how we can arrive there. It is a tension that arises from the fact that the point of departure for creating works in contemporary choreography is not something stable (like a text, a plot or a narrative) but rather an open field of heterogeneity where everything is unstable, abstract and not tangible.¹¹⁸ This creates an atmosphere of uncertainty where the dramaturg arrives coming from a tradition of language and theoretical knowledge that often is misperceived as the one who actually knows something in this field of dispersion.

Lepecki's original proposition in his text "We are not ready for the dramaturg" for resolving these tensions is to destroy the figure of the dramaturg as the one who is supposed to know by acting from the position of not-knowing. As he states, "Dramaturgy emerges thanks to the dramaturg's capacity to bypass a subject-position of (fore) knowledge".¹¹⁹ This proposition has to do more with the intellectual presence of the dramaturg in the studio. However, zooming out to look also into his other writings, one can find another suggestion Lepecki does concerning the distancing of the figure of the dramaturg from the subject supposed to know. The presence of the dramaturg in the studio has another dimension that Lepecki highlights: the embodiment. The proximity through the presence is Lepecki's way of opposing the metaphor of the dramaturg as the eye being the locus of power and knowledge at the disposal of the choreographer, who is perceived (following the metaphor) as a body incapable of truly seeing and knowing.¹²⁰ Fighting the "anatomical monstrosity of the external eye", he redirects attention to the whole body of the dramaturg and its adaptation to the dynamics in the studio, as for him "dance dramaturgy implies the reconfiguration of one's whole anatomy, not just the eyes".¹²¹ It is not only the vision he must engage when he is in the studio but all the senses, as he states:

¹¹⁸ Lepecki, "'We are not ready for the dramaturge'...", 191.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 53.

¹²⁰ André Lepecki in Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy", 63.

¹²¹ André Lepecki in Scott DeLahunta, "Dance Dramaturgy: Speculations and Reflections", *Dance Theatre Journal* 16, no. 2 (2000): 25.

I enter in the studio as dramaturge by running away from the external eye. Just as the dancers and the choreographer, I enter to find a (new) body. That's the most important task of the dance dramaturge -- to constantly explore possible sensorial manifestoes.¹²²

The dramaturg must engage every time anew with the process in a bodily sense. Instead of being “the one who is supposed to know,” the dramaturg enters the process as a body that brings with it a sensorial, subjective knowledge and understanding of the process and the studio. To reverse the argument that “tacit knowledge makes possible an immediate presence” in this case the dramaturg's embodied presence makes possible that tacit and embodied knowledge will take more space in the dramaturg's practice and move away from the objective, solely discursive and intellectual conception.

To summarize, Lepecki's proposition is that the dramaturg can be released by the metaphor of the outside eye and the intellectual mind of the process if he or she engages with the whole body into the process. Hence, it is a proposition that argues for a dramaturgical knowledge that is manifested through the participation of the body – including the mind – and thus it is a practical and embodied knowledge.

3.4. A practice of inhabiting: Kate Adams

Moving from Lepecki and the investigation of his dramaturgical practice through his writing to the case of Kate Adams, it is important to mention that this discussion draws upon my (personal) research and collection of material generated by conducting interviews with her.¹²³ It is important to be aware of this, in order to understand the difference in the breadth of the influence of Lepecki's ideas and Adams's here. Nevertheless, what a discussion of a personalized practice such as Adams's has to offer in the discourse is to

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ The material was gathered for the needs of my BA thesis with the title “The Practice of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance: Four Cases Studies from the Belgian and Greek Scene of the 21st Century” conducted in School of Drama, Faculty of Fines Arts, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in February 2017. The thesis researches the practice of dramaturgy in contemporary dance by studying the dramaturgical process of four different cases studies: *Badke* (2013) by Les Ballets C de la B in collaboration with KVS and A.M.: Qattan Foundation, *Le Salon* (2004) by Peeping Tom, *Transforming me: a bilingual solo* (2014) by Medie Megas and *This is it, no other, just this* (2016) by Mariela Nestora-YELP danceco. The interview with Adams was conducted on the occasion of her work as a dramaturg in the piece *Transforming me: a bilingual solo*, but it also touched upon general aspects of dramaturgy.

show a more recent approach to embodied dramaturgy than Lepecki's texts as well as in a different context. At the same time, what is interesting is that Adams engages in a 'dialogue' with Lepecki's approach and takes it a step further, as we will see.

Adams is an English dramaturg who is currently dividing her time between the UK, where she is a lecturer in Drama in the University of Salford, Manchester, and Athens, where she is working as a dance dramaturg mainly with the Greek choreographer Medie Megas.¹²⁴ Just like Lepecki, she is a process-based dramaturg with a 'hands-on' approach to dramaturgy in the studio. Her focus on an embodied understanding of her practice as was immediately evident through one of the first questions I asked her: to mention one object that her main tool or an integral part of her dramaturgical practice. She chose to say that this object is her body; something that she is aware is not what is expected from a dramaturg.¹²⁵ Embodiment thus emerges already as the focal point of her approach.

However, when asked to comment on Lepecki's quote that "as a dramaturg you enter in the studio by running away from the external eye [...] to find a (new) body", Adams commented that, even though she finds it to the point, she would not use the verb 'running way'. For Adams the initial state that you adopt when entering into a creative process is as an external eye and "you are moving away from being an external eye because you are going deep in the vision of the artist"¹²⁶. In this way, the dramaturg enters into different possibilities in relation to what is happening with the body onstage. And this is possible only if, as a dramaturg, you, along with the choreographer/dancer, are willing to find a particular mode of embodiment. Because for Adams,

Any dance work is actually creating a particular mode of embodiment, a way of being, a way of inhabit the body on stage, of activate a body on stage; and in the process you are engaging with this particular state of embodiment.¹²⁷

According to her view thus, as a dramaturg you have to understand on a bodily level what is happening on stage and not only visually, because it is a different knowledge you gain through seeing the piece and different through 'inhabiting' it. In the case of Adams and her

¹²⁴ Adams and Megas have a long-standing collaboration over the last 5 years.

¹²⁵ Kate Adams, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Athens October 10, 2016.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

work with Medie Megas, this action of inhabiting the movement is very literal. When they are in the studio, Adams is actually standing and working through the movement material, even though she does not have any dance training. She does because, as she says, “I understand things both visually and physically and I need to understand in what state the choreographer is trying to engage her body”.¹²⁸ Inhabiting with her own body the ‘body’ of the piece allows Adams to make use of an embodied knowledge that she does not have access to otherwise. At the same time however, she is fully aware of how she sees things from the outside, which is why for Adams the dramaturg has to constantly move – in a movement of oscillation – backwards and forwards in a balancing act between seeing and inhabiting that vision.¹²⁹

At the same time, for Adams her participation in the dance improvisation also has a different dimension: it contributes to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and equality between her and the choreographer as it puts the dramaturg in the vulnerable position in which the dancer/choreographer finds herself most of the time.¹³⁰ In situations of such proximity like these, in which the dramaturg works with the maker, this vulnerability is very important for her. Working most of the time with personal themes and issues as starting points to generate material, Adams often asks the choreographer/dancer to explore “dark personal areas” that will make her vulnerable. She then feels that it is important for the dramaturg to be in a vulnerable position too, and for her that means to participate in the movement improvisation, even though she is not trained in this field.¹³¹ Embracing the position of not knowing and opening up space for the emotional subjectivity of the dramaturg is a suggestion for the role of the dance dramaturg that not only questions the figure of ‘the one who is supposed to know’ and destroys the quintessence of thinking, but also suggests the ability to be vulnerable as an integral tool of the dramaturg.

Kate Adams’s approach is a radical proposition for the disengagement of the dramaturg from the traditional metaphor of the external eye that opens up space by approaching it through the lens of embodied and tacit knowledge. What she proposes is that this kind of knowledge also exists in the creation process that the dramaturg must

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ In this case, the piece was a solo in which the choreographer was also dancing.

¹³¹ Adams, Interview (10/10/2016).

acknowledge and let influence her practice, a claim that constitutes the main argument of this thesis. Going a step further than Lepecki, Adams abolishes the schism between the dramaturg as the bodiless thinker and the choreographer as the mute doer, putting faith and value in “the body as bearer of knowledge” and suggesting a very literal embodied practice for the dramaturg.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to show how the discourse of dramaturgy can move away from a visual dramaturgy that relies only in cognition, if one makes more explicit the embodied dimension of the dramaturg. Using the now active discussion regarding presence and proximity in dramaturgy and connecting it with the notion of presence as the bearer of tacit knowledge, it advocates a dramaturgical practice that focuses on the potential of the embodied knowledge of the dramaturg as an experience subject. Both Lepecki’s view that the most important task of the dramaturg is “to explore possible sensorial manifestoes” and Adam’s that the dramaturg must “inhabit” the body of the work each time, in fact proposes a dramaturgical practice that is more pluralized and multifaceted as it opens space for different layers of knowledge to impact on the work.

Chapter 4: The political dimension

“To move beyond the Cartesian paradigm is to move from solid ground, to stumble and stutter at the edge of our thinking, revealing new and unforeseen ways of thinking and feeling”

Christel Stalpaert, “A Dramaturgy of the Body” (2009)

Zooming out from the practice of the dramaturg in the studio and from the microcosmos of the creation process, this chapter turns to the larger context to touch upon the political dimensions of giving visibility to these different types of knowledge that the practice of the dramaturg entails. Aiming to answer this question, the chapter functions as a critical contextualization of my research that opens up space for reflection. After a short explanation of the notion of politicality based on Ana Vujanović’s view, the chapter continues by discussing the participation of the embodied practice of the dramaturg to Jacques Ranciere’s “distribution of the sensible”, as described by Christel Stalpaert, ending with a discussion of the participation of the dramaturg in the current economy of knowledge.

4.1. A note on politicality

To start the investigation, it is important to note that, when I am talking about political dimensions, my focus is not on *politics* but on the problematics of *politicality*. In this sense, I follow Ana Vujanović’s proposition in the text “Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance” that politicality is “the aspects of an artwork or art practice that address the ways it acts and intervenes in the public sphere”.¹³² As she argues, politicality is a complex grid that characterizes every performance – no matter whether its content is political or not – because every performance is a social event that is practiced in public:

Politicality implies discussions about and conflicts around topics such as the subjects and objects that perform in the public sphere, the arrangements of positions and power relations among them, the

¹³²Vujanović, “Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance”, 181.

distribution of the sensible, and the ideological discourses that shape a common symbolic and sensorial order of society, which affects its material structures and partitions.¹³³

According to Vujanović there are three dominant modalities in which the political is practiced by and in performance today: 1. political content and the concept of engaged performance; 2. the politicality of the performance medium; and 3. the politicality of modes of work/production.¹³⁴ Of these three modes, the third is the most relevant to this thesis, as the practice of the dramaturg, comprising the main phenomenon of analysis in my research, is related to the processes of work and production. In this mode, politicality relies on “questions of property and authorship, principles of sharing, position in the exchange economy and market, production and distribution of knowledge, organization of artistic collectives, mechanisms of decision making, collaboration and networking”.¹³⁵ Thus, in the case of this thesis, questions related to the position of the dramaturg to an artistic process with a specific focus on the ‘production and distribution of knowledge’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘power relations’ are raised. The practice of the dramaturg – as with all art practice – intervenes in the public sphere and by doing so it proposes something about the mode of working; and this proposition is political charged.

4.2. Participating in the ‘distribution of the sensible’

When it comes to the proposition of an embodied practice of the dramaturg as described in Chapter 3, Christel Stalpaer, in “A dramaturgy of the body”, offers us with a very relevant proposition on its political dimension that is close to Vujanovic’s understanding of politicality I engage with. In her article, Stalpaert argues that a practice of the dramaturg that goes beyond the status of the expert or the vessel of knowledge towards an embodied dramaturgy is political, as it moves away from a cognition-based dramaturgical method.¹³⁶ Here also the political is not referring to the content or the message but to the modes of work/production. The practice of the dramaturg can be political in the way that he or she functions and uses his or her knowledge in order “to move from solid ground to the edge of

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 190.

¹³⁶ Stalpaer, “A dramaturgy of the body”, 124.

thinking”.¹³⁷ Using Jacques Rancière’s perspective on politics, Stalpaert’s main claim is that, by focusing on the embodied dimension of the dramaturg instead of her intellectual and linguistic capabilities, the practice of the dramaturg becomes political, as it participates in “a recasting of the distribution of the sensible”.¹³⁸

For Rancière ‘the distribution of the sensible’ addresses issues of framing public space as a common in which certain bodies have parts and others do not, based on the distribution of space, time and activity:

The distribution of the sensible reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community. Having a particular ‘occupation’ thereby determines the ability or inability to take charge of what is common to the community; it defines what is visible or not in a common space, endowed with a common language, etc.¹³⁹

Continuing, Rancière argues that artistic practices are political because they are ways of doing and making that encompass a specific way of recasting the distribution of the sensible as they participate in the general distribution of ways of doing and making, as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility.¹⁴⁰ Thus, art practices carry out politicality, either as a contribution to the existing distribution of the sensible or as a critical intervention into it.

Following this train of thought, a discussion of a practice of the dramaturg that enhances the tacit and embodied dimension of the practice is political because it gives visibility to aspects that challenge the dominant Cartesian paradigm and allow for a new distribution of the sensible. If what is visible now in what Rancière calls ‘the common space and language’¹⁴¹ of the dramaturgy discourse is a dramaturgical practice that mostly relates to theory, thought and language, this thesis hopes to bring into these commons the notions of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge. These notions not only challenge the dominant understanding of the dramaturg but also the discourse of epistemology at the same time, as they raise questions about what knowledge is and what is valued as

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2004): 12-13.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

knowledge. Drawing attention to the political dimension of the tacit, Adloff et al. remind us not only that “tacit knowledge can stabilize oppressive forces and normative orders but that it also has the potential to further emancipate agendas and social change”. The notions of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge questions the Cartesian paradigm in which cognitive understanding is the dominant way of understanding both in the discourse of dramaturgy and of the knowledge economy; and because in doing so they have an inherent political dimension. In Rancière’s view, their politicality pertains to the fact that they act as a critical intervention in the distribution of the sensible, while in Vujanović’s understanding it relies on the fact that they challenge the way that knowledge is produced and distributed in a process.

4.1. Participating in the knowledge economy

Lastly, in a discussion about the politicality of the practice of the dramaturg in relation to knowledge, it is necessary to make a brief connection with the economy of knowledge we are living in today. The core idea of the knowledge economy of the twenty-first century is that knowledge represents a key factor in organizing the economic and social spheres. As Walter W. Powell and Kaisa Snellman note:

Since the 1970s, many researchers have documented the transition underway in advanced industrial nations from an economy based on natural resources and physical inputs to one based on intellectual assets. This change often goes by the labels postindustrial or post-Fordist.¹⁴²

The key components of a knowledge economy include a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources. Knowledge is not quantifiable, and work based on knowledge is no longer calculated or measured in hours. No longer does more physical labor simply produce more output. The boundaries between notions of work, labor and production are blurred. It is no longer about fixed and actual material capital, but about immaterial capital - knowledge or cognition.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Walter Powell and Kaisa Snellman, “The Knowledge Economy”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, no. 30 (2004): 201-202.

¹⁴³ David Rooney, Greg Hearn and Tim Kastle, *Handbook on the Knowledge Economy Volume Two* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Pub, 2012): 31-32.

With knowledge being at the core of today's neoliberal society as one of the main forms of capital, questions of knowledge have become even more political because of the ways this affects the society at a structural and economical level. Against the aforementioned background, one realizes that the discussion of the knowledge of one's practice is not neutral. The conventional conception of the dramaturg as the one who holds the knowledge obtains different layers of meaning when looking at it through this lens. Assumed to be the one with the most developed intellectual capabilities, the dramaturg lives up to the expectations of the knowledge economy. As the one who supposedly has the cognitive and linguistic knowledge and access to information – or, in other words, the one closest to immaterial capital – the dramaturg obtains more authority and power in favor of the choreographer or dancers, whose practice is correlated with physical labor – they are the 'doers' that produce physical input. In this sense, going back to politicality as 'discussions on arrangements of positions and power relations among the subjects of a production',¹⁴⁴ one can see how politicality has an influence here. The dramaturg's privileging of knowledge in an economy of knowledge places him or her in a position of power, establishing a hierarchical system of power relations in this way.

Following this logic, at first it might seem that a thesis discussing the knowledge of the dramaturg falls under this paradigm and 'serves' the knowledge economy. Konstantina Georgelou, for instance, when interviewed for this thesis, was cautious about entering into a discussion on the knowledge of the dramaturg exactly because the notion of knowledge is present everywhere as the holy grail without to question it.¹⁴⁵ However, in order to answer this, one must first reconsider what kind of knowledge is valued in this knowledge economy and for what types of knowledge this thesis argues. Therefore, reposition the practice of the dramaturg as a different knowledge practice is indeed responsive to the contemporary political economy and to the needs and structures of a 'knowledge economy'; but it does so by working in a subversive way through highlighting types of knowledge, like tacit and embodied, that are usually ignored by the scientific paradigm. Using this same discourse of the knowledge economy, this thesis proposes an alternative way that dramaturgy can participate in these 'knowledge economies' that is

¹⁴⁴ Vujanović, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance", 181.

¹⁴⁵ Georgelou, Interview by Rodia Vomvolou, Utrecht March 10, 2018.

closer to the actual practice of the dramaturg. This proposition is based on the acknowledgement that we live in these economies of knowledge and participate in them as dramaturgs and scholars; it is, however, how we participate that entails a political meaning/importance.

Therefore, a practice of the dramaturg that is based on the practical, embodied and tacit qualities of knowledge, repositioning the dramaturg in non-hierarchical relation to the rest of the collaborators as she is no longer considered to be the knowledgeable critic and objective guarantor of the work; the one that controls the process. Instead, the production and distribution of knowledge in the work is distributed among all the subjects of the production. At the same time, different qualities related to sensorial and subjective understanding come into the production, opening up space for a more pluralized, sensitive and imaginative practice of dramaturgy and thus a more politicized one.

Conclusion

Somewhere around November 2017, we are in a classroom in Utrecht University where the first class of the course ‘Doing Dramaturgy’ takes place. Sigrid Merx asks us to take five minutes to write down what dramaturgy is to each one of us. I recall writing down ‘a proactive practice’ while others said, ‘providing a theoretical background’ and ‘doing theoretical research’. A week later, we are in a different classroom, this time for the course “Writing Dancing” guided by Laura Karreman, where a vivid discussion takes place about the role of the dramaturg. Someone says that the dramaturg is ‘the outside eye’ and another person that it is the ‘second brain of the process’. I – admittedly more passionately than is necessary – immediately react to these responses, juxtaposing how the dramaturg is much more than an outside eye and arguing that this metaphor implies the dramaturg as the quintessence of knowledge. Expect for my obvious interest on the topic, what these two moments show is that the connection of the dramaturg to texts, theory, knowledge and the mind is still very present, even between a group of future dramaturgs.

In this thesis, driven by the existing connection of the dramaturg to knowledge I created an environment for thinking about the practice of the dramaturg through the lens of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge. I showed how ‘borrowing’ these three concepts from the field of epistemology can lead to a re-examination of the knowledge that the dramaturg employs in the studio. Of course, it is important to keep in mind that an approach like this is not unproblematic or ideal. Using concepts from another field, one has to always be aware of the different tensions and connotations they come into being when relocating them. For instance, there is a major difference between activities like riding a bike and artistic practices, as the second one consists of much more specialized, complicated and intentional actions; as well as ,for example, between talking about phothesis in the context of ethics and in the context of dramaturgy. In addition to this, one must always remain open in questioning whether theoretical and practical knowledge can be so distinctively separated and what the implications of such a separation might be. As is evident, there are many loose ends in this thesis and thus there are still a lot of possibilities for continuing to deepen and clarifying the understanding of these concepts in relation to dramaturgy.

Nonetheless, I strongly believe that approaching the practice of the dramaturg as concerned with these types of knowledge does provide a new productive perspective to the discourse around the dramaturg. Therefore, in these last lines, I want to focus more on the *performativity* of the framework I propose; what a conception like the one I describe *does* to dramaturgical practices. For the dramaturg herself, this framework can offer a point of reference of how she can be “ready” to enter the studio, what kind of skills and knowledge she has to employ when in the action of creation. Instead of being in the studio feeling that she has to recall theoretical knowledge or to apply a method, the dramaturg can enter the studio with a different openness towards the sharpening of the creative sensitivity, sensorial understanding and creative actions. However, maybe even more important than the shift in the dramaturg is a shift in the perspective of the collaborators (makers, choreographers, dancers, musicians, technicians, etc.) on what to expect from the dramaturg. Instead of expecting an objective critique or a distant observer that ‘holds the knowledge’ of the work, they can count on an experienced practitioner with creative sensitivity, embodied and cognitive understanding, processual thought and the capacity for speculation.

On the larger scale, in the dominance of neoliberal logic that commodifies knowledge and gives value especially to language and cognition, the choice of foregrounding the practical, subjective, sensorial and embodied aspects functions as small ruptures in the normalized and established way of perceiving knowledge. This is a particular interesting note, if one looks at dramaturgy as a product in academia. During the last years, Master’s and Bachelor’s programmes of Theatre Studies have started to include dramaturgy in their curriculum. In the Netherlands for instance, there are two Master’s dedicated to dramaturgy, both in a university context.¹⁴⁶ The fact that dramaturgy is part of universities strongly indicates that dramaturgy is not yet a practice like dancing, choreographing or performance making, so to be in an Academy. Instead, it falls under the dominant understanding of what is considered as knowledge in Academia and the ways in

¹⁴⁶ The first one is the MA Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy course in Utrecht University <https://www.uu.nl/masters/en/contemporary-theatre-dance-and-dramaturgy> and the other is the MA International Dramaturgy in University of Amsterdam <http://gsh.uva.nl/content/dual-masters/international-dramaturgy-arts-and-culture/international-dramaturgy.html>.

which such knowledge is transmitted. For example, in the Contemporary Theatre, Dance and Dramaturgy MA, even though teachers like Bleeker and Merx acknowledge the fact that dramaturgy is a practice that needs on-the-floor experience, this is considered as something different and extra to the academic knowledge of the dramaturg. Thus, what I am proposing here is that, exactly because of the nature of the dramaturgical knowledge that is based so much on subjective, practical and embodied qualities, this on-the-floor practice must actually not be the exception but an integral and legitimate part of the academic learning of the dramaturg.

Overall, based on the belief that concepts are not only a way of representing the world but also a way of influencing and changing it, this thesis suggests that foregrounding a discussion of the dramaturg through the lens of practical, tacit and embodied knowledge can lead to a reposition of dramaturgy from theory to practice. Such a reposition will have an impact on the way that we conceived of both the role and the education of the dramaturg. A reposition though, that does not equate with a cancelation of theoretical and intellectual knowledge but involves reframing it for the needs of the practice and completing it with a different perspective in order to lead to a more open, pluralized and imaginatively politicized practice of the dramaturg.

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