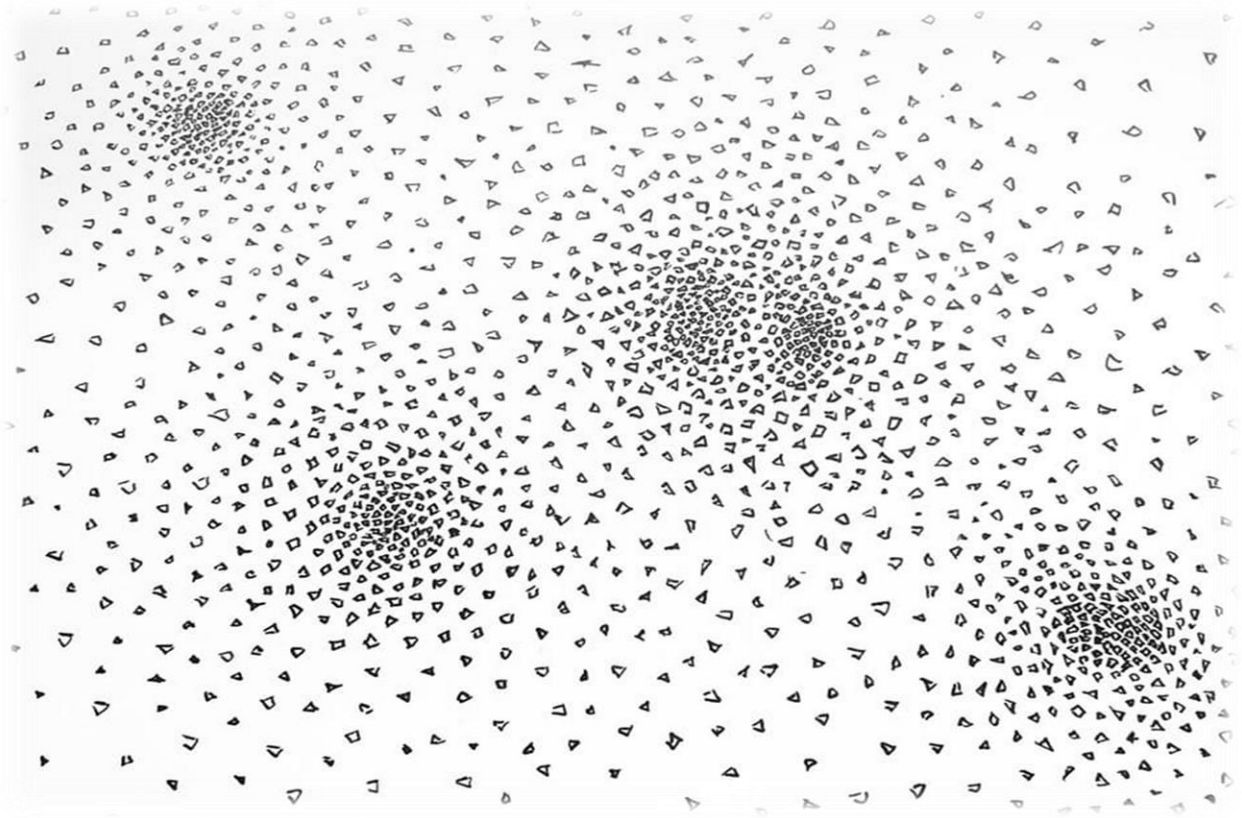
“DIAGRAMMING” [DANCE] DRAMATURGY:

FRAMING DRAMATURGICAL THINKING THROUGH CHÂTELET’S CONCEPT OF VIRTUALITY



Artwork by Lamprini Gkolia

Research Master’s Thesis

Elissavet Kardami, 6277845

e.kardami@uu.nl

RMA Media, Art and Performance

Department of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University

March 2021

Supervisor: prof. dr. Maaike Bleeker

Second Reader: prof. dr. Nathalie Sinclair

To Freddie Mercury, the ultimate master of embodied knowledge

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 5
Abstract 7
Introduction 9
Contribution of the research 16
Theoretical framework 18
Methodology 22
Outline of the Thesis 23
Chapter 1: Setting the stage 25
The dynamic state of contemporary dramaturgy: a practice on the move 25
Methodological interlude: Framing the concept of dramaturgical practice. 30
Georgelou, Protopappa, Theodoridou 30
Common Threads 33
Maaike Bleeker: “Dramaturgy as a mode of Looking”,” (2003) 33
Myriam Van Imschoot: “Anxious Dramaturgy,” (2003) 38
Georgelou, Protopappa, Theodoridou: *The Practice of Dramaturgy* (2017) 41
Andrian Heathfield: “Dramaturgy Without a Dramaturge” (2010) 46
The value of dance dramaturgy within dramaturgical discourses 50
Chapter 2: Redrawing the space 57
Changes in the field: The process of making (dance) performances 57
Dance and dance dramaturgy: A complex history 60
Articulating dance dramaturgy 64
Methodological interlude: A note about text and language in the creative process 68
(Dance) dramaturgy, text, language, and movement: Reflecting on “how” movement can be manifested in the creative process 70
Katherine Profeta 70
Maaike Bleeker 73
From theory-practice to potentiality and actualization 76
André Lepecki 76
Chapter 3: Spacing the body ⇔ Embodying the space 82
Virtuality’s theoretical background: Aristotle, Leibniz & Descartes’ metaphysics of motion 82
Virtuality and diagrammatic writing 87

Virtuality and diagrammatic writing “in context”: de Freitas & Sinclair 89
Mathematical and dramaturgical entanglements 92
The role of the dramaturg 96
Virtuality, perspective, and the (embodied) observer 97
Perspective and the work of the dramaturg 99
The everchanging horizon and the necessity of the dramaturg 104
Conclusion 109
Bibliography 114

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Maaike Bleeker, for her always subtle, yet indispensable and robust support, and for guiding me through my academic and professional endeavours over the last years. I am truly grateful for being part of her thinking and working process.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Konstantina Georgelou and Laura Karreman for the dedication and care with which they approach their work, and for igniting the one of the sparks that lead to this research project.

I would also like to thank Nathalie Sinclair, my second reader, whose work and ingenuity placed the final blow and set into motion this long, yet very rewarding research process.

I am also grateful to my long-lasting and new friends who during these strange quarantine times were truly close to me, even from afar: to Manto, for making me see how friendship bonds can be so flexible and become strengthened in unexpected ways by exploring together similar experiences; to Vassilis, for reminding me that friendship does not only rely on consistency and presence, but on being close to someone when it matters the most; to Lia for all her infinite positive energy and generosity during all the priceless intellectual and personal interactions that we have shared, especially this last year; to my new neighbour, Leslie, who introduced me to the merits of gardening and the brilliance of Gordon Ramsay, but more importantly for her positive spirit and valuable company during these rather lonely times; to Tamalone for helping me refine my writing during the last stages of this research and for always encouraging me by reminding me how challenging this process is; to Danae, for her meticulous copy editing of the final version of this work, and her immense and rare generosity as a teacher, a colleague, and a friend; and, to

Lamprini, for being always and unconditionally next to me, while we explore the perks, challenges and beauty of life together.

An immense thank you should also be expressed towards my family. To my mom, for her love, generosity, dedication, stamina, insightfulness, belief in me and what I am capable of, and for showing me that it is never too late forgive and ask for forgiveness, to learn, and experience new things in life. To my dad, who although never really understood what it is that I am doing, he has been supporting me unconditionally and selflessly - by any means at his dispense. And, to my sister, whose arrival changed my life forever!

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank my “togetherness”, Stefan, for his infinite love, constant encouragement and support all these years - which are quite a lot! I would definitely not be who I have become today without him.

Abstract

This research engages in a dialogue between discourses of contemporary dramaturgy and the concept of virtuality as introduced by mathematician philosopher Gilles Châtelet. Several threads of thought in contemporary dramaturgy indicate an increasing focus on the *motion-like* qualities of process-based dramaturgical practices and move away from text-based or concept-based approaches. They argue for the re-evaluation of existing analytical tools that can introduce new mode of thinking that is required to engage with its increasing complexity and the new methods of making performances. The role that concepts of motion and movement occupy in dramaturgical discourses create the need to write about the practice of dramaturgy in a way that acknowledges the specificities and the creative potential of movement. This research argues that a conceptual analysis of Gilles Châtelet's virtuality and the mode of thinking it implies introduces the basis for a proposed theoretical framework which can address some aspects of the motion-like qualities of contemporary dramaturgical practice. More specifically, Châtelet's work, brings forward a mode of knowledge production that emphasizes the value of embodied action that has the potential to activate thinking processes that are employed in order to theorize phenomena in motion through the practice of diagrammatic writing.

This research explores the complexity of defining dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg in the creative process. To further address these issues, it focuses on the subfield of dance dramaturgy which provides valuable insights due to dance's special attention towards movement and its role in the history of dramaturgy. It analyses the relationship between the different ways in which language and movement are used in the creative process, which consequently brings into question the theory-practice binary that has dominated the practice since its conception. This thesis proposes a shift from the theory-practice binary, towards an

understanding of dramaturgical practice that operates between potentiality and processes of actualization, using virtuality as the theoretical backdrop. Ultimately, it is argued that in order to address the complexities of contemporary dramaturgy, it is constructive to move away from working towards defining what dramaturgy is and instead focus on the mode of thinking that emerges in dramaturgical practices, the embodied qualities of the practice and how they can be manifested through the role of the dramaturg.

Introduction

In recent years, dramaturgy has gained significant attention within the field of performance studies.[1] A significant corpus of the literature addresses the highly diversifying and expanding practice of dramaturgy by identifying several problematics, as well as possibilities for further research. This research identifies some common threads of thought in contemporary dramaturgy that move away from text-based or concept-based performance-making practices. It focuses on the rise of process-based approaches, what can be identified as *motion-like* qualities of contemporary dramaturgy,[2] and a new mode of thinking that is required to engage with dramaturgy's increasing complexity. These common threads of thought challenge existing modes and methods of writing and thinking about the practice of dramaturgy, which seem to be inadequate to address the new creative and conceptual territories in which contemporary dramaturgy operates. Nevertheless, all those accounts lack a broader theoretical framework that can address the difficulties of transposing the conceptual and material processes and skills that dramaturgical practices employ into writing. This thesis aims at demonstrating how dramaturgy can become enriched through a specific mode of mathematical thinking, which is presented in the work of philosopher and mathematician Gilles Châtelet. More specifically, it is argued that a conceptual analysis of Gilles Châtelet's understanding of virtuality can provide the basis for a proposed theoretical framework that can address and theorize some aspects of the motion-like qualities of dramaturgical practices.

[1] Some examples include: *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy (2014)*, *Dramaturgy in Motion at Work on Dance and Movement Performance (2015*), *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance (2015)*, which will be used more extensively throughout my research.

[2] This is not a term that exist in the literature that I engage with, but it is an observation that was a result of this research.

There are two observations which repeatedly appear in the work of prominent practitioners and theorists that this research employs. The first one is that it can be counterproductive to try and define dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg.[3] The second one is that at the beginning of any creative endeavour, we should start from the assumption that the dramaturg is not necessary.[4] These observations gesture towards a need to re-examine some of the implicit assumptions upon which dramaturgy is based. They call for new ways in which dramaturgy can be theorized.

Dramaturgy's expansion beyond the confines of dramatic theatre created the space for experimental approaches towards dramaturgical practices, granting dramaturgy a highly dynamic character.[5] The notion of a process-based dramaturgy is an important step that recognizes the evolution of the practice.[6] A process-based dramaturgical approach proposes a re-evaluation of the existing analytical tools that are used to describe the practice of dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg. For example, it questions dramaturgy's dependence on the dramatic text as the source that grands the performance structure and coherence. It also questions the dramaturg's place as the protector of the performance's conceptual consistency. Nevertheless, the existing

[3] Bojana Cvejic, "The Ignorant Dramaturg," *Maska 16*, no. 131-132 (Summer 2010): 41; This proposition is explicitly mentioned in Cvejic article, but as this research will demonstrate, especially in chapters one and two, the problem of providing a clear cut definition of dramaturgy is addressed implicitly in the majority of the literature used in this thesis.

[4] Cvejic, "The Ignorant Dramaturg," 41; Katherine Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion: At Work on Dance and Movement Performance* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 13; Myriam van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 13, no. 2 (2003): 65, https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700308571425.

[5] Konstantina Georgelou, Efrosini Protopapa, and Danae Theodoridou eds., *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance*, (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2017), 16-17; Hans – Thies Lehmann and Patrick Primavesi, "Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds," *Performance Research 14*, no.3 (2009): 3, https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160903519468.

[6] These arguments appear in several of the accounts that this research employs, such as in the work of Maaike Bleeker, Marianne Van Imschoot, Georgelou, Protopappa and Theodoridou and will elaborate more in chapter 1.

literature on process-based dramaturgy is not sufficient to address the theoretical issues raised by the two propositions mentioned above.

This research conducts a close reading of the accounts that address the dynamic qualities of dramaturgy, and identifies a common way of thinking about dramaturgy that is highly relational and is constantly *on the move,* always *in motion.* Based on this observation, this research argues that movement and motion play an important role in contemporary dramaturgical practices. Consequently, it proposes that one of the main challenges in existing attempts to theorize contemporary dramaturgy emerges from the difficulty to articulate the contribution of movement, from a practical and conceptual standpoint, in the creative process and in dramaturgical practices. Thus, one of the main challenges is the difficulty to transpose dynamic processes, processes that are always *on the move*, into writing.

Within the broad spectrum of dramaturgical practices, the subfield of dance dramaturgy provides valuable insights into the theoretical challenges raised above. This is attributed, firstly, to the significant role that movement plays in the creative process of dance or movement-based performance and, secondly, to its short interaction with the dramaturg as a distinct function within the creative process. Dance dramaturgs specialize in observing movement, work towards identifying its creative potential, and try to articulate how it is shaping their own dramaturgical practice. Moreover, dance dramaturgs appeared in the field of dramaturgy at a time when dramaturgy entered a highly experimental phase. Thus, they were less restricted by certain conventions or expectations on how one should *practice* dramaturgy.

Several accounts elaborate on the problematics of dance dramaturgy. They propose new ways of writing about dramaturgy that acknowledge the role of movement as a way of thinking through the diverse elements of the creative process. An important example is the increasing use

of metaphors as an analytical tool that employs the imaginative potential of language and sets thinking processes in motion rather than crystalizing meaning. This is already a significant step towards a better understanding movement's role in the creative process. Nevertheless, there is still a theoretical gap, an absence of a concise theoretical framework, analytical tools and concepts that can acknowledge and articulate the creative potential of movement in the process of making performances.

One of the main assumptions that is addressed and challenged is the theory-practice binary with which dance dramaturgy is often associated with. The roots for these misconceptions can be traced back to the complex history of the emergence of dance dramaturgy in conjunction with changes in the conditions of making performances more broadly. This is enhanced by an inherent difficulty in articulating the specificities of movement through language,[7] and identifying the various ways in which movement informs the creative process. Movement does not only function as a primary source of inspiration for the development of artistic material but it also influences the thinking processes entangled in the creative process. Consequently, this creates the need to write about the practice of dramaturgy in a way that acknowledges the dynamic qualities of movement and its contribution in the creative process.

The concept of virtuality is introduced as an instructive concept that encapsulates the potentiality of movement. Virtuality for Châtelet is the theoretical key to encompass the dynamic nature of motion and analytical tools that have developed to represent it within the field of mathematics, namely diagrams. Virtuality invokes a revised mode of thinking and writing about movement. It addresses the gap in the process of abstracting motion from its actualization by

[7] André Lepecki, "Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy," in *Dance Dramaturgy*, eds. Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 51, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137373229_3.

accepting the inseparability between motion and potential. According to Châtelet, a body in motion operates in a state of constant transit; each motion generates the potential for more motion.[8] Diagrams are but a *screenshot* of motion, and if they are understood as fixed representations, then the phenomenon of being in motion is not fully presented and addressed. Thus, to bridge the gap between the process of encoding and systematizing the phenomenon of motion, Châtelet argues that it becomes necessary to engage with the 'inventive spaces' that are enclosed in the gestures that generate diagrams, by accepting the metaphysical implications that virtuality introduces.[9] Ultimately, the concept of virtuality functions as the basis for a broader practice that Châtelet's work introduces, namely the practice of diagrammatic writing. [10]

Virtuality invites, on the one hand, a mode of thinking and writing that emphasizes the importance of metaphors and gestures in the process of knowledge production as a way of trying to reinstate the significance of imagination and speculation. On the one hand, it brings to the fore the value of embodied experience as a mode of producing knowledge which can then be encoded into diagrams. This research indicates how Châtelet's insistence on the potential of diagrams as inscribed gestures can provide an instructive framework through which dramaturgical thought can be further unpacked and theorized. Therefore, the research questions that guides the line of argumentation of this research are the following:

Research question: How can we frame and theorize the practice of dramaturgy in a manner that acknowledges the contribution of movement in the creative process?

---

[8] Gilles Châtelet, *Figuring Space: Philosophy, Mathematics and Physics*, vol. 8, Science and Philosophy (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2000), 19.

[9] Gilles Châtelet, *Figuring Space*, 6.

[10] Kenneth Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space: Philosophy, Mathematics and Physics*, by Gilles Châtelet, trans. Robert Shore and Muriel Zagha (Dordrecht: Springer – Science + Business Media, B.V., 2000), ix.

Sub Questions:

i. How are (dance) dramaturgs addressing the problematics that arise due to the specificities of their practice in relation to the broader context and methods of writing about dramaturgy?

ii. If we assume that defining dramaturgy is counter-productive, how can we theorize dramaturgy?

iii. If we assume that the dramaturg is not necessary, how can we conceptualize/understand her role in the creative process of performances?

iv. How can we unfold further the implicit propositions (dance) dramaturgs make with regard to the role of movement in the thinking and writing modes of their practice through Gilles Châtelet's conceptual analysis of virtuality and his theory of diagrammatic writing more broadly?

By introducing the two main observations and posing the questions that emerge from them, it becomes possible to engage in-depth with the existing discourses on dramaturgy. The challenges, as well as the value, that come with the existing accounts on (dance) dramaturgy, lie in their multiformity. Each dramaturg approaches their subject matter from a slightly different point of view, emphasizing different aspects and qualities of the practice. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they do not share similar concerns and consequently reflect on how these concerns can be addressed and potentially be overcome. Thus, a new way of engaging with the literature is introduced. This research identifies the focal points of existing concerns, which in the context of this research is movement, and the ways in which it infiltrates the thinking and writing modes of dramaturgical practices. Initially, this is achieved by posing questions, which function as a way of framing the discourse and the analysis that follows. Firstly, this allows me to expand on the

points on which all those accounts diverge, but most importantly, on the points they converge. Secondly, this allows me to provide a meta-analysis of the literature and identify potential unexplored underlying assumptions and limitations in the current mode of writing about dance dramaturgy. Finally, I propose a new theoretical framework for thinking and writing about (dance) dramaturgy.

More specifically, Châtelet's framework assists in moving past some of the critical discourses in dramaturgical thinking that position dance dramaturgy between theory and practice and the role of the dramaturg as the "special representative" of theory, language, and reflection. This research proposes the "replacement" of the theory-practice binary, with which dramaturgy is often associated, with a more productive pair of concepts, namely that of potentiality and actualization. Moreover, by employing Châtelet's analysis of perspective and its diagrammatic manifestation, it is possible to implicate the observer as an embodied subject of knowledge without negating the objectivity constituted by the act of observation nor the value of the knowledge that is produced from that position. This is, in turn, instructive in creating a parallel with the role of the dramaturg as a locus of knowledge, whether this role is assigned to a single person or it is distributed amongst all the collaborators at different instances during the creative process.

This analysis frames dramaturgical thinking as an embodied process. On the one hand, this can explain the inherent difficulty in explicating the role of the dramaturg through conventional analytical tools or by presenting a set of fixed tools or methods that the dramaturg can employ at ease in the context of any creative endeavour. On the other hand, this points towards the need for experimenting further with new analytical tools that can articulate clearer alternative modes of

knowledge production and more specifically how thinking dramaturgically through movement contributes to the creative process of performances.

Contribution of the research

Over the last seven years, there has been a surge of publications that address the complexity of dramaturgical practices and even more so that of dance dramaturgy. Important examples are *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy* (2014), edited by Magda Romanska, Hansen and Callison's compilation of articles *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement* (2015), Katherine Profeta's *Dramaturgy in Motion at Work on Dance and Movement Performance* (2015), Konstantina Georgelou, Efrosini Protopapa, and Danae Theodoridou's edited book's *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance* (2017), and *A Theory of Dramaturgy* (2019), by Janek Szatkowski. This growing interest in this field is complemented by the proliferation of conferences, journal articles, and symposia publications and suggests that there might be value in exploring further what movement-based performances have to offer. One reason for this interest is that dramaturgy seems to operate on highly shifting grounds, and dramaturgy runs the risk of transforming into a ubiquitous term.[11] Part of this operation on shifting grounds could be traced back to the conflation of practices and disciplines due to transformations in the conditions of the creative process amongst various performative mediums. The rise of post-dramatic theatre could be considered a pivotal aspect in this transformation. Another reason could be the highly interdisciplinary nature of dramaturgy and its presence both in practical as well as academic realms, which enables a more fluid and experimental adaptation of the term in realms that transcend the disciplinary boundaries of

[11] Lehmann and Primavesi, "Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds," 3; Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy,* 12-13.

dramaturgical practice.[12] These reasons intensify the need for theorizing dramaturgy more broadly as well as its different subfields such as dance dramaturgy.

Another aspect of this interest could be that dance dramaturgy can provide some insights and another way of looking at the expansion of the term dramaturgy. Synne K. Behrndt provides an interesting way of framing the research potential that emerges from the dialogue between dance and dramaturgy. By echoing the arguments of dramaturgs with significant experience in dance performances, such as Heidi Gilpin, Bojana Bauer, and Marianne Van Kerkhoven, she identifies dance's potential of "setting into motion" and challenge ideas and assumptions that are associated with dramaturgy, as well as experiment with new modes of perception.[13] Thus, by understanding movement's specificities and by working towards expanding the means and modes of its articulation in the way it is embedded in creative processes, the insights of dance dramaturgy can contribute further to the existing attempts of theorization of dramaturgy.

More broadly, the value of this research lies in the way it gestures towards the value of interdisciplinary research in a radical form by proposing an academic leap into uncharted territory. It brings into dialogue not only philosophy and science and performance studies but also stresses their points of convergence which are mediated implicitly by a better understanding of the potential of movement and embodiment as a mode of knowledge production. On the other hand, it proposes new ways of thinking and writing about movement within the context of dance dramaturgy. These new methods can become instructive for any medium that employs movement by any means, modes, or forms within the broader field of dramaturgy.

---

[12]Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou,13; In this context I am particularly interested in dance dramaturgy not so much in an effort to legitimize it as a distinct subfield but to suggest how the specificities of the practice and more specially its attentiveness to movement, can become instructive in further unfolding the complexities of the field more broadly.

[13] Synne K. Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 20, no. 2 (May 2010): 185, https://doi.org/10.1080/10486801003682393.

Theoretical framework

At the centre of this inquiry lies an interest in analyzing and exploring further the research potential of the concept of movement from radically different methodological and disciplinary points. In order to expand on the underlying assumptions of the two observations that I have selected as a starting point for this research, I use as the backbone of my theoretical framework Gilles Châtelet book *Figuring Space: Philosophy, Mathematics and Physics* which belongs in the intersection between the disciplines of mathematics, physics, and philosophy. More specifically, I focus on his analysis of the concept of virtuality and its implications on the knowledge that is encoded and can be derived by drawing diagrams.

The concept of virtuality is part of a broader practice that Châtelet's work introduces, coined by Kenneth J. Knoespel as "diagrammatic writing."[14] Diagrammatic writing, according to Knoespel, is a practice that brings into focus the "phenomenological analysis of diagrams" and the inventive spaces in which thinking operates.[15] Moreover, diagrammatic writing is positioned "in contrast to [ongoing] discussions that approach the practice of science from the vantage-point of natural language."[16] Diagrammatic writing is mapping out how the certain theories of motion in physics and their mathematical formulations have developed over time. Châtelet does that by sketching an alternative history of how metaphors and diagrams have been the vehicles for intuition and how they have been instructive in advancing mathematical thought. Châtelet invites us to understand how creativity, learning, and knowledge are developed in mathematics by looking closer at how thinking processes have been encoded through the physical gestures that draw diagrams. Through diagrammatic writing, the agents (or observers) that produce knowledge

[14] Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space*, ix.
[15] Knoespel, ix.
[16] Knoespel, ix.

become implicitly subjects of new ways of experiencing phenomena, which is instrumental for further developing theories that correspond to different areas in physics and mathematics and are related to modes of articulating motion.

Ultimately, by elaborating on the value of virtuality in the practice of diagrammatic writing, Châtelet reinstates a mode of thinking that focuses not only on the abstracted knowledge that is generated, but also on the actions that produce that knowledge. He emphasizes the potentiality embedded in motion, and he develops a metaphysical framework that incorporates that potentiality in the analytic tools and the thinking modes employed to describe and theorize motion.

It is essential to point out that Gilles Châtelet's book has been significantly understudied in the field of mathematics with the only exception of Nathalie Sinclair and Elizabeth de Freitas' work, based on the research conducted for this thesis.[17] Thus, my analysis on his work relies, primarily on my close reading of his work. Secondarily, it is enriched by Sinclair and Freitas' account, to the extent in which they reinstate the importance of embodiment in the process of nurturing mathematical intuition through the use of gestures and diagrams.

For my research on dramaturgy, I use two books, Katherine Profeta's *Dramaturgy in Motion at Work on Dance and Movement Performance,* and Konstantina Georgelou, Efrosini Protopapa, and Danae Theodoridou's edited book's *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance*. I also use a selection of articles, or chapters in edited books written by

[17] Elizabeth de Freitas and Nathalie Sinclair, "Diagram, Gesture, Agency: Theorizing Embodiment in the Mathematics Classroom," *Educational Studies in Mathematics 80*, no. 1/2 (2012); Their work is exploring the role of embodiment in learning mathematics, and they also employ Châtelet's theory as a starting point for rethinking existing teaching practices and reinstate diagrams and gestures as modalities for embodied thinking and learning of mathematical concepts.

(dance) dramaturgs,[18] such as Myriam van Imschoot, Synne K.Behrndt, Maaike Bleeker, Andrian Heathfield, André Lepecki, Bojana Bauer, Heidi Gilpin, and Bojana Cvejic, who have been quite prominent in contemporary discourses on dramaturgy. The works that inform this research operate on multiple levels. They inform multiple sections of this research in different ways and complement each other. For example, the works of van Imschoot, Bleeker, Heathfield, and Georgelou, Protopappa and Theodoridou's map some common threads that emerge within discourses of contemporary dramaturgy and focus more specifically on the prominent role that motion and movement play in these accounts. On the other hand, works from Gilpin, Lepecki, Cvejic, and Behrndt focus on the history of dance dramaturgy, its complexity, its problematics, but also its potential for the larger discourse of dramaturgy due to its special attention to movement.

Profeta's book is a balanced account of personal experience and instructive parts of reflection and extensive research on the history of the dance dramaturg. The content of the book cannot be detached from her collaboration with a specific choreographer. Nevertheless, her arguments, regarding the mode of dramaturgical thinking emerging from the creative process of a movement-based performance, function as general markers move beyond the specificity of the processes in which she is involved personally as a dramaturg. Ultimately, her work could be seen as a representative way of approaching the issues rising within the current discourse on thinking dramaturgically, that seems to be shared by other dramaturgs. Finally, Georgelou, Protopappa and Theodoridou's work is instructive because it informs the framing of dramaturgical practice for the scope of this research. Next to this, it provides insights into the dynamic status of the field

[18] Not all dramaturgs identify explicitly with the characterization of dance dramaturg, although their work and analyses include dance or movement-based performances.

of contemporary dramaturgy. Their analysis is employing vivid metaphors and analytical tools that invoke a practice and a process that is in motion.

All the sources are employed on an equal footing. The multiformity of points of view is enabling this research to address the complexity of dramaturgical practice. At the same time, it becomes possible to approach certain aspects of dramaturgical practice based on different accounts in a way that emphasizes how they are complementing each other rather than work against each other. For example, Profeta's book provides the most extensive historical account of the emergence of the dance dramaturg, but this does not mean that elements and points of view on the history of the role cannot be traced in the work of Lepecki, van Imschoot, Behrndt, and others. Similarly, Bleeker's work and, more specifically, her analysis of dramaturgy as a mode of looking and the notion of the dramaturg as the collaborator who is thinking no ones' thought will be more instructive for the analysis of the second observation. Nevertheless, this does not mean that in her work, she does not implicitly present a resistance in categorising and defining what dance dramaturgy is, or that she also explicitly employs metaphors as a tool for exemplifying how the practice of dramaturgy is a process that sets thinking in motion. Finally, it could be argued that the two observations that I point out at the beginning of my argumentation are most explicitly stated in Cvejic's article "The Ignorant Dramaturg".[19] Nevertheless, it is my understanding that the underlying assumptions behind these observations are also addressed in the rest of the literature of dance dramaturgy that has been used for this research. Ultimately, this research hopes to identify some points of convergence in the ways dance dramaturgy is practised and reflected upon by different dramaturgs. In turn, this can unfold some underlying thinking

[19] Cvejic, "The Ignorant Dramaturg," 41.

processes that are manifested, either through actions or through writing, without, however, proposing a standardized way in which dramaturgy should be practised.

Finally, it is important to note that the complex "histories" of dance dramaturgy and dramaturgy make any clear-cut distinction between different subfields of dramaturgical practice, based on the creative material used, progressively challenging. This can be further illustrated by how different dramaturgs *label* their role. There are dramaturgs that clearly identify as dance dramaturgs, while in their work and their understanding of their role, ideas that stem from accounts that have a strong connection to theatre studies, such as André Lepecki. Others make this association more ambiguous by identifying themselves as dramaturgs, while their work focuses on works that can be seen as dance performances or at least movement-based performances, such as Maaike Bleeker. Therefore, the terms (dance) dramaturgy and (dance) dramaturg(s) are used occasionally to indicate that this distinction is not always explicit. The purpose of this research is not to make a clear conceptual distinction between dramaturgy and dance dramaturgy. This research argues that the theoretical and practical value of some explicit observations made within the field of dance dramaturgy exists exactly because of this ambiguity.

Methodology

This thesis employs and combines four different research methods: discourse analysis, historical analysis, conceptual analysis, and comparative analysis. The discourse analysis explores some of the underlying assumptions and implications that are presented with regards to dramaturgical practices. The historical analysis is used to frame some of the problematics and complexities that are present in contemporary discourses of dramaturgical practices. The conceptual analysis is used to show how Châtelet's concept of virtuality can be instructive for analysing further some aspects of dramaturgical thinking and constructing a potentially valuable theoretical framework.

Finally, a comparative analysis is employed when parallels between diagrammatic thinking and dramaturgical thinking are developed to clarify the points of divergence and convergence between those two notions. The combination of all these methods allow me to demonstrate the value of Châtelet's work and provide a framework through which a specific mode of dramaturgical thinking can be further theorized.

Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into three chapters:

Chapter one provides a literature review and a close reading of a significant corpus of work by dramaturgs. This close reading sketches out some common threads of thought with point out to the motion-like qualities of dramaturgical practices. The motivation behind this close reading is to identify and expand on certain qualities and practices of thinking, which I refer to as elements of dramaturgical thinking. This research does not delineate what dramaturgical thinking is, but what it strives to do and how it is implicated in the creative process. This chapter explores the thinking processes that emerge from these practices. It focuses on how dramaturgical practices are related to the processes of paying close attention to and articulating movement and what the qualities of this mode of dramaturgical thinking are.

Chapter two addresses changes that have taken place in the field of dance since the end of the twentieth century and how they have been arguably connected to the rise of dance dramaturgy and the dance dramaturg. Moreover, it identifies how has that coupling been articulated so far by (dance) dramaturgs, how it has been explored, and what possibilities for alternative ways of conceptualizing the practice these explorations invite.

Chapter three provides a detailed analysis of Châtelet's work, its metaphysical context, and its implications. This chapter elaborates on the potential of virtuality as a constructive theoretical framework for thinking and writing about the mode of dramaturgical thinking presented so far. More specifically, I focus on how diagrammatic writing is connected to dramaturgical thinking and how the role of the dramaturg can be conceptualised through this proposed theoretical framework. This is done by elaborating on how the work of dramaturgs such as Bauer, Bleeker, Profeta and Lepecki opens up the space for a renewed understanding of the role of the dramaturg in the creative process. This is then connected with Châtelet's analysis of perspective, its diagrammatic representation, the role of the horizon and the implications for the role of the observer.

The Conclusion offers a summary of my argument's development and presents my propositions in response to the two observations that I identified at the beginning of this research. Finally, I position my findings and their relevance in the broader field of contemporary dramaturgy and point out possible directions for future research.

Chapter 1: Setting the stage

The dynamic state of contemporary dramaturgy: a practice on the move

Within the vibrant and interdisciplinary field of performance studies, the concept of dramaturgy operates on highly shifting grounds.[20] There are different layers that compose this dynamic state of dramaturgical practices. A few of these layers could be related to transformations in the conditions of production of performances that extend towards an institutional as well as a political level. There are also transformations and a further process of experimentation and questioning of the disciplinary boundaries and possibilities of different media, such as theatre and dance. These elements become coupled with further developments in the creative processes that generate performances, bringing into question several of fundamental assumptions and associations with the role of dramaturgy and the dramaturg in the creative process.[21]

This dynamic state is also reflected by contributions that approach the field of dramaturgy as a theoretical endeavour. Flexibility, adaptability, emergences, dealing with complexity, are a few qualities that have been used to characterize the various practices of contemporary dramaturgy. In addition to these qualities, there is also an emergence of terms that have been used to characterize new ways of practicing dramaturgy such as "new", "open", "contemporary", "expanded", "slow", "porous", "post-dramatic".[22] This wide spectrum of possibilities makes any consequent attempts quite challenging to articulate and further conceptualize the particularities of the practice and how it is manifested within the creative process. This has led to the proliferation of texts on the subject matter. With the proliferation of texts and the expansion of

[20] Lehmann and Primavesi, "Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds," 3; I use this term inspired by Lehmann and Primavesi's short article which briefly elaborate on the shifting conditions of dramaturgical practices in contemporary performances.

[21] Lehmann and Primavesi, "Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds," 3.

[22] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy,* 14-15.

practices came a multiplication of accounts and methodological approaches, which have also produced provoking and ambiguous approaches regarding the specificities of the practice. Van Kerkhoven's suggests that "dramaturgy involves everything, is to be found in anything."[23] Bleeker, in an attempt to counterargue the idea that there is "an essential or a singular way of doing dramaturgy", proposed that "there are as many dramaturgies as there are dramaturgs."[24] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou argue that within "today's fragmented and diverse landscape" in which contemporary performances are created and operate, it is impossible to identify a "golden set of rules" that produce a well-made performance.[25] This plurality of approaches within dramaturgical practices is also aptly described by Georgelou, Protopappa, and Theodoridou in their book *The Practice of Dramaturgy:*

> [t]he possible responses to the question of what dramaturgy is or what kind of work it entails seem to be as many as the multiple and diverse dramaturgical practices that are to be found in the heterogeneous landscape of the performing arts today. In other words, it is commonly accepted that the way we understand dramaturgy has to do with diverse, multiple, and shifting areas of practice that are extremely difficult to nail down.[26]

Thus, any attempts to define dramaturgy through existing analytical frameworks become rather complicated, and as Cvejic has argued, any such attempt could even be counterproductive in our attempt to understand how dramaturgy operates in the creative process.[27] However, along with such understanding of the contemporary dramaturgical landscape, there is also the risk of

---

[23] Marianne van Kerkhoven, "On Dramaturgy", *Theaterschrift*, no.5-6 (1994):8, http://sarma.be/docs/3108;

[24] Maaike Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought", in *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, eds. Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 67

[25] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy*, 12.

[26] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou,13.

[27] Cvejic, "The Ignorant Dramaturg," 41.

"arbitrary relativization" of the practice and any attempts to articulate the ways in which it contributes to the creative process.[28] Thus, how can we theorise and write about a practice that becomes increasingly challenging to define?

There is a tendency in the literature of dramaturgy to talk about a significant shift in the way that dramaturgical practices are approached. This shift has been described, more broadly, as a processed–based approach. This description has been developed, partially, in response to existing conceptualizations of the practice of dramaturgy. These existing conceptualizations originate primarily from theatre and are closely related to an understanding of dramaturgy as an extension of the role of the dramaturg, and in turn, the dramaturg as the person responsible for adhering to the main ideas that guide the development of a performance. In tandem with this understanding came an approach to the creative process of performances that relied on the envelopment of pre-determined concepts. Such concepts were usually closely related to a source text or a selection of texts and were expected to ensure a logical coherence and structure for the work that will be created. Bleeker's comments on the status of dramaturgy in the Netherlands and Flanders in the sixties illustrate clearly this point:

> Dramaturgy as it was then conceived, starts from a concept (usually an interpretation of a text) that the director and the dramaturg work out before the rehearsals begin. This concept entails a well-defined direction in which they want the performance to go – that is the idea that the play should express. Seen this way, the dramaturgical concept is a goal one has to move towards. Often the dramaturg is assigned the role of protector of this goal.[29]

In that sense, dramaturgy and the dramaturg functioned as the "guardian of the concepts", the "outside-eye" which will make sure that everything falls in line with the initial plans, the one that

[28] Cvejic, 41.
[29] Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought," 164.

has enough background/ theoretical knowledge so as not to deviate from what the performance is supposed to become. [30]

This way of approaching dramaturgy is not necessarily rejected by accounts that focus on more process-based practices. Depending on the conditions and the context of a performance's production, such practices can be instructive.[31] Nevertheless, dramaturgs that expand on process-based approaches focus on the danger of misconceiving the role of the dramaturg as a "guardian of concepts" and the dramaturgical practices, assumptions and expectations on what dramaturgy is that have been connected with this approach.[32] Bleeker provides interesting insights on the matter by arguing that:

> it was also from this tradition that the mistaken idea grew that directing is the execution of a dramaturgical concept thought out in advance. As a result, dramaturgy became associated with pre-given concepts that have to be fulfilled, rules that have to be imposed on material, prescriptions that have to be carried out. [33]

On the other hand, a process-based understanding of dramaturgical practices shifts our attention towards the creative potential of developing "works that are oriented towards the construction of possibilities and not the establishment of clearly definable and repeatable schemas."[34]

It is quite interesting to point out that based on this resistance to rely on pre-established concepts and frameworks, the role of the dramaturg and the practice of dramaturgy has transformed from a source of authority and cohesion to an agent or facilitator of creative modes

---

[30] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 14; Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," 59, https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700308571425.

[31] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion*, 90; Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," 59; Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought," 67.

[32] Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," 59.

[33] Maaike Bleeker, "Dramaturgy as a Mode of Looking," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 13, no.2 (2003): 164, https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700308571432.

[34] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy*, 12.

of working and meaning-making processes.[35] This development, coupled with an effort to clarify several misconceptions surrounding the role of the dramaturg, has led to an interesting paradox: a sense of *diffusion* of the role into the practice of dramaturgy or even the non-necessity of the role in the context of the creative process. It seems that "dramaturgy without a dramaturg" is possible, and yet they can be a valuable asset.[36] It is interesting to see how several dramaturgs agree that it is important to start from the assumption that the (dance) dramaturg is not necessary.[37] Hence, how can we theorize the role of the dramaturg in the creative process? How can we make sense of the fact that they are "essentially" unnecessary, yet important, especially when taking into account expanding literature on the subject?

Next to the theoretical and practical expansion of process-based approaches on dramaturgy, there is an underlying resistance to distinguish between different types of dramaturgical practice based on the types of performances that they have been related to. For example, it becomes challenging to provide a clear distinction between dramaturgical practices for dance performances or dramaturgical practices from theatre performances. Multidisciplinary approaches in the creative process of various types of performances are arguably a reason for this resistance. A pivotal stage of this development is Lehmann's analysis of the rise of post-dramatic theatre, which announced the fall of the dramatic text as the source of meaning and the coherence for the development of performances. Such an understanding and analysis of the new type of performances that were emerging opened up the space for other mediums to gain more prominence as materials for inspiration and means for meaning-making, such as movement,

[35] Andrian, Heathfield, "Dramaturgy without a Dramaturge," in *Rethinking Dramaturgy: Errancy and Transformation*, eds by Manuel Bellisco, Maria José Cifuentes, and Ampraro Écija, (Murcia: Centro Parraga & CENDEAC, 2010), 105.

[36] Heathfield, "Dramaturgy without a Dramaturge," 105.

[37] Cvejic, "The Ignorant Dramaturg," 41; Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," 65; Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion*, 17.

sounds, and visuals. Nevertheless, it is important to note that what has been termed as the post-dramatic theatre is but a subset of broader changes that have been taking place in the field of performance studies since the end of the twentieth century. Thus, there are two important elements that form the discourses on contemporary dramaturgy that are related to the constantly changing states and demands of the creative process: (1) on the one hand, a retrospection in its relation with previous conceptualizations and understanding of the practice and what it is supposed to achieve in the creative process and how, and, (2) on the other hand, a process of exploration towards new methodological and conceptual territory in an attempt to provide new means for articulating the new conditions, qualities, and tools of their practice.

Methodological interlude: Framing the concept of dramaturgical practice.

Georgelou, Protopappa, Theodoridou

At this stage, it will be useful to elaborate on how the term dramaturgy is presented and analysed for this research andhow the term practice is employed when coupled with its dramaturgical *partner*. Firstly, it is important to make an initial distinction between two different ways people might conceive and write about dramaturgy. The first one is to focus on the dramaturgy of a performance as a complete event. As Lepecki argues, "dramaturgy is the name one gives to a work's overall aesthetic consistency, solidity, and coherence (even if the desired coherence is to be incoherent)."[38] The kind of analytical work involved in the practice of dramaturgy involves a focus on the various elements of the performance in the making, how these elemets employed and composed in relation to each other and consequently how they are presented and address the

[38] André Lepecki, "We're Not Ready For the Dramaturge: Some notes for dance dramaturgy," In *Rethinking Dramaturgy, Errancy and Transformation*, edited by A. Écija, M. Bellisco & M.J. Cifuentes, (Madrid: Centro Párraga, Centro de Documentación y Estudios Avanzados de Arte Contemporáneo, 2011), 188.

audience.[39] The second one focuses more on the different kinds of dramaturgical practices that are part of a performance's creative process. This way of writing about dramaturgy is done primarily by practitioners who provide their reflections on the skills, individual and collaborative processes their work entails, and the modes of interaction they identify with the other collaborators. My intention is not to develop two analytical categories, as this distinction is not without its nuances. As Heathfield argues, dramaturgy does not belong to a "resolved temporality," but it "takes place in the event of performance," although its work becomes more apparent during the rehearsal.[40] Nevertheless, this distinction here is made to make more explicit that my research focuses on the practice of dramaturgy and the means of articulating this practice as it manifests during the creative process of a performance.

As for the use of the term practice, I align with Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou's understanding of dramaturgical practice. Although their aim is to provide an analysis of dramaturgical practice to claim back its political nuance, which departs from the scope of this research, their analytical framework is based on three fundamental assumptions. These assumptions, on the one hand, address the core of some of the problematics in current discourses on dramaturgy and, on the other hand, provide an instructive frame from which further analysis can be made in multiple directions. Firstly, they oppose an understanding of practice as individualized work, which might demonstrate specific features, and is aligned with a specific

[39] This is by no means a definition of dramaturgy. However, for this scope of this research this explanation is used to distinguish between these two ways in which dramaturgy could be analysed, based on the different stages in the "life" of a production in which dramaturgy is applied.

[40] Heathfield, "Dramaturgy without a Dramaturg," 105; Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy,* 18-19; Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou provide a broader context through which these nuances have been elaborated on by Heathfield, Turner and Behrndt.

methodology, while operating within specific conditions and contexts.[41] Secondly, they challenge the assumption that dramaturgy is usually associated with the practice – theory binary, in the sense that it implies a "pre-existing separation and a subsequent coming together of the two."[42] On the contrary,

> the kind of work that [they] identify as dramaturgical takes place in thinking, doing, making and writing, in a way that it does not privilege either theoretical thinking or performance making as the site of dramaturgical practice, but rather exceeds and makes irrelevant such distinctions.[43]

Finally, they stress the importance of situating dramaturgical practice as a mode of working together for the creation of a performance, in a way that it refrains from becoming a derogatory term. This approach intends to resist the tendency of dramaturgical practice being relativized and applied arbitrarily into any mode of working, becoming a fixed term that can be endlessly copied, propagated, and employed indistinctively as a successful guide for performance-making.[44]

The importance of this initial analysis of dramaturgical practice will unfold as the line of argumentation develops. More specifically, once I delve into some of the problematic assumptions that have been associated with the role of the dramaturg and its relationship and responsibility towards the dramaturgy of the performance, it will become clearer that the disassociation with dramaturgical practice as an individual action and its further disassociation with the practice theory-binary, will open up the space for alternative ways of articulating the specificities of the practice. Moreover, the focus on the notion of dramaturgical practice on the

[41] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 20.
[42] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 20.
[43] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 20-1.
[44] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 21.

work on actions shifts our attention from an analysis of dramaturgy based on its results towards the modes of thinking, enacting and experimenting with the possibilities that emerge during the creative process. This is also related to the difficulty of defining dramaturgy. By shifting our attention from trying to define what dramaturgy is towards expanding the means of articulating the qualities of dramaturgical thinking and the types of processes that it can generate, it will be possible to reach a renewed understanding of how dramaturgical practices operate and how they contribute towards the creation of a performance.

Common Threads

How has this new mode of dramaturgical practice been described so far, and what methodological tools have been employed for its articulation? In the following section, I provide an overview of several accounts within the field of dramaturgy and identify some common aspects in their line of thinking and argumentation. The accounts below should be considered a representative sample of some of the existing discourses within the field of dramaturgy.[45] There are suggestive of a specific way of approaching dramaturgical practice. Finally, by bringing them together, this analysis aims to present the way conceptualizations over the qualities of this process-based dramaturgy developed over the years.

Maaike Bleeker: "Dramaturgy as a mode of Looking"," (2003)

In her seminal article, "Dramaturgy as a Mode of Looking," Bleeker provides an analysis of the practice of dramaturgy as a movement of thought that takes place between collaborators and is manifested through the act of looking.[46] She positions that approach as a response against an understanding of dramaturgy that is, firstly, identified as an "independent aspect of a work" or

[45] For example, within the same set of accounts we could add Marianne Kerkhoven's article "European Dramaturgy of the 21st Century", published in 2009, as well as Lehmann and Primavesi's article, "Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds", also published in 2009.

[46] Bleeker, "Dramaturgy as a Mode of Looking," 163.

something "applied to a work" and, secondly, considered as the "exclusive terrain of the dramaturg."[47] She acknowledges that both the director or choreographer and the dramaturg work with the same material, but they do so from *different perspectives,* and these differences, however big or small, might initiate this exchange of knowledge through a collaborative mode of thinking. Bleeker bases her analysis on Deleuze and Guattari's proposal in *What is Philosophy?,* where thinking is conceptualized *as movement*. This approach is used as an alternative to "representational thinking in which meaning is thought to result from the decoding of signs." [48] The value of such an approach is that it reconceptualizes the meaning-making process based on the audience's interaction with the performance from a pre-determined and one-directional mode of experiencing towards an on-going interaction between different agents. And, as Bleeker argues, the conditions and qualities of meaning-making processes constitute an important part of the dramaturgical perspective.[49]

It is important to point out that Bleeker situates her analysis in the context of European theatre practices in the Netherlands and Flanders towards the end of the twentieth century, and it is based on her own experience as a dramaturg. In that environment, as mentioned earlier, practitioners started challenging certain associations attributed to dramaturgy and the methods employed in the creative process. This questioning of existing methodologies was directed towards a specific use of concepts as a methodological tool for structuring the creative process and the artistic material. Within this context, the dramaturg was considered the "guardian of the concepts," as someone who is supposed to ensure the cohesion of the initial artistic ideas in the form of concepts and provide the means for those pre-given concepts to be carried out

[47] Bleeker, 163.
[48] Bleeker, 163.
[49] Bleeker, 164.

throughout the creative process. The response to that was a "process-oriented method of working in which form and meaning arise during the working process." [50]Consequently, thisdestabilized prevailing modes of dramaturgical work and the way that the dramaturg is expected to contribute within the creative process, without, however, providing a clear-cut substitution of what the dramaturg does using the existing methodological frameworks of contemporary dramaturgy.

This expansion of the creative possibilities during the working process was coupled with a further destabilization of the primacy of text as a source of meaning, which according to Lehmann, marked the rise of what he termed post-dramatic theatre.[51] Through this new mode of working, visual elements, sounds, movement, bodies and other elements gained prominence within the meaning-making practices and processes. Consequently, this opened up new layers of signification for the audience, who is now invited to engage with and synthesize them at their own discretion. What is essential for the context of this research is that Bleeker identifies two interrelated consequences: firstly, the demise of the "dramatic structure as a unifying framework," and secondly, the fact that "conventional dramaturgical tools originating from the dramatic theatre do not serve their purpose anymore."[52] Thus, how does Bleeker invite us to reflect upon and articulate the work of dramaturgy under this new scope?

Through this new light, a new mode of thinking dramaturgically about the meaning-making process and spectatorship emerges. The unifying framework that was based on the dramatic texts is diffused and substituted by the "incitation of events," which invite the audience to interact with and make meaning in their own terms.[53] From the point of view of, the

[50] Bleeker, 164.
[51] Bleeker, 164.
[52] Bleeker, 165.
[53] Bleeker, 165.

prescriptive qualities of dramaturgical practice are transformed into a mode of looking of the meaning-making possibilities that can emerge by this incitation of events. Such a mode of looking "implies an eye for the possibilities inherent in the ideas and the material, as well as an eye from their implications, their effects."[54] Bleeker elaborates further on her statement by invoking Hubert Damisch's concept of "moves" which is understood as incidents

> that make up the performance turn time and space into a specific here and now place. These moves appear through and against a complex network of earlier moves, be it other performances, other art works, philosophical ideas, practical knowledge and everyday experience, or historical events.[55]

Such a broad understanding of these moves and the wide range of sources out of which they can emerge make difficult any sort of classification. Moreover, the appearance of these moves seems to be highly dependent on specific on the situation and the context out of which they emerge. At the same time these moves are connected to situations and ideas that exist outside the environment of their manifestation. In that way, they invoke both a sense of transience and concreteness. Even more interestingly, these moves seem to be related both to physical actions/incidents that are triggered by the use of the creative material and to a mode of reflection that is activated by those actions.

What Bleeker does is to shift our attention from solidifying meaning towards an acceptance of the multiplicity of possibilities that emerge. She points out the need to train our attention as dramaturgs to speculate on the implications and the potentials embedded in these possibilities and how they create a flow of ideas, which stem from, but also generate actions and ideas. Through this mode of looking, Bleeker invites us not to follow rules and conventions but

[54] Bleeker, 166.
[55] Bleeker, 166.

to become aware of the ways they can be manifested, played with or even dismantled during the working process. Finally, this new mode of dramaturgical practice encompasses a more flexible attribution of who acts as a dramaturg at any given moment during the creative process. The role becomes less connected to a fixed set of tasks, but it rather requires the acquisition of a specific point of view from which this dramaturgical mode of looking takes places and informs the working process.[56]

As a final gesture in her analysis, Bleeker argues for the need of "a concept of a concept" to capture more aptly the interactions that are taking place in this new dramaturgical mode of looking.[57] She argues that this mode "demands the concept of a concept that is dynamic instead of static, and open instead of saturated with meaning …. This concept is not a starting point in a linear sense, nor is it some kind of goal or end-point; instead, it should be thought as a function in the process of making a work."[58] In my understanding, this concept of a concept should encompass a collaborative mode of thinking that can grasp and articulate the *moves* as they appear in the creative process. It needs to be able to shed light on what is possible and speculate on the implications of emerging moves rather than prescribe or concretize them. Such a concept conspicuously evades classificatory processes and points towards a spectrum of possibilities that are *in motion*. Such a concept could be understood more as a quality rather than a qualification, as a mode of thinking rather than a modality expected to produce certain results. Bleeker invokes once again Deleuze and Guatarri's work and their model of the duet to emphasize the conceptual interactions that are taking place in the creative process.

[56] Bleeker, 166.
[57] Bleeker, 166-7.
[58] Bleeker, 166-7.

> Here the model of the duet helps to conceive of the movement of thought as it is materialized in their books as the product of their movement towards a common goal, a product that in its turn -like a duet- invites an 'other' to engage with it, to move along with it but also to produce new moves in interaction with it.[59]

Hence, this concept of a concept should encompass the movement of thoughts and should be able to foreground the results of their interaction. The various parallels and metaphors of motion and movement incorporated in Bleeker's analysis become important for the scope of this research. These parallels function as means for describing this new mode of dramaturgical practice to bring them in contact with other accounts of contemporary dramaturgy and identify some common threads among different dramaturgs.

Myriam Van Imschoot: "Anxious Dramaturgy," (2003)

In another pivotal article within the discourse of contemporary dramaturgy, Myriam Van Imschoot approaches this new mode of dramaturgy from a different perspective. Firstly, it is significant to point out that her approach has more political undertones. The largest part of her analysis focuses on the effects of the modernization of the cultural institutions and the arts more broadly. She identifies the impact these processes had on dramaturgy and on the role of the dramaturg from a practical and conceptual point of view. Van Imschoot situates her analysis, initially as a response to Marianne Van Kerkhoven's claim over the "invisibility" of the dramaturg, out of which she distils a set of, what she calls, "anxieties."[60] These anxieties, she argues, are imbued in the dramaturgical discourses. They reflect the need to understand this new dramaturgy through questions that are trying to define, on the one hand, the modes of working within this new context and, on the other hand, what the role of the dramaturg is in it.

[59] Bleeker, 172.
[60] Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," 58.

Nevertheless, as Van Imschoot argues, these attempts obtained a prescriptive rather than an exploratory or descriptive form. They ended up operationalizing and subverting the interest into researching new means of performance-making processes that layed behind this new dramaturgical practice. Thus, she proposes to refrain from developing new descriptions of dramaturgy but rather "find out more about the underlying aesthetic paradigm that instantiates the surface varieties."[61] She argues that instead of understanding this new role of dramaturgy based on a historical account of the origins of the practice – which places within a long standing theory - practice binary – it might be more beneficial to investigate the different contexts and conditions that facilitate this renewed interest in the role of dramaturgy and dramaturgical practices within the creative process and beyond.

At the same time, Van Imschoot seems to be in line with Bleeker's analysis of the way this new dramaturgy is challenging previous conceptualizations and modes of dramaturgical work. In her own words,

> [t]he new dramaturgy challenged the role of predetermining factors, such as the text as the pivot for signification and the concept (or a prefixed interpretational frame) as the structuring principle that governs rehearsals. [62]

Once again, the overthrowing of the text as the basis for the internal logic of the performance on the making challenged the presupposed authority of the dramaturg. That authority was gained from obtaining a position of the external observer, of the external eye. The dramaturg functioned as the mediator between the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the creative process. Ultimately, they facilitated the transposition of the theoretical aspect of the creative process into the practice of performance making. Along with this "reduction of the dramaturg to an eye,"

[61] Van Imschoot, 58.
[62] Van Imschoot, 58.

followed a connotation of disembodiment.[63] The prescriptive use of concepts as representatives of theory – and here Van Imschoot quotes and aligns with André Lepecki – are reflective of yet another binary, that of the body-mind, which propagate a sense of superiority of the intellect represented by the eye "as a locus of power and knowledge" put into the disposal of the practitioner awaiting to be guided.[64]

To further counteract this "older" conception of the dramaturg, Van Imschoot employs, as an illustration, her own experience as a participant in a series of workshops where dramaturgical practice emerged as a collaborative process. In her understanding, to practice dramaturgy a dramaturg is not needed. What is needed instead, is the nurturing of a dramaturgical context through which ideas are exchanged, various actions are taking place and all these processes inform accordingly the creative process. It is interesting to point out – especially in connection with Bleeker's account on the mode of dramaturgical looking as a particular point of view – how Van Imschoot describes instances where several exchanges of point of views took place in terms of specialty and competences of different collaborators, which negate a more conventional attribution of tasks within the production of a performance. For example, she mentions that "[d]ancers would manipulate the sound or the camera, musicians and the writer danced …. The result of these transgressive reversals was it heightened a sense that even when one stayed with one's specialty, there was a collective and active responsibility for all the components."[65] Ultimately, she contended that "[t]he dramaturgical skill can be understood as a competence in composing actions and reading their potential for significance in the weaving of the

[63] Van Imschoot, 63.
[64] Van Imschoot, 63.
[65] Van Imschoot, 65.

performance's fabric."[66] It is important to point out that although Van Imschoot does not employ direct parallels with notions of movement, there is still an underlying dynamism in the qualities of the dramaturgical skills that she is describing. She directs our focus towards an attentiveness to the potentiality of the materials employed for the creation of a performance. She points towards the creative potential of actions and their conceptual and practical implications within the creative process. Finally, by employing the metaphor of the weaving of the performance's fabric as a way of describing the creative process, we could understand dramaturgical practice as a dynamic process that does not dictate the outcome, but rather moves along with formative forces that shape the performance and explores their possibilities and their implications.

Georgelou, Protopappa, Theodoridou: *The Practice of Dramaturgy* (2017)

The book, *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance*, approaches dramaturgical practice from yet another perspective.[67] The scope of their analysis ultimately argues for an understanding of dramaturgy as a (re)politicized practice, which "resides on an attitude of pluralized interreference and reconfiguration of hegemonic organizations of coexistence and co-work."[68] By drawing from existing accounts and interlacing them with their own research and practice, they shift their mode of analysis from delineating a set of tools and

[66] Van Imschoot, 65.

[67] At the same time, it is important to point out how these accounts are also interrelated. Given the ongoing dramaturgical discourses it will be false to argue that each of these scholars came up with their 'conclusions' or arguments independently. Some points of their argumentation (and especially *The Practice of Dramaturgy* which postdates the publications of Bleeker and Van Imschoot's articles) build up on former conceptualizations of the practice or even explicitly refer to the other accounts. Nevertheless, what this analysis would like to point out is that there is a sense of continuation of specific some lines of argumentations. And this continuation seems to be reinforced as the theoretical input and understanding of contemporary dramaturgical practice grows. The fact that this particular approach is shared by scholars, who even thought is base their arguments on the same literature, are also pointing towards similar conclusions after conducting research from their own point of view seems to validate the potential of these conceptualization.

[68] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy,* 90.

methodologies that can accurately describe contemporary dramaturgical practices, towards distilling a set of principles that operate on a meta-analytical level and guide their thinking modes, the processes of actualization and the actions that appear during the creative process. Overall, it can be argued that they identify a shift in dramaturgical practice from a prescriptive to a speculative mode of working, which emphasizes the role of dramaturgical thinking rather than the role of "dramaturgy" or the dramaturg in the creative process per se.[69] This consequently *democratizes* the role of the dramaturg and points towards a more collaborative mode of working. Ultimately, this approach challenges former conceptualizations of the different roles within the creative process that might adhere to a more authoritative, hierarchical, or individualistic structures within the production a performance of on a creative as well as an institutional level.[70]

What becomes quite pertinent in relation to this research is the way the authors also invoke abundantly notions of motion and movement as their analytical tools in their elaboration of the principles that they propose. In the book, they identify three main principles:mobilizing questions, alienating, and communing, which ultimately contribute towards their understanding of dramaturgy as a catalytic mode of working. Each principle focuses on a different aspect of the

[69] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 25.

[70] It is important to point out that the results of their research, as they are articulated in this book have been highly informed by the practical aspects of their work in progress as it enveloped through a series of meetings and workshops. Moreover, the framework of these workshops had also been in some aspects pre-planned, meaning that some of the task that have been used as an example to further substantiate their line of argumentation and have been designed with some presumptions in mind regarding how dramaturgy can be practiced. These presumptions have also been supported by existing accounts in dramaturgical discourses. Nevertheless, this pre-planning was designed to facilitate a dynamic environment for exploration and experimentation, rather that focus on validating or discrediting existing processes and practices that are already present in dramaturgical practice. Thus, we can approach this research and its propositions as a way of further substantiating as well as building upon existing conceptualizations of this new mode of dramaturgical practice.

practice, but also builds upon one another in the way that they foreground a specific mode of dramaturgical thinking. Moreover, each principle addresses a specific way of working and exemplifies the manifested interactions between different agents within that mode of working.

Mobilizing questions refers to a two-way operation of, on the one hand, articulating questions that have the capacity to mobilize a process while, on the other hand, employing certain dramaturgical operations that can, in turn, mobilize questions.[71] In their own words, they "understand the activity of dramaturgy as the 'motor' that makes questions appear, while such questions also function to activate the work itself."[72] At the same time, such a mode of operating redistributes notions of responsibility and authorship in relation to the propositions and suggestions made:

> whereas the process of asking, posing, or answering questions may belong to someone [..], mobilizing questions does not (and cannot) belong to anyone by its very nature as a directed movement of thought. Rather, by practicing it one comes to disown one's thinking; such challenging of individual authorship does not lead to a proposition about co-authorship, but allows the work to author itself. [73]

Moreover, the authors argue that such a mode of thinking and creating together is not confined in the studio, nor it ends once the performance is finally performed for an audience. Based on this frame of meaning-making processes, the spectator is invited to join this process of discovering things together as the performance unfolds. "[T]hey [the spectators] are too invited to follow the movement from one thought to the next, from one action to the next." [74] Thus, with their principle of mobilizing questions, they try to articulate the particularities of a mode of thinking

[71] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 41.
[72] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 41.
[73] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 44-5.
[74] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 44.

and working together that is constantly changing, constantly *in motion*, and can be re-activated with any subsequent action, questioning, or engagement.

Their principle of alienating addresses the differing/differentiating processes which are, according to them, necessary and constantly at play while the collaborators engage with the various material that emerges from the creative process. This principle emphasises processes of motion operating on a content-related, as a well as a collaborative-related level. On the one hand, they understand alienation as a process that "subverts our established categories and challenges us to think again by threatening the known with the unknown."[75] An engagement with alienation places the dramaturgical process "in a zone of indetermination," a term quoted by dramaturg André Lepecki, "which sustain elements of unpredictability and estrangement."[76] These elements of unpredictability, estrangement and the anguish that comes with it "certainly deserves the trouble as it opens up one's work, letting go of the horizon of expectations, and allowing us instead to meet alterity."[77] It is through this encounter with alterity that, in collaboration with their first principle, we move away from authoritative or prescriptive attitudes towards the process of developing a work. Instead, we allow the work to author itself. When also taking into consideration the various agents or collaborators that are contributing to the creative process and the knowledge and expertise there are bringing, then we can understand dramaturgy:

> as a movement distributed across the various performing agents in the room and across various theoretical, critical and artistic thinking and operating modes – a

[75] Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), quoted in Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, *The Practice of Dramaturgy*, 52.

[76] André Lepecki, "Errancy as Work," 60; Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 49.

[77] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 51.

movement across diverse disciplines and cultural sites, that does not belong to any of them [78]

Their third and last principle, commoning, strives for the exploration and articulation of "producing 'in common,'" not in the sense of homogenization, but rather as a constant negotiation as to what counts as being in common.[79] Once again, this commonality refers to a shared understanding of the work in process, not in the sense of necessarily agreeing on everything or following the direction proposed by one or more collaborators. Through this lens, dramaturgy is rather "conceived as an attentive engagement that is distributed among everyone who is taking part in the process, including the eventual audience."[80] And, within this framework, the dramaturg holds one of the voices that participate in this communing process. Thus, by considering these principles, dramaturgy obtains a certain kind of potential, "a quality of 'setting into motion'", which the authors describe as "a catalytic mode of working."[81] Therefore, the principles can be seen as catalysts which facilitate an understanding of dramaturgy as transforming and developing a process "*without necessarily controlling it* [emphasis in the original]."[82] The metaphor of the catalyst provides an understanding of dramaturgical practice – and the thinking modes that are encapsulated in it – that does not dictate or determine but rather opens up "a space for imagination, not in the sense of the unconceivable, but as that that could be otherwise."[83] Overall, these principles and the metaphor of the catalyst articulate different movements of thought and of actions within different semantic levels within the creative process. Thus, once again, it is not difficult to identify similarities in the way different dramaturgs are

[78] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 48.
[79] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 56.
[80] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 59.
[81] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 66.
[82] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 66.
[83] Georgelou, Protopapa, and Theodoridou, 68.

approaching this new mode of thinking dramaturgically and the various associations that have been made on a conceptual and practical level in relation to motion and movement. For the final part of this section, I present the work of dramaturg Andrian Heathfield, as his arguments set the stage for the arguments that I develop in the following section of this chapter.

Andrian Heathfield: "Dramaturgy Without a Dramaturge" (2010)

Heathfield's work, "Dramaturgy Without a Dramaturge," addresses several of the arguments presented above regarding the dynamic status of dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg in it. He argues that the dramaturgical role is not one that should be uniquely assigned to a specific collaborator. By moving away from conceptualizations that attribute a sense of authorship and authority to the role of the dramaturg, Heathfield sees that role as "an agent in a process of communal meaning making."[84] Since the decay of dramatic representation, and the dissolution of linear narrative structures, dramaturgy has been assigned the role of maintaining a sense of coherency. For Heathfield, this can be both limiting and liberating. Within the role, we can identify "the necessity and opportunity of contributing to creative formations that redefine the potentials of creative force, altered spatial and temporal phenomena, and affective embodied relations."[85] This is what gives the role its creative potential, but also its lack of specificity and invisibility in relation to its contribution to the final result. The biggest challenge appears when the role becomes institutionalized, and the creative capacities of the dramaturg become infused with external or even imposed motives and intentions.

In a gesture to dissolve the problematics that emerge, Heathfield redirects our attention toward and understanding of dramaturgy "as a form of responsibility towards (and response to)

[84] Heathfield, "Dramaturgy Without a Dramaturge," 105.
[85] Heathfield, 106

that which is immanent in a given performance, its phenomena and forms of representation."[86] Nevertheless, this understanding can work both in favour and against the dramaturg. On the one hand, "[t]he dramaturg would be the one whose interest lies the bringing forward of the implicit forces of any given articulation."[87]On the other hand, he/she also knows that "there is not possession of ideas: the dramaturg is then content to act as the invigilator and attendant of the showing, the steward on the journey of thought."[88] It is interesting to point out how Heathfield draws a picture of the dramaturg as a facilitator of thought processes, while also challenging their necessity in the creative process. This redirects the need to define what dramaturgy is and what tools and methods the dramaturg might or should use and instead think of dramaturgical practice as a specific mode of thinking and doing. Dramaturgical practice becomes once again a mode of attentiveness of the thinking processes at play, which stems from the various collaborators and the meaning-making elements that emerge from the work-in-progress. Dramaturgical thinking, then, focuses on how these processes are manifested and revisited through the actions taking place throughout the creative process. And the dramaturg, when present, is the one that moves along, or sometimes against, all these elements.

Moreover, Heathfield highlights another issue that emerges for this revised understanding of dramaturgy and the role that the dramaturg might be asked to play in it. This is the act of writing about their role in the creative process and the inherent contradiction that comes from that. In Heathfield's words:

> [t]he dramaturg is often asked to write on the work that they have played a role in making. But how should they write on something from which they cannot be apart,

[86] Heathfield, 110.
[87] Heathfield, 110.
[88] Heathfield, 110.

> something that is in any case not a consolidated or finalized object in the world, but a living articulation itself? [89]

In order to address this question, Heathfield turns to the practice of performative writing, which approaches events not as objects but as "manifestations and articulations of ideas," which in turn transforms them into "dynamic and provisional" entities rather than "static and final."[90] Such an understanding of writing focuses on the differentiating qualities of language. It requires a constant contextualization of what has been articulated, as well as an awareness of the ways in which the manifestations of such events are also "embodied (in terms of the physical and sensual relation between the spectator and the object, and the spectator and the work's other recipients)."[91] Heathfield argues that the dramaturg "is first and foremost a conversationalist," a characterization which reflects Bleeker's analysis of the dramaturgy as a mode of looking and as a constant dialogue between collaborators.[92] Once again, the need appears to engage with alternative analytical tools that can facilitate the articulation of a practice that is both in motion and challenges modes of knowledge production that are confined within certain individuals. In a similar manner with the previous literature used in this chapter, Heathfield makes specific references to the role of movement in relation to dramaturgical practices, while also arguing against certain conceptualizations of the role of the dramaturg.

Towards the end of his article, Heathfield tackles the issue of the assumed objectivity and presumed distance from the work that has been attributed to the dramaturg, by reinstating the importance of the embodied presence their physical presence. He argues that the dramaturg is on an equal footing regarding his physical presence, like all the other collaborators, such as the

[89] Heathfield, 111.
[90] Heathfield, 111.
[91] Heathfield, 111.
[92] Heathfield, 111.

dancer, the director, or the technician. The event of the performance requires the dramaturg's, or whoever assumes that point of view at any given time, corporeal presence, "as a practice of watching and thinking;" it demands "extensive emotional and sensory attention."[93] In that sense, the various movements of thoughts at play need not only to be identified and articulated, but they also need to become embodied and incorporated through more corporeal modes of knowledge production. As a final point of analysis, Heathfield, addresses the diversification and expansion of performance-making practices over the last thirty to forty years which progressively question the "foundations and disciplinary boundaries between dance and theatre."[94] This development challenges our ability to pin down our understanding of dramaturgy on historical grounds, to also connect this point with Van Imschoot's proposition. For Heathfield, dramaturgy no longer belongs to a specific discipline nor to a specific agent. Rather, dramaturgy becomes distributed across different collaborators and dramaturgical practice encompasses a variety of activities. All in all, "[d]ramaturgy, […] without a dramaturg, becomes the movement of relations through a constellation of questions approaches and responses to the matter at hand."[95] However, the question still remains: how can we reconcile those two forces that are at play in discourses of contemporary dramaturgy, namely, its exponentially motion-related characterization, with the continuous attempts to articulate in writing its dynamic qualities?

---

[93] Heathfield, 112.

[94] Heathfield, 115.

[95] Heathfield, 116; A similar conclusion regarding the qualities of dramaturgy and its connection to movement has been made by Marianne Kerkhoven in her article "European Dramaturgy of the 21st Century", where she argues that "[i]f there is one thing that we can say with certainty about dramaturgy it is that it is movement itself, a process", or similarly in another section she argues that "[d]ramaturgy is building bridges, it is being responsible for the whole, dramaturgy is above all a constant movement. Inside and outside. The readiness to dive into the work, and to withdraw from it again and again, inside, outside, trampling the leaves. All constant movement", in "European Dramaturgy in the 21St Century," in Marianne van Kerkhoven, "European Dramaturgy in the 21St Century: A constant movement," *Performance Research 14*, no. 4 (2009): 7-11, https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160903519476.

The value of dance dramaturgy within dramaturgical discourses

In her article "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," Synne K. Behrndt provides some compelling arguments on why dance dramaturgy can engage with the problematics raised above in a fruitful manner. There are two elements that seem to be valuable with regards to the potential of dance dramaturgy and the knowledge that has been derived from that practice that push forward the discourses of contemporary dramaturgy more broadly. The first one is dance's special attention to movement and its role within the creative process. By referring to the work of dance dramaturg Heidi Gilpin, Behrndt argues that dance performances are "increasingly moving into a multidisciplinary field."[96] This requires a more careful consideration of the "interpretational and perceptual challenges that are embodied by multidisciplinary compositions where movement or the body is the protagonist."[97] This multidisciplinary move is not, of course, an exclusive development of dance performances. As mentioned earlier, the advent of post-dramatic theatre and the demise of dramatic text has permeated the creative process of a wide range of performance-making practices and diluted any clear-cut distinctions between different mediums, such as theatre and dance. However, what is emphasized here is that due to dance's long history with practices of attending to movement and embodied practices on a compositional and, more recently, on a dramaturgical level, dance and dance dramaturgy could provide insights on the kind of methodological tools that can address more effectively some of the existing anxieties and discourses that surround dramaturgy.

The second element that makes dance dramaturgy's contribution valuable is dance's rather recent engagement with issues of dramaturgy, which places it in a unique place where it is not

[96] Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," 185.
[97] Behrndt, 185.

bound by pre-existing working practices tied to historical developments. In Behrndt's own words,

> an interesting upshot of dramaturgy's migration into dance is that this new context has presented an opportunity to re-examine classical assumptions as well as inherited working practices around dramaturgy, dramaturgical thinking and the dramaturg in particular.[98]

It is not that there are no misconceptions regarding dance dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg. This does not also negate the fact nor that dramaturgical discourses in dance have been, at least partially, influenced by more classical assumptions of what dramaturgy should be – which have been linked more explicitly with its theatrical counterpart. The value of this proposition is that due to dance dramaturgy's short history, there is a more exploratory attitude embedded in its practices. This exploratory attitude is closely related to notions of movement and motion that seem to be prominent in the ongoing discourses on the *new* dramaturgy. Moreover, it would be interesting and beneficial to identify how dance dramaturgy addresses certain misconceptions that relate to more traditional approaches to dramaturgy. Thus, by understanding the specificities of the practice and the forces that lead to its emergence, it could be possible to provide a better understanding of the current problematics that are present in contemporary dramaturgy. In Behrndt words, "[d]ramaturgy's migration into dance is therefore also an invitation to outline a more interdisciplinary trajectory where dramaturgy is not tied to one discipline or ideology." [99]

Other theorists and dramaturgs also identify the potential of dance and dance dramaturgy in relation to existing discourses in dramaturgy more broadly. For example, Bleeker argues that

[98] Behrndt, 186.
[99] Behrndt, 196.

> [d]ance and performance can also be considered media of thinking, and the strong focus on movement and their being in constant transformation, makes them particularly interesting objects of research for current attempts at conceptualizing thinking in terms of material practice that proceeds through enactment.[100]

Moreover, the invitation of dance, and more broadly movement-based approaches, to explore more conceptual realms in relation to their discipline and to engage more directly with elements of dramaturgical practice, according to Heathfield, has resulted in:

> systematic investigations of movement itself, its necessity on choreography, its status as an elemental constituent of being and of thought, its force within an aesthetic and across the relations that constitute the event of performance. [101]

These kinds of investigations can become valuable in an attempt to articulate more aptly the dynamic character of contemporary dramaturgy by engaging with methodological tools that instigate a mode of thinking within dramaturgical practice that is constantly in motion.

Katherine Profeta, dance dramaturg and long-term collaborator with choreographer Ralph Lemon, in an analogous tone with the previous part of this section, describes her role as a dramaturg as a "quality of motion." [102] But more importantly, she stresses out how dance dramaturgy can contribute to the larger discourse on dramaturgy through a more thorough understanding of the "art of attending to movement."[103] By referring to Bleeker's analysis of dramaturgical thinking as movement in itself, she argues that "movement does not just enable understanding; it describes the very activity of understanding."[104] Dance dramaturgs are more aware of the subtleties of movement, both at the level of perception and the level of meaning-

[100] Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thoughts," 70.
[101] Heathfield, "Dramaturgy Without a Dramaturge," 115.
[102] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 17.
[103] Profeta, 139.
[104] Profeta, 139.

making. In her book, *Dramaturgy in Motion: At Work on Dance and Movement Performance*, Profeta is guiding us through the thinking processes that take place as part of her dramaturgical practice and the way that they address those two levels of attending movement. Another element of her work that can be constructive for the scope of this research is her analysis of the role of text and language in relation to movement. It could be argued that the decline of the dramatic text, and the rise of alternative meaning-making mediums, in which movement is an important one, has put pressure on the existing analytical tools for analysing the dramaturgical aspects of performances. Moreover, this has arguably caused misconceptions regarding the role of the dramaturgy in the process and has created further tension in former conceptualizations of dramaturgy as the bridge between theory and practice. An apt example is Bleeker's argument which identifies the risk of viewing dramaturgical practice as imposing a certain mode of intellectualism, especially in dance performances.[105] In another chapter of her book, Profeta focuses specifically on that relationship and tries to identify the dynamics at play between text, language and movement from a dramaturgical perspective. The second chapter of this research expands on Profeta's analysis of the art of attending movement and the role of text and language in movement-based performances in relation to dramaturgical thinking, in conjunction with the work of other dance dramaturgs. At this stage, what is important to point out is the value of the existing methodological tools within dance dramaturgy for articulating the dynamic qualities of dramaturgical practice.

Moving more specifically to the discourses regarding the role of the dramaturg, dance dramaturg Bauer proposes a "shift in orientation that locates the dramaturg as a subject in the

[105] Bleeker, "Dramaturgy as a Mode of Looking," 170.

creative process rather than a mediator at the centre of the tired theory/practice dichotomy."[106] This is a position that will be further elaborated upon in the following chapter. The theory-practice dynamic, according to Bauer and others, invites a conceptualization of the dance dramaturg "as a theoretician or a critic who puts his/her linguistic and intellectual skills in the service of the practitioner's performance-making."[107] However, and specifically in the creative process of dance or movement-based performances, this division can become counterproductive and, as mentioned earlier regarding the discourses on dramaturgy more broadly, can induce conceptualization of the dramaturg as a distant observer, as an external eye. The reason for that is that practices that involve movement require a very different mode of engagement from the side of the dramaturg and a type of knowledge that cannot necessarily be transposed into intellectual processes associated with certain theories. It requires a physical presence in which the body is an essential tool of engagement with the processes at hand. Seen as such, the dramaturg is absolved from the responsibility of bringing "intelligibility" into the creative process. Bauer, amongst others, proposes the metaphor of proximity as a way of pointing out the dramaturg's engagement with the creative process as "embodied experience, associative thinking and memory."[108] And as a counter-proposal it also seeks to challenge "traditional categories of knowledge" associated with the role of the dramaturg.[109] André Lepecki, in an interview on dance dramaturgy and the role of the dramaturg, argues that he enters "the studio as dramaturge by running away from the external eye. Just as the dancers and choreographers, I enter to find a

[106] Bojana Bauer, "Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance", in *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, New World Choreographies, eds. Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 31.

[107] Bauer, "Propensity," 33.

[108] Bauer, 34.

[109] Bauer, 34.

(new) body. That's the most important task of the dance dramaturge – to constantly explore possible sensorial manifestoes."[110]

Bojana Kunst takes a closer look at the metaphor of proximity and its implications for the role of the dramaturg. More specifically, she asks

> [w]hat is accepted (or not) as a result of the proximity of the dramaturg? What exactly is calming about the dramaturg's presence? These questions are meant to supplement the introductory questions pertaining to the difficulty of articulating the processes of dramaturgical coaching. If we wish to answer those questions at least approximately, we need to immerse ourselves in the complex core of immaterial knowledge – an elusive ability and potentiality, which is part of dramaturgical work.[111]

Coming back to Heathfield's argument that positions the dramaturgs in a place where they are expected to write about the *work* of dramaturgy in the creative process, how can we engage with this process in a way that captures its dynamic? How can we write about all these material and immaterial actions that are in motion? For Lepecki, if we start from the premise that "the relationship between writing and physical action has always been a difficult one (at the level of theorization and of its implementation, or performance)" this relationship becomes even more challenging when we talk about dance dramaturgy.[112] However, his proposal is that:

> the 'interrogating' and 'composing' relationship that dramaturgy must establish in order to fulfil its function is not between writing (understood as a general system of representation) and physical action (understood as performance). The tension […] that fuels dramaturgy as a practice in dance and with dance is the tension between multiple *processes of thought and multiple processes of actualization* (emphasis in original). [113]

---

[110] Schott de Lahunta, "Dance Dramaturgy: speculations and reflections," *Dance Theatre Journal* 16, no. 1 (2000): The Conversation, http://sarma.be/docs/2869

[111] Bojana Kunst, "The Economy of Proximity: Dramaturgical work in contemporary dance," *Performance Research* 14, no. 3 (2009): 88, http://sarma.be/docs/2872.

[112] Lepecki, "We are not ready for the dramaturge," 188.

[113] Lepecki, 188.

Thus, in the upcoming chapters, I explore whether this immaterial knowledge, which is tightly linked with embodied practices, can be at least partially articulated through a better understanding of the dynamics of actuality and potentiality and inscribed through modes of articulating motion.

Chapter 2: Redrawing the space

Changes in the field: The process of making (dance) performances

In *Rethinking Dance History*, dance dramaturg André Lepecki addresses significant moments in the history of dance that triggered fundamental changes in the conceptual and practical approaches used for the creation of dance performances. Lepecki argues that these changes can provide insights into the "unstable ground" of the contemporary European dance scene.[114] Nevertheless, he suggests that this instability should not be considered as a weakness but rather as a sign of a reconceptualization of the "formal and ontological parameters set by modern dance at the beginning of the twentieth century."[115] In other words, this instability could be understood as a paradigm shift since the fundamental assumptions and practices are being challenged and transformed to adjust to emerging phenomena within the field. More specifically, Lepecki argues that it became progressively clearer for many choreographers and dances in the early 1990's that the "isomorphism between dance and movement, and the emphasis on dance's autonomy with regard to the verbal, had set up an ontological and political trap for dance."[116] Lepecki's argument on the isomorphism between dance and movement can be understood when thinking of the specific aesthetics and formalism of modern dance through which dance performances were connected to and classified based on their adherence to a specific style, such as Martha Graham's, José Limón's, or Merce Cunningham's technique and modes of composition.[117] In that regard, dance and movement were considered interchangeable within the context of a dance

[114] Lepecki, "Concept and Presence," 171.
[115] Lepecki, 171.
[116] Lepecki, 170.
[117] Lepecki, 170.

performance. The questioning that emerged in the 1990s extended beyond the formalism of dance. More specifically, Lepecki argues:

> What contemporary European dance perceives as unbearable are the modernist imperatives, still so prevalent in dance criticism and marketing of asserting an absolute (and absurd) division between artistic disciplines, and of considering historical time as teleologically linear. The consequence of these two imperatives is the imposing of yet another problematic division: that between the artists on the one side, and agents responsible for producing and controlling the discourse on art on the other (critics, theoreticians, programmers) […]. Since the 1990's a variety of choreographers coming from diverse training backgrounds, different social and national contexts, conflicting aesthetic lineages and sometimes dissonant political views have dedicated themselves to explore the role of dance within the broader realms of art and of society.[118]

Although further analysis of the reasons of this shift exceeds the scope of this research, what is important here is that fundamental transformations started taking place in the mode of thinking about and making of dance performances within the field of dance dramaturgy. An essential aspect of those changes was the incorporation of discourses around art and society more broadly within the creative process. These transformatios, consequently, signalled a change in the way movement was approached and incorporated in the creative process both conceptually and choreographically.

This new direction has also been identified by dance and performance theorist and dramaturg Bojana Bauer, who argues that "progressively, a plurality of theoretically informed choreographic practices emerged that were very different in terms of materials, aesthetics and conceptual approach."[119] In a similar manner, Bauer argues that the result of these transformations in choreographic practices generated a more experimental approach towards the

[118] Lepecki, 171.
[119] Bauer, "Propensity," 35-36.

established conceptualizations of dance and establish modes of making dance performances. This new approach also meant that this experimentation moved beyond the very physical and practical aspects of dance and movement. It started to address additional layers of signification within the practice of dance, such as its historical, or political aspects, while also engaging "in philosophical reflections about the body meaning, and representation."[120] Thus, previous modes of meaning-making practices based on what was considered as dance, started to be placed under scrutiny. Different modes of movement came into place that moved beyond the highly stylized dance techniques of modern dance in the beginning and middle of the twentieth century.

Moving briefly back into the historical analysis, Lepecki identifies two important points in dance history that arguably mobilized the processes identified above. The first one is the experimental practices that were taking place in the Judson Church in the 1960s, by pioneers like Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, and Yvonne Rainer, who were based in New York (U.S.).[121] The value of this development lies in the radical interdisciplinary gestures taking place between dance and minimal art, which challenged the foundations of dance practice. Using the example of Rainer's *Trio A*, Lepecki argues that it is "paradigmatic in its attempt to ground itself outside the usual parameters of theatrical dance and to draw explicitly from the visual arts its compositional integrity."[122] According to Lepecki, this illuminates the contention of contemporary choreographers and dancers "with the theatrical space and with movement."[123] The second is Pina Bausch's experimental and radical attitude towards alternative modes of making performances in Germany through her dance company Tanztheater Wuppertal. Lepecki argues that Pina Bausch generated a political and compositional shift in the late 1970s when "she

[120] Bauer, 36.
[121] Lepecki, "Concept and Presence," 173.
[122] Lepecki, 174.
[123] Lepecki, 174.

decided to ask her dancers questions, rather than to propose movement as the compositional departure of her pieces."[124] Based on those two pivotal points in the history of dance, Lepecki suggests that "dance could no longer be certain of where it stood and what it stood for" and that these points can be seen as "activators of possibilities" that can be understood retrospectively in relation to "their performative and political implications for dance."[125] Hence, now, a new question emerges: how are these changes related to the introduction of dramaturgy in dance?

Dance and dance dramaturgy: A complex history

Profeta argues that Pina Bausch's collaborator, Raimund Hoghe can be coined as the first dance dramaturg to be officially appointed responsible for the dramaturgy of a dance performance in 1979.[126] This way of presenting the history of dance dramaturgy seems to be shared by other theoreticians/dance dramaturgs such as Hansen, Van Imschoot, and deLahunta.[127] Thus, this hallmark in the history of dance dramaturgy arguably coincides with the radical changes in the process of making performances mentioned above. As Behrndt argues, "it is, if inadvertently, the changing nature of dance that brings dramaturgy into dance in the first place."[128] Similarly, "Van Kerkhoven concurs and remarks that dramaturgy and the dramaturg reflect a moment when theoretical and conceptual inquiries within dance become more pronounced and embedded."[129] Thus, the introduction of the dance dramaturg can be historically and theoretically connected with the conceptual and ontological transformations that the field of dance was going through

[124] Lepecki, 173.
[125] Lepecki, 174.
[126] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion*, 7.
[127] Pil Hansen, "Introduction", in *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, eds. Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), 4; deLahunta, "Dance Dramaturgy: speculations and reflections," Dance and Dramaturgy; Van Imschoot, "Anxious Dramaturgy," 58.
[128] Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," 187.
[129] Behrndt,188.

since the end of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, one must be careful not to suggest that dramaturg's entrance in the dance scene was solely necessitated by those changes.

As both Hansen and Profeta suggest, interactions between the choreographer and other collaborators that resemble this dramaturgical mode of working have been taking place long before Hoghe. More specifically, Profeta provides the examples of John Cage's collaboration with Merce Cunningham, as well as Sergei Diaghilev's work at the Ballet Russes.[130] Hansen provides the examples of Martha Graham's collaboration with dance writer/critic John Martin in the 1950s, as well as Elizabeth Langley's work in Canada since the 1960s.[131] This indicates that more experimental modes of collaboration have already been present in dance. Yet, for Profeta, the decision to name a dramaturg – referring to the case of Hoghe – is "formative, not least because naming opens up more possibilities in its wake."[132] Some aspects of this formative process can be identified through the gradual, yet increasing, appearance of more "dance dramaturgs" within the field of dance, with Heidi Gilpin, Marianne Van Kerkhoven, Guy Cools, and André Lepecki being some prominent examples.[133] Thus, the *rise* of dance dramaturgy has already been on the making for some time and it is related with ontological and methodological changes in the field of dance. Nevertheless, the role of the dramaturg had not been placed into sharper focus until it had been officially coined as such. Thus, Hoghe and Bausch's gesture of naming the dance dramaturg signals even more radical changes in the mode of creating dance performance, without though negating the ongoing experimentation of dance artists since in the later part of the twentieth century.

[130] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 7.
[131] Hansen, "Introduction," 5.
[132] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 7.
[133] Hansen, "Introduction," 5.

However, there were not only changes in the field of dance that opened up the space for dance dramaturgy to enter the creative process. For Behrndt, "[d]ramaturgy emerged in dance at the time where the schism between theatre and dance was dissolving."[134] As already discussed in the previous chapter, the emergence of new modes of dramaturgy in the field of performance more broadly put under scrutiny more traditional modes of performance-making practices. The focus on process-based approaches directly responded to the restrictive creative potential of the use of concepts for guiding the structural elements and the coherence of the performance to come. Thus, it was not only dance that was changing, but also other modes of performance were facing radical transformations with respect to their creative modes of production.[135] Thus, this new space of exploration challenged the disciplinary boundaries of different modes of performance-making processes and how those processes have been conceptualized. As Lepecki argues,

> Theatre enters into the name of dance when theatre is setting aside the problem of drama. Which means, when it is setting aside a kind of understanding of the theatrical function of writing. Thus, without the backbone of a structuring and anterior narrative at which the work will aim (as in Martha Graham's works in the 1950s and 1960s, for instance) or without the backbone of formal abstraction (where the space of the stage is made equivalent to the space of the canvas, as in Merce Cunningham), dance becomes dance theatre by highly problematizing, and indeed debunking, the unifying and sovereign function of writing as one of the main tensors of and in dramaturgy. Dance becomes dance-theatre by bypassing drama in theatre. But this bypassing coincides with the arrival of dance dramaturgs in dance studios. The dramaturg arrives to find drama out of the picture. Without drama, what is left from dramaturgy is, as Barba reminds us, ergon – in other words, work. The dramaturg arrives then, to the dance studio, as simply a worker. At the very moment when the point of departure for creating a dance piece was no longer a technique, nor

[134] Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," 187.
[135] Behrndt, 196.

> a plot, nor a text, but the embrace of vague (yet concrete) fields of heterogeneity, a new kind of worker arrived in the dance studio, the dramaturg.[136]

Consequently, dramaturgical practices and their historical associations were put into question. Again, for the case of dance more specifically, Behrndt suggests that

> a discussion of dramaturgy in relation to dance has challenged the notion that dramaturgy pertains exclusively to playwriting, literary management or even Aristotelian dramaturgical structures. It is interesting to consider the way in which dance, alongside other disciplines and contexts, could inspire an alternative or more expansive history of dramaturgy and dramaturgical practice other than a traditional, if still viable, trajectory from Aristotle via Lessing through to Brecht.[137]

Thus, the novelty of dramaturgical work in the development of dance performance, and the absence of analytical tools or theoretical frameworks dictating how such work should be applied in the creative process, facilitated the emergence of a space for experimentation on the different ways in which movement, meaning, text, language, and the ongoing discourses can be incorporated in dramaturgical work. However, if we follow this line of argumentation, it is important to consider the alternative analytical tools needed to further develop this dramaturgical practice. As Gilpin aptly suggests in one of the earliest texts on the dramaturgy of movement-based performances

> Contemporary movement performance … offers previously unrecognized possibilities in its distinct manner of formally, conceptually, psychically, and physically manifesting the interdisciplinary. Its constant attention to other disciplines and other forms of expression make movement performance an inherently multidisciplinary genre. It is a large and necessary task for the dramaturg of this genre to expose and explore how this multidisciplinary quality functions at the

[136] Lepecki, "Errancy as Work," 58-9.
[137] Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," 196.

> compositional level in the creation of these productions as a well as in the development of new discourses through which to interpret them. [138]

It would not be feasible to address all the aspects of multidisciplinarity that Gilpin suggests here.[139] However, as pointed out in the previous chapter, it seems that the role of movement plays an important role in a conceptual and practical aspects of reformulating the modes of creative thinking taking place in this new type of performance-making. Thus, the knowledge acquired over the years in the field of dance and dance dramaturgy in relation to movement could help develop these broader discourses on contemporary dramaturgy even further.

Articulating dance dramaturgy

However, how has this new dramaturgical practice been discussed so far in the context of dance dramaturgy? Bojana Bauer argues that "since the establishment of dramaturg as both a practice and a profession of contemporary European dance in the mid-1990s, one of the most common ways to describe what dramaturgy does is that it bridges theory and practice."[140] In the previous chapter, I addressed issues closely connected to the figure of the dramaturg and the associations made in relation to that theory-practice binary about dramaturgy more broadly. Now, I will elaborate further into this and connect it to the practice of dance dramaturgy in light of the historical analysis provided in this chapter's previous section.

This conceptualization of dance dramaturgy as a bridge between theory and practice is not without its complications. Despite dance's historical journey and theatre's critical outlook on

---

[138] Heidi Gilpin, "Shaping Critical Spaces: Issues in the Dramaturgy of Movement Performance", in *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book*, eds. Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu (Orlando: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997), 87.

[139] It is also important to point out that there are different approaches to how the terms interdisciplinarity, multudisiplinarity, and as an extension trans-disciplinarity can understood in the context of performance studies. Further analysis on that exceeds the scope of this research.

[140] Bauer, "Propensity," 31.

traditional modes of creating performances, the term dramaturgy has its own specific history, which is closely connected to more theatre-based traditions and are related to a certain way in which language, theory, and intellectual work are employed in the created process.[141] Thus, once the terms dance and dramaturgy were coupled, certain associations with the term entered the newly formed discourses on the place of dance dramaturgy in the creative process.

For example, in her chapter "Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance" Bauer argues that

> the terms as reflection, criticality, discourse text, and theory represent some of the notions that were welcomed with enthusiasm in the dance field of the 1990's. Simultaneously, however, the introduction of dramaturgy into dance practices gave rise to fears regarding power relations between practice (doing dancing, choreographing) and theory (thinking and reflecting critically, analytically, etc.) …. The profile of the dramaturg as someone with a background in the humanities, in theatre or performance studies, or in established aesthetic disciplines such as literature or 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.[142]

Thus, it seems that some of the concerns and skepticism that surround the practice stem from a conflation of what dance dramaturgy is expected to do and how it has been conceptualized in relation to the original conception of dramaturgy in theatre.[143] This conflation can be identified,

---

[141] Profeta in the first chapter of her book *Dramaturgy in Motion* provides a very interesting analysis of the term dramaturgy its historical associations with theatre and how it has later on been transposed into dance dramaturgy.

[142] Bauer, "Propensity," 32-3.

[143] This can be seen more clearly in Profeta's analysis of the term dramaturgy. "'Dramaturgy' is often found in phrases like 'King Lear's dramaturgy' or 'Shakespeare's dramaturgy'. In this usage it indicates the proprietary structure of a single play or a body of work. We might intuit that it points to the skeleton of the work—my preferred metaphor since it refers to a structure that is both weight-bearing and enabling of motion and articulation. The skeleton remains after allegedly less essential components are removed, and yet is still particular

at least partially, through certain linguistic associations that relate to the use of text and language in the creative process. In turn, these associations can be connected to the theory part of the binary and how this can be subsequently transposed into movement, which can be closely connected to its practice counterpart.

In the previous chapter, I have indicated that some dramaturgs are becoming more vocal regarding the problematics inherited from the conceptualization of dance dramaturgy through the theory-practice binary. I will now expand further on the problematics that these dramaturgs have identified. I take a closer look at how some aspects these problematics become manifested through the creative process by focusing on the tensions that emerge between the use of language, text, and movement. Then, I expand on how they are related to the conceptualization and articulation of dramaturgical practices. Finally, I identify some ways in which certain dramaturgs are hinting towards a renewed way of looking at (dance) dramaturgy.

Below, I provide three apt examples, where (dance) dramaturgs become quite explicit about how the theory-practice binary and the linguistic associations connected to the practice of dramaturgy permeate the creative process and its implications for the broader discourses on dramaturgical practice. For example, Profeta argues

> I can easily conjure the stereotype of the text-bound dramaturg, in snapshot glimpses: the dramaturg with her head in a book, planning to move between theory and practice just as soon as she finishes reading up on her theory. The dramaturg lugging books

---

to the organism it held up, not so generalized as to claim universality. Dramaturgy includes but then extends beyond the text as structure: 'Shakespeare's dramaturgy' is a skeleton found on both page and stage, concerning both how the play was written and how it was meant to be performed. The dual usage acknowledges that the structure of the text is going to imply and inform the structure of the event. Webster's current definition for 'dramaturgy' 'the art or technique of dramatic composition and theatrical representation'— accordingly acknowledges both page (dramatic composition) and stage (theatrical representation)", in Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 3.

> and printouts into the rehearsal room to sit in an imposing pile, so that others may read too (though they may be perfectly happy to outsource that task).[144]

Similarly, Cvejic, in her article "The Ignorant Dramaturg" is trying to counteract the misconception that

> The dance-dramaturg has the linguistic skills that place her on the reflective pole of the tedious mind-body split. This assumption entails a binary division of labour by faculties: choreographers are mute doers, and dramaturgs bodiless thinkers and writers.[145]

Finally, Bleeker identifies some of the misconceptions that have entered the discourses on dramaturgy, both within theatre and dance practices in relation to the split between theory and practice.

> Ironically, this historical moment in which intellectual practice got incorporated into the theatre itself contributed to the opposition of the artistic and the intellectual that still can be seen at work ' today in certain critical appraisals of dramaturgy and dramaturgs in which dramaturgy is associated with intellectualism imposed on theatre or dance.[146]

Thus, some incompatibilities appear regarding the specificities of dance practice and the way theory and texts can be applied in the dramaturgical practices of dance. In order to tap more into how dance dramaturgy can be understood and written about differently, I start my analysis based on Behrndt's proposition, who argues that the changes in the field of dance, and its renewed relationship to discourse and discursive practices, "might prompt to a re-evaluation of the

[144] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 24-5.
[145] Cvejic, "Ignorant Dramaturg," 41.
[146] Bleeker, "Dramaturgy as a Mode of Looking," 164.

association of dramaturgy with text (or textuality)."[147] Behrndt bases her proposition on accounts from prominent choreographers, dance scholars, and dance dramaturgs who suggest that the introduction of critical discourses and the appearance of dance dramaturgy in choreographic processes facilitated the conception of the body and of choreographic practices as critical texts.[148] However, once again, articulation issues come to mind when trying to capture the enveloping choreographic processes and how they place bodies in motion. How is the relationship between text language, choreographic thought in motion, and physical movement manifested through dance dramaturgical practices?

Methodological interlude: A note about text and language in the creative process

Text and language can generate all kinds of associations when employed without a certain context in mind. Even within a rehearsal studio text(s) and language can be employed through various forms and contribute in different ways in the creative process. Text and words, for instance, can be used as source material for inspiration, or they can be composed to serve as material that will be used in the performance. It can take the form of notes taken by the collaborators, which can then be shared or employed for individual use and still be directly or indirectly part of the creative process. Language, in the broader sense of the word can have equally various applications. It can be a mode of communication amongst different collaborators to negotiate, explicate, and elaborate on what is taking place during the rehearsal. Languae functions as the means to communicate the involvement of each person's involvement in the creative process and the involvement of the team as a whole. Moreover, just like text and words, it can also be used as a source material for inspiration and be incorporated in the performance. This is not an exhaustive list of possible uses. This elaboration demonstrates how certain words

[147] Behrndt, "Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking," 189.
[148] Behrndt, 189.

can have multiple meanings and applications within the creative process. By using text and language as elements within dramaturgical thinking, it becomes possible to expand upon some of the underlying assumptions related to certain modes of knowledge production that these concepts facilitate, as they appear in several accounts from dance dramaturgs, and explore further how they are related to movement.

More specifically, in this section, I focus on the role of text and language in the creative process as acts of articulating and codifying meaning in relation to movement, focusing on its ability to resist the fixation of meaning through linguistic means. Suppose text and language are perceived and employed in the creative process as concretizing, fixating, or imposing certain meaning. In that case, it seems that the creative potential of movement becomes limited and impoverished, which can be related to some of the fears expressed by choreographers and dancers of language "closing things too soon."[149] On the other hand, if language is *mobilized* for its potential in the way that it addresses the multiplicity and complexity of thinking processes and the wide range of associations that are taking place during the creative process, then the creative potential of movement becomes enriched, and the acts of articulation through linguistic means complements the physical aspects of the practice. Thus, by moving beyond the theory-practice binary, which the text/language and movement are also tightly connected to, I argue that by focusing on the tensions lying in-between these two modes of meaning-making rather than in their opposition, it might be possible to identify a mode of articulation that precisely addresses and explores the interplay within the two.

[149] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 5.

(Dance) dramaturgy, text, language, and movement: Reflecting on “how” movement can be manifested in the creative process

Katherine Profeta

In the second chapter of her book *Dramaturgy in Motion*, Profeta addresses two modalities with which dance dramaturgy engages, namely text/language and movement. The selection of these modalities does not mean that they are the only ones employed, nor necessarily the most dominant ones in the creative process. Profeta shifts our attention between these two modalities to demonstrate how their dynamic relationship shapes dramaturgical thinking in movement-based performances. By doing so, she opens up a space for reflection that moves in two different directions. The first one activates the historical underpinnings of the dramaturg's role and her relation to text and language within the creative process. More specifically, she is pointing out associations that are being made with regards to the dance dramaturg’s affiliation with language and how she is “supposed to” or “expected to” employ it in her involvement within the creative process. This can be connected to the logocentric origins of the dramaturg's role and its affiliation with text and language, as explained in the previous chapter. The second one highlights how the relationship between language (as a text and word) and movement cab be explored within the creative process and how dramaturgical thinking might address this dynamic. This exploration is representative of concerns that other dance dramaturgs have addressed with regards to the connection between language and the presumed role of dramaturg in the creative process.

More specifically, certain associations with theory and language with respect to dramaturgical practices can incite anxiety amongst the different collaborators. Certain medial specificities of text and language might hinder the creative and generative potential of

movement. This has been phrased most aptly by Bauer, who suggests that "one fear that choreographers and dancers have of dramaturgical work is that it can close things too soon by naming them."[150] It is important to clarify that it is not suggested that this 'fear' is necessarily present in every instance in which dramaturgical work is employed within the creative process. However, this observation is indicative of the various associations that could be made between the different collaborators within the creative process. It highlights some of the complexities involved in the creative process in the way text and movement interact. It provides insights into how these complexities are manifested in dramaturgical work and, in turn, shape dramaturgical thinking. Profeta seems to identify two different ways in which language can be employed in the creative process. On the one hand, she agrees that "naming can still be a horribly blunt instrument"; but, on the other hand, "when activated by metaphor, dialogue and the play of language, words gain nuance."[151]

The importance of language as a means of communication and mode of meaning-making in the creative process is not something new, and it does not constitute a special case in movement-based performances when compared to the creation of other performances that are less focused on movement. However, what Profeta points out is the special attention that dance dramaturgs need to pay to the different associations made with respect to how language is employed within the creative process, and especially in their relation to movement. In dance dramaturgy, the dynamics between language and movements and the way that they are fostering the creative process are enhanced. The dance dramaturg needs to be very attentive of their

[150] Bojana Bauer, "Enfolding of the Aesthetic Experience: Dramaturgical Practice in Contemporary Dance" (proceedings, Society of Dance Historians and Scholars, 34th Annual Conference, Dance Dramaturgy: Catalyst, Perspective & Memory, York and Toronto, USA and Canada, June 2011): 13, quoted in Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 25.

[151] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 27.

position towards their colleagues and towards the way that she employs language. They need to be aware of the different ways in which language is incorporated in the creative process and how it is used, not only by them but also by their collaborators. This heightened awareness can be traced back, on the one hand, to the history of the role and its association with text and structures, but, on the other hand, to certain associations that might be ascribed to the power of language, for example, how the act of articulation can inhibit the generative powers of movement and its creative potential. As she argues, the dance dramaturg

> is already aware of the potential suspicions around her words- the fear that they might prematurely fix the questions being researched or reduce the useful indeterminacy of movement. But she may be equally aware that counter to that reductive power of naming also runs the transformative power of naming. She may wish to harness that power. Naming can transform especially if what is named is until then invisible – an unnoticed assumption, an unexamined pattern.[152]

Profeta provides a more detailed account of the various ways in which language can be employed as part of the creative process. It can simply be used as means of communication amongst the group. When referring to the movement of bodies, it can be used indexically by pointing out certain anatomical features of the body to clarify which body parts are asked to be moved. Language can also be used figuratively to create "new webs of connection and new potential meanings,"[153] invoke new dynamics in movement inspired by the imagery presented and its kinesthetic qualities.[154] Lastly, she discusses briefly the idea of "languaging." Languaging is a term that she has traced back to the New York dance world of the late 1990s and early 2000s, and she uses it in her collaboration with choreographer Ralph Lemon. Although she

[152] Profeta, 26.

[153] Profeta, 26.

[154] Profeta used the example of a *snake curling up and down your spine* as a way of conjuring a particular quality of movement (emphasis in original), in Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion*, 26

expresses her hesitation over this neologism, she recognizes the value of its connotations. The change from a noun to a verb suggests that, in that instance, language functions as a tool for describing an embodied experience, as an ongoing process rather than presenting the result of that process and thereby fixating that process.[155] Moreover, it suggests a hierarchical shift between language and movement when employed in the context of the creative process, meaning that movement or an embodied experience precedes the action of articulation, "for first there is something to be language, to which the languaging process is applied." [156] She elaborates on the dynamics that they generate, and the importance of focusing on generative and open-ended processes: "…words and movement may jostle alongside each other to create the larger range of meaning of 'what's going on', to expand or contract experience and understanding."[157]

Maaike Bleeker

In her article "Thinking No-One's Thought," Maaike Bleeker provides a similar argument on the potential of language and movement to create new spaces for exploration within the creative process.[158] Additionally, she introduces some new ideas in the equation that relate more broadly to the way the creative process of (dance) performances can be conceptualized. More specifically, the generative potential of language is identified as a creative tool. Language here is understood not as a mode that fixes, but as a playful intellectual engagement with words meanings and movement. Language is conceived as one of the possible mediums through which dramaturgical thinking can take place.[159] In her analysis, Bleeker is using Wittgenstein's idea of language games in order to expand on the mode of experiencing and engaging with a

[155] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 26.
[156] Profeta, 26.
[157] Profeta, 26.
[158] Bleeker provides a more expanded analysis on *Artefact* in her book *Visuality in the Theatre: The Locus of Looking.*
[159] Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought," 70.

performance using William Forsythe's performance *Artifact* (1984) as her theoretical object. For this research's scope, I wish to redirect the attention to the way language is approached in dramaturgical practice through her analysis, how it shapes dramaturgical thinking, and how it proposes an alternative mode of thinking when compared to the creative and thinking potential of movement. More specifically, Bleeker argues that

> [j]ust like language games open up intellectual spaces that emerge from our engagement with language, so too dance invite us to enter spaces that appear for us as experience only through our engagement with what is being presented. How these spaces show up will depend on our ability to engage anticipate and understand.[160]

The parallel that she creates between language and movement is important from two different points of view. Those points of view also demonstrate the complementary nature of the two modalities. The first one exemplifies the similarities between the creative potential between language and movement, while the second one the way in which they differ. On the one hand, our engagement with language and movement constructs our experiences and the meaning they generate. They are not pre-fixed or predetermined, but every iteration opens up new spaces for exploration. On the other hand, the physical manifestation of movement introduces a new mode of experience and spaces that are not confined in a solely conceptual realm, or to a type of thinking that strictly aligns with the medium specificities of language. The experience becomes embodied. Moreover, she introduces a new element that shifts our attention from what is generated to who is perceiving what is generated and how they engage with that. Instead of generating a gap between the two, this shift invites us to consider how language and movement

[160] Bleeker, 78-9.

can work productively together, exactly because of their points of convergence and divergence.[161]

Through this analysis, an alternative understanding of dramaturgical practice emerges that moves beyond the theory-practice binary. Bleeker shifts our attention towards a dramaturgical practice that focuses more on the importance of awareness rather than the application of theoretical tools – although it should be emphasized that she does not suggest that theory or theoretical tools are not useful or informative in this mode of working.[162] This awareness is directed towards the "the emerging potential of that which is being created" and "[i]t involves an understanding of the directions in which the creation could potentially proceed."[163] Moreover, this mode of awareness shifts ones attention towards the "implications and complications of the material being created."[164] This kind of awareness requires a specific mode of working and of conceptualizing the creative process. In her own words,

> [t]his requires a mode of thinking which does not stand outside the material, attempting to bend it towards preexisting ideas, but rather which emerges through it and through an interaction with its possibilities. It requires entering the logic of what emerges and moving along with it. [165]

[161] Here Bleeker is using the framework of language games in order to expand on the mode of experiencing and engaging with a performance using a specific performance as a theoretical object. Nevertheless I would like to redirect the attention to the way language is employed and the way in which it can be instructive for a better understanding of the way that language is approached in dramaturgical practice and how it is shaping dramaturgical thinking but also who it implies a kind of thinking that is mediated by movement, or maybe filtered through movement or also to reverse the order of my predicates how movement becomes infiltrated in the thinking process and emerges in dramaturgical practice. The next chapter will expand on "who", the subject as an agent of dramaturgical thinking, whether this is embodied more profoundly by the dramaturg, or whether this role is distributed more obscurely amongst the collaborators.

[162] Bleeker, 68.

[163] Bleeker, 68.

[164] Bleeker, 68.

[165] Bleeker, 72.

This last sentence is important because it indicates a different mode of thinking that is dynamic, that is constantly in motion, but it is also meta-reflective. This kind of thinking is not trying to analyse what exists in front of you, what is being represented by the artistic objects or actions. Rather, it invites us to reflect on how thinking operates or could be structured in different ways; and, in turn, engage with the different possibilities implicated in those different ways. It requires a mode of thinking that does not fixate meaning but activates it. It sets it in motion. It acknowledges and becomes aware of the potential of that motion. At the same time, this mode of thinking is entangled with material practice. It does not exist in a separate abstract space. It is constantly co-shaped by those practices. Profeta's focus on attentiveness also comes to mind in relation to this argument. It is interesting to see a connection in how Profeta employs the notion of languaging, as it requires something else to have occurred prior to the form of the articulation thought language; an action that is co-shaping its transposition into language. It requires a mode of dramaturgical thinking in motion between different mediums and modalities that cannot be fully encompassed through the tensions between theory and practice. Thus, if we assume that the theory-practice binary, and its specific linguistic associations are no longer an apt way of describing the dramaturgical thinking implicated in dance practices (or more broadly performative practices that have a strong focus on movement on a physical and conceptual level), how can we conceptualize this mode of dramaturgical practice?

From theory-practice to potentiality and actualization

André Lepecki

André Lepecki is even more explicit in the way in which this mode of dramaturgical practice can be further theorized. This is an argument I have already foreshadowed towards the end of chapter one. Now, I will expand further on the implications of such a proposition and connect it to the

ongoing analysis of this section. In the chapter "Errancy as Work: Seven Strewn Notes for Dance Dramaturgy," Lepecki starts his argument by responding to the initial proposition on the mode of dramaturgical practice posed in the *International Seminar on New Dramaturgies*, in 2009, organized by CENDEAC AND Centro Párraga.[166] The proposition was: "[w]e can understand dramaturgical practice as an exercise of interrogation and composition that has traditionally mediated the difficult relationship between writing and physical action."[167] In this formulation, the theory-practice binary seems to underline the main presumptions of what dramaturgy is and how it is supposed to function within the creative process. Moreover, the tension between written language and movement is placed into sharper focus, without thought identifying any way beyond the difficulty that arises through the expectation of the mediating process. Lepecki acknowledges this difficulty, "the relationship between writing and physical action," and even acknowledges that this relationship becomes even more complicated for the case of dance dramaturgy.[168] However, he argues that it might be more instructive to shift our focus from the tension between writing and physical action towards the tension between "multiple non-written, diffuse, and errant processes of thought and multiple corporeal processes of actualizing these thoughts."[169]

Already in this formulation, I identify once again a parallel with Profeta's and Bleeker's accounts. There is an entanglement in relation to a mode of thinking and the way this thinking can be materialized through practice and corporeal processes and vice versa. Later in the text,

[166] This article has two written versions. I have already used some quotes from the first version in my first chapter. However, as the author also states this last version contains some substantial departures from the earlier one. Thus, although similar, I consider this version more refined and closer to the current positioning of the author with regards to his understanding and analysis of dramaturgical practices in dance.

[167] Lepecki, "Errancy as Work," 51.

[168] Lepecki, 51.

[169] Lepecki, 52.

Lepecki becomes more explicit about his understanding of dramaturgical practice through this revised focus. More specifically, he suggests that:

> dance dramaturgy operates in a field of disunity that nevertheless remains specific and demands coherence. This coherence comes from the grainy materiality of actions, thoughts, steps, gestures, objects, props, costumes, timings, and rhythms that each dancer, each object, each place exudes, invokes, and collectively assembles onto a plane of composition.[170]

Later on, he comes back to the same point by elaborating further on how he perceives this new tension that he introduced.

> To go back to my initial proposition. It is in the tension established between a quasi-nothingness predicated on a desire (let's call it authorial, for now) and a quasi-actualisation of virtuals (let's call their final effectuation the work-to-come) that dance dramaturgy operates. [171]

In light of this renewed formulation, it is also instructive to understand how he understands the notion of actualization with respect to dramaturgical practice and thinking.

> There is nothing closer to the process of actualisation than this particular mode of co-creating in a dance studio with an ensemble of heterogeneous collaborators. We start with a zone of indetermination that surrounds very concrete elements. This zone is constituted by a variety of specific and well defined nodes of problems (for instance, choreographic problems like how to dance still or how two bodies can occupy the same space); nodes of affects (for instance, affective problems like how to create a body of panic, a body of frenzy, a body of loss); or nodes of references (for instance, aesthetic ones like how the painting of Francis Bacon, or Joseph Beuys' sculpture, or certain fragments of philosophy, poetry, and daily newspapers can be activated in this particular piece). From this initial cloud made out of heterogeneous elements and their references, adequate ways for their condensation (or actualisation) need to be

[170] Lepecki, 59.
[171] Lepecki, 60.

created: physically, gesturally, corporeally, temporally, atmospherically, spatially, semantically, and so on. [172]

To connect Lepecki's point with Bleeker's argument, I identify a mode of thinking that operates relationally. A mode of thinking that does not operate with certainties or focus on fixating meaning based on a specific set of variables that constitute the working material of the creative process. Through this mode of operation, language and theory do not function in the way it has been suggested through former conceptualizations. They can, of course, inform the process but not construct it based on a set of fixed presumptions. There are always possible directions in which each performance might go. This type of dramaturgical thinking constantly examines the potential routes that all these elements might lead without focusing on an end goal. Although the elements are concrete, as Lepecki argues, this does not mean that the way they will be employed creatively is fixed. Their presence introduces sets of problems and questions that dramaturgical thinking is called to identify and engage with and consciously work towards actualizing them through different modalities. Nevertheless, this process of actualization does not mean that it can be manifested in a specific way. The way that all those elements become actualized is willed and constructed based on the ongoing conditions of the creative process. As Lepecki points out, "[t]o will the actualisation of a vagueness onto a particular plane of composition requires tuning to the diagrammatic consistency of the situation in rehearsal."[173] I identify again a connection with Bleeker's formulation, where she points our attention away from an analytical mode of working that focuses on decoding representation. She presents a mode of thinking that requires an engagement and awareness of the logic of what is being

[172] Lepecki, 60-1.
[173] Lepecki, 61.

presented to us. A mode of reasoning that constructs, as Lepecki suggests, this "diagrammatic consistency."[174]

At the same time, the situational character of this diagrammatic consistency means that each work needs to be approached in a different way dramaturgically. There can be no model of dramaturgical practice fits and be applied to different performances. Therefore, it becomes impossible and even counterproductive to develop an overarching theory that identifies and defines what dance dramaturgy is. According to Lepecki,

> [d]ance dramaturgy must always remember that each new piece demands its specific new methods and modes. Each piece demands its own specific ways of incorporation and actualisation, excorporation and virtualisation.[175]

Nevertheless, he does not allow this argument to ponder on a sphere of uncertainty and vagueness. Although he refrains from defining what dramaturgy is, he deflects the question of definition by identifying the scope of dance dramaturgy is:

> Mapping how all these elements fall into place by sometimes cohering, sometimes adhering, sometimes dispersing, and sometimes conflicting with each other, is the task of dramaturgy. [176]

Therefore, I would like to propose a conceptual shift from the theory-practice binary towards an understanding of dramaturgical practice that oscillates between the notions of potentiality and actualization. Moreover, I refrain from providing a concrete definition of this mode of dramaturgical thinking. Instead, I focus on explicating some fundamental assumptions that give rise to this mode of thinking. However, to avoid moving from one binary construction to another, I elaborate in the next chapter on the value of Châtelet's concept of virtuality and the mode of

[174] Lepecki, 61.
[175] Lepecki, 61.
[176] Lepecki, 62.

diagrammatical thinking that this concept implies. These two elements can function as a theoretical framework that clarifies how these two terms (potentiality and actualization) are employed while also encompassing a certain mode of thinking that is in line with the dynamic nature of the dramaturgical practice indicated above.

Chapter 3: Spacing the body ⇔ Embodying the space

"To learn or teach, to accord or cede mobility gradually to a body, is always to invent a new homogeneity – a potential – and to resist the expeditious processes of the 'transference of information.'" [177]

Gilles Châtelet

Virtuality's theoretical background: Aristotle, Leibniz & Descartes' metaphysics of motion

In the first chapter of his book *Figuring Space: Philosophy, Mathematics and Physics*, "Châtelet emphasizes the drama that takes place between matter and the languages that are used to describe it."[178] To develop this argument, Châtelet focuses on Aristotle's theory of metaphysics. Aristotle identifies a tension between "physical natures," which are "dedicated to mobility and final causes, but enjoy a separate existence" and "mathematical natures," which are "immobile and necessary" and "separated only by thought" since "our wit has to lend them an existence", regarding their ontological precedence. [179] In other words, Aristotle identifies a conceptual gap in the correspondence between physical and mathematical natures. We observe physical phenomena that we experience through our senses, but to describe them we use mathematical formulations which are products of our conceptual capabilities. But which of the two can provide the most logically coherent theory about the world? How can we understand the link between "reality" and theory?

[177] Châtelet, *Figuring Space*, 19.
[178] Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space*, xiii.
[179] Châtelet, *Figuring Space*, 17.

Aristotle mediates the tension by subordinating these two "natures" to his theory of metaphysics, "the first philosophy - whose objective is the theory of the immobile and real being, immutable substance."[180] A theory of abstraction-addition also complements his metaphysics. Based on his theory, it is possible to remove the qualities of matter and mobility from a being. Thus, through this process (of abstraction), a mathematical being can be created, "to which a geometer's wit will lend an existence."[181] Once a being has entered the abstract and systematized mathematical realm, then, according to Aristotle, it is possible to "reintegrate this being into the order of physical natures" by adding back the determinations out of which it had been deprived.[182] However, Châtelet identifies an important shortcoming in this, "[f]or to abstract is always to mutilate."[183] This process is unavoidably marked by a loss, since matter cannot be manifested in its totality without its physical presence. Moreover, "[a]bstraction pushed to its limits, presents us with a paradoxical situation: immobile substance, the object of metaphysics, would then be of the poorest content!"[184] To compensate for that loss, Châtelet proposes an alternative way of approaching abstraction in relation to motion inspired by Leibniz's contemplation on Aristotle's understanding of potential.

The first step for understanding this alternative way of approaching abstraction is to present how motion is defined in Aristotle's framework and how Châtelet employs it in his analysis.

> Motion, according to Aristotle, is the process of actualization of a form in transit towards a higher form which cannot be reduced to the simple nostalgic yearning of a form in transit towards a higher form. For to reduce motion to an act is immediately

[180] Châtelet, 17.
[181] Châtelet, 18.
[182] Châtelet, 18.
[183] Châtelet, 18.
[184] Châtelet, 18.

> to quench it: the moving has to be fulfilled in respect to power, since all motion is above all a seed of motion.[185]

In other words, there is no word or description that can fully encompass the process of being in motion since it always contains the potential of more motion; it is always in transit, and it can only be understood and elicited in relation to other elements that facilitate its manifestation. At the same time, motion is closely connected to the concept of potential. More specifically, Châtelet argues that

> [p]otential is what in motion, allows the knotting together of an 'already' and a 'not yet'; it gives some reserve to the act, it is what ensures that act does not exhaust motion and, in giving some scope to the grasping of the motion, it respects and extols the latencies coiled in the bodies. That is why perfect motion must be understood as an indefinitely suspended actualization, dissipating no power and requiring no displacement.[186]

Even more importantly, "potential … is exactly what evades the clutches of an abstraction that seized mobility from or granted mobility to beings."[187] Thus, it could be argued that potential lends to motion its dynamic quality, its ability to be in a constant state of change depending on the affordances present in each body. Motion and potential are entangled. Motion can never become actualized if *conceived* separately from its potential. It is interesting to point out that Châtelet also conceives potential as a "particular patience attached to each moving body,"[188] which seems to reinforce an understanding of potential as strictly tied with the unique elements and qualities that lend bodies the ability to move in certain ways and at the same time not in other ways. In that regard, potential could be understood as both enabling and limiting depending on the affordances of the environment in which a body is in motion at any given time. Finally,

[185] Châtelet, 19.
[186] Châtelet, 19.
[187] Châtelet, 19.
[188] Châtelet, 19.

the presence of potential in motion is what makes Aristotle's theory of addition-abstraction unattainable since it becomes impossible to create an equivalence between physical and mathematical beings once their physical qualities that provide them with mobility have been removed or added.

Nevertheless, as Châtelet argues, Aristotle's understanding of motion and potential make possible another theory of abstraction, "another manner of cutting by thought."[189] This line of thinking was picked up by Leibniz, who tried to provide a different way of understanding how these abstracted mathematical beings that remain unchanged, are connected to physical beings, which are always in a potential state of being in motion. Leibniz (and Châtelet) found in the concept of virtuality "the means of combining act and power." [190] The concept of virtuality assumes "mode of elasticity" to bodies and brings together the actual with the potential.[191] Virtuality reconceptualizes how mobility is attributed to matter and then transposed into its diagrammatic representation. Motion and potential are irreducibly linked.

This point can be understood better when taking into consideration Leibniz's criticism of Cartesian kinematics. "To Descartes, who claims to grasp the physical-being-in-the-world under the determinations of length, breadth and depth only, Leibniz responds that the bare size does not exist alone and that 'the point weights nothing.'"[192] More specifically, Leibniz questions the metaphysical implications of Descartes's diagrammatic representation of motion because it strips away the potentiality of matter by subjugating and abstracting it into geometry. The main point

[189] Châtelet, 20.
[190] Châtelet, 20.
[191] Châtelet, 20.
[192] Châtelet, 20.

of Leibniz's critique was the Cartesian account of the body or corporeal substance.[193] More specifically, "[a]ccording to Descartes, the essence of body is extension; that is, a corporeal substance is simply a geometric object made concrete, an object that has size and shape and is in motion."[194] Leibniz is identifying a problem in the implications of attributing extension to corporeal substances. On the one hand, this suggests that matter is infinitely divisible, which then deprives it of the ability to exist on an ontological level. On the other hand, if matter is only an extension, then the source of its activity, its ability to be in motion, cannot be fully explained and understood on a fundamental level.[195] As Freitas and Sinclair suggest, "[f]or Leibniz, motion is constitutive of bodies, and point of view and perspective, rather than extension, are definitive of substance."[196] In other words, motion is not a quality that can be retrospectively added to bodies to describe how they move. It is part of what constitutes bodies as such. Their ability to be in motion is coupled with their status as corporeal substances. What allows us to describe and understand their qualities of motion is the specific point of view that we occupy as observers rather than posing on motion specific characteristics and values that correspond to some external qualities of bodies, such as length, breadth, and depth.

Thus, to attribute elasticity to mass, and therefore to matter and corporeal substance more broadly through a theory of virtuality, means to "assert its irreducible difference from geometric size."[197] Matter cannot be reduced to its geometrical dimensions. There is another element that gives rise to the motion of matter. For Leibniz, "it is elasticity that gives spring

[193] Brandon C. Look, "Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Spring 2020 Edition), Overview of Leibniz's Philosophy, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/leibniz/.

[194] Look, "Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz," Overview of Leibniz's Philosophy.

[195] Look, Overview of Leibniz's Philosophy.

[196] de Freitas and Sinclair, "Diagram, Gesture, Agency," 140.

[197] Châtelet, *Figuring Space*, 22.

to mass (which for Descartes was a simple factor of inertia)."[198] When represented diagrammatically, the mathematical objects should always maintain a mode of elasticity that encompasses the potentiality of matter. Thus, the concept of virtuality creates an alternative metaphysical space that allows the potential of motion of bodies to be incorporated in the ontological status of matter and consequently in its diagrammatic representation.[199]

Virtuality and diagrammatic writing

"the diagram's mode of existence is such that its genesis is comprised in its being."[200]
Gilles Châtelet

In the preface of Châtelet's book, Kenneth Knoespel brings into sharper focus the practice of diagrammatic writing in relation to virtuality. He argues that "Châtelet not only poses questions about figures and writing technologies and how we think through space with them through them and in them, but offers strategies for assuring that subsequent discussion does not become isolated in one discipline."[201] Diagrammatic writing for Châtelet is not just a technique or a tool for representing motion. His analysis reconstructs the history of mathematical thinking by stressing the importance of the act of diagrammatic writing as a way of "activating intuition, invention and discovery in mathematics."[202] He aims to reinstate the importance of diagrams and the use of mathematical theorems, which have been guiding the history of mathematics. Within diagrammatic writing lies a mode of knowledge that is enclosed in the act of writing diagrams; it is part of the gestures that generate them.

---

[198] Châtelet, 20.

[199] Howard Robinson, "Substance," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University, Spring 2020 Edition), Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/substance/; There is still an ongoing philosophical debate about the ontological status of substances, the points expressed here align with Leibniz's work.

[200] Châtelet, 10.

[201] Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space*, ix.

[202] Knoespel, x.

> Châtelet argues that our investigation of mathematics must include our manual technologies for representing space – marking, drawing, sketching, scribbling. For Châtelet our own interaction with the figures that we draw constitutes a place of invention and discovery that cannot be explained away by theorems that appear to lock-down a particular mathematical procedure.[203]

Part of this aspect of invention and discovery is based on his understanding that diagrams, exactly because they are dependent on the gestures that design them, have also been conditioning our spatial interactions. However, it is also because the act of drawing needs to be repeated that diagrammatic writing has the potential to pose questions about that conditioning and, as Châtelet argues, to "reactivate problems." [204] From an etymological perspective, Knoespel argues that the word diagram, originating from the Greek "διάγραμμα," "embodies a practice of figuring and defiguring …. From a phenomenological vantage point, the Greek meaning of diagram indicates that any figure that is drawn is accompanied by an expectancy to be redrawn."[205] Ultimately, Châtelet is interested in exploring how modes of writing and manual technologies are developed not only to assist in remembering but also in thinking.[206]

Thus, by reinstating the value of virtuality in the practice of diagrammatic writing, Châtelet also reinstates a mode of thinking in the field of mathematics that focuses not only on the generated abstracted knowledge, but also on the actions producing this knowledge. Moreover, he emphasizes the potentiality embedded in motion, and he develops a metaphysical framework incorporating that potentiality in the analytic tools and the thinking modes employed to describe and theorize motion.

[203] Knoespel, xi.
[204] Knoespel, xi.
[205] Knoespel, xvi.
[206] Knoespel, xiii.

Virtuality and diagrammatic writing "in context": de Freitas & Sinclair

So far, I elaborated on the foundational arguments on which Châtelet's practice of diagrammatic writing is based. But how can we see the value of his work beyond the realm of metaphysics? How can we see its application in a more contemporary framework? More importantly, what is the explicit relevance of this work for (dance) dramaturgy? To address these questions, I briefly turn to the work of Elizabeth de Freitas and Natalie Sinclair, and their article "Diagram, Gesture, Agency: Theorizing Embodiment in the Mathematics Classroom." [207]

De Freitas and Sinclair use Châtelet's work as a theoretical framework that can explore the ways mathematical agency and knowledge are constituted through the relationship between gesture and diagram within an educational context.[208] Although the framing and direction of their analysis ultimately lie beyond the scope of this research, it is useful to expand on some aspects of their analysis and their observations to get a better understanding of the value of virtuality as a way of exploring ways of understanding and articulating this mode thinking.

One of the most critical aspects of their analysis is the fact that they situate it within a broader contemporary field of studies that addresses issues of embodiment and how they can be constitutive of an alternative mode of knowledge production and agency that operates beyond the confines of purely linguistic and intellectual processes of signification. More specifically, they connect their analysis with Brian Rotman and Deleuze and Guattari's work, among others, and focus on a renewed understanding of the connections between the linguistic/conceptual and the physical/embodied modes of knowledge production. Through this renewed understanding, the body becomes part of a complex network of material and immaterial interactions and produces a mode of agency that resides in the relationships that emerge within that network. Within this

[207] de Freitas and Sinclair, "Diagram, Gesture, Agency," 134.
[208] de Freitas and Sinclair, 134.

framework, the writing of diagrams becomes inseparable from the gestures that produce them. The diagrams become manifestations of the thinking processes of the embodied subjects or agents that draw them.[209] According to de Freitas and Sinclair,

> [d]iagrams are more than depictions or pictures or metaphors, more than representations of existing knowledge; they are kinematic capturing devices, mechanisms for direct sampling that cut up space and allude to new dimensions and new structures. By adding a dotted line to a paper, a new dimension can be brought into being; an arrow might forge out new temporal relationships between objects. These excavations enable the virtual and the actual to become coupled anew. [210]

In other words, diagrams are not just tools that codify knowledge; they also (re-)activate it. They mobilize thinking processes by inviting new potential connections to form between objects and subjects. The act of drawing diagrams invokes a rethinking of the way connections have been established. This action has the ability to expose previously undiscovered possibilities of the affordances of objects or elements at play by tapping into their potentiality and consequently reconfiguring how the qualities of these objects can be actualized and manifested materially.

> Châtelet is asking that we imagine the inventive gesture as an action that literary breaks down previously taken-for-granted determinations of what is sensible or intelligible, and actually carves up space in new, unscripted ways. Like the gesture, the diagram is a kind of potential and never entirely actualized standing somehow on the outside of signification.[211]

What is interesting in this approach is a reconceptualization of the analytical tools that are used to propagate knowledge, but also a shift in the scope and ultimate purpose of such tools. The drawing of diagrams, according to Châtelet, does not sediment the process of signification; the product of the discovery is never identical with the diagram itself. The diagram operates as a thought vehicle that encompasses all the potential configurations of the object or phenomenon/a

[209] de Freitas and Sinclair, 136.
[210] de Freitas and Sinclair, 138.
[211] de Freitas and Sinclair, 138.

under investigation. Consequently, it is through our engagement with the act of drawing them that we, as investigators/observers/researchers, might be able to expose at least some aspects of their *potentiality*, their potential configurations, and the way they can be manifested and actualized in relation to other objects and phenomena. In de Freitas and Sinclair's words,

> The potential plays a central role in this new approach to gesture and diagram, since it marks that which is latent or ready in a body. In the case of the diagram, the potential *is* the virtual motion or mobility that is presupposed in an apparently static figure – and that was central to its creation in the first place. In other words, the virtuality or potentiality of a diagram consists of all the gestures and future alterations that are in some fashion 'contained' in it (emphasis in original). [212]

Thus, coming back to Châtelet's starting point on how the physical and the conceptual can be related through the process of abstraction,

> [t]he virtual insensible matter becomes intelligible, not by a reductionist abstraction or a 'subtraction of determinations' (Aristotle's approach to abstraction), but by the capacity to awaken the virtual or potential multiplicities that are implicit in any surface. [213]

Ultimately, together with this reconceptualization of the use of diagrams, virtuality provides a renewed mode of thinking *through* diagrams and an alternative approach to the processes that generate knowledge. A way of thinking that acknowledges the transience of actions and their power of catalyzing thinking processes that assist in unfolding underlying processes and phenomena and creating new configurations, new ways in which these processes can become objects of knowledge. This way of thinking assists in reimaging new structures that are already contained in the objects or phenomena of the investigation but are hidden because they have been approached from a specific perspective.

[212] de Freitas and Sinclair, 139.
[213] de Freitas and Sinclair, 141.

Mathematical and dramaturgical entanglements

Ultimately, I identify a parallel between Châtelet's attempt to bridge the mathematical and the material and the dramaturg's attempt to bridge the conceptual processes with the decisions and actions taking place during the creative process. Arguably, there is a level of abstraction taking place in the process of articulating and writing about what is happening in the creative process, such as the different thoughts, actions and moves that are taking place. How can we talk about them without mutilating the power of the action? Thinking dramaturgically would require a process of abstraction, but not in the sense of *sedimenting* meaning into concrete units of thought through language, theories, and tools that can then be applied indistinguishably to seemingly similar situations. It requires a mode of articulating the thinking and creative processes that are taking place in a way that encompasses their dynamic and mobilizing qualities.

Châtelet argues that diagrams, understood specifically through the concept of virtuality, are gestures inhabiting problems that can and should be reanimated. Similarly, dramaturgical thinking is trying to continuously pose questions that catalyze processes of exploration. It invites a mode of thinking in motion that tries to comprehend the implications of actions taking place during the creative process, without necessarily trying to concretize them. Knoespel's comment is once again indicative of Châtelet's understanding of the connection between the mathematical and the physical, between the abstract and the material: "[b]y acknowledging that it is never possible to fully merge the mathematical with the physical, it becomes important to create a common space where the two can interact."[214] Thus, in a parallel manner, by accepting this inevitable chasm between experiencing, observing, and understanding movement in a creative context and the process of articulating that experience, we might be able to provide an analysis

[214] Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space*, ix.

of the thought processes of making performances more concisely. What becomes more instructive than an attempt to create a one-to-one correspondence between the observation of action and the mobilization of thought processes is acknowledging the potential where the two modalities interact.

Furthermore, just like the act of naming in language, diagrams represent an articulation of a certain thought process. Châtelet aptly highlights that depending on the metaphysical implications behind their formulation, and consequently on how they are deployed, different diagrams articulate different approaches to motion and the phenomena they are referring to. His concept of virtuality and the practice of diagrammatic writing provide the metaphysical foundations for a mode of articulating thought that encompasses the dynamic qualities of matter and the potentiality of motion. In the same way, by approaching language not as a process of fixing meaning but as a way of mobilising meaning, the potential of dramaturgical thinking and the processes of writing about it can be understood in catalyzing manner.

At the end of chapter two, I proposed a conceptual shift from the theory-practice binary, as an analytical tool for articulating the processes implicated in dramaturgical practice towards the pair of potentiality and actualization. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that this new pair should not be understood as another binary opposition. They should be understood as specific modes of operations, and relations between the different elements that become part of the creative process. However, for this pair to be understood accurately, it is essential to distinguish a specific mode of thinking that facilitates their constructive use. In my analysis, I already indicated a shift in the way thinking processes operate within the dramaturgical practice. Bleeker has explicitly addressed the value of working towards a concept of a concept that can encompass this renewed mode of dramaturgical work. She has

identified a type of thinking that moves beyond the decoding of representational methods and techniques of a work. Instead Bleeker focuses on the importance of becoming aware of the logic that structures what is being presented by the work and its implications. By granting as a fundamental assumption behind this mode of thinking the concept of virtuality (as a concept of a concept), the notions of potentiality and actualization are not just labeling or categorizing a type of practice. At their core lies the acknowledgement that meaning never stays still; it never gets fixated. Under this premise, the thinking processes that give rise to a work operate on a highly relational plane and are constantly in motion. Consequently, this indicates a new mode of framing dramaturgical thinking, which operates on the intersection between the physical and the conceptual aspects of the creative process.

By accepting the concept of virtuality as the backbone of dramaturgical thinking, we not only incorporate in our articulation its dynamic character, but we also shift our attention from trying to define further what *it is* towards what it does (or can do), how it has been (or can be) manifested. This can be directly connected to my framing of dramaturgical practice as introduced in the first chapter by using the work of Georgelou, Protopappa, and Theodoridou. Virtuality can provide a constructive theoretical framework that highlights the value of actions within the dramaturgical practice and the envelopment and awareness of the thinking processes that emerge during the creative process. More specifically, it provides the conceptual framework to explore and become aware of how objects, elements, phenomena have been imagined and how they can be re-imagined, how they can be staged, and how their staging produces, as Bleeker says, a "multidimensional network of synchronic and diachronic relationships against which these elements of the performance may appear to an audience."[215]

[215] Maaike Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought," 69.

Furthermore, by using virtuality as the main assumption behind this dramaturgical mode of working, we acknowledge the importance of corporeal, embodied processes, which Bauer has aptly identified. Language and its use in the creative process are liberated from its concretiszing tendencies, as discussed through Bleeker and Profeta in chapter two. Moreover, since virtuality is entangled with actions and gestures, it becomes unproductive to identify an additional set of rules that can be identically applied on different occasions. This also reverberates with earlier suggestions by (dance) dramaturgs that there are no specific methods or tools that can fit all performances. As Bauer suggests: "[t]hrough implementation and exploration in practice, dramaturgy transformed the very limiting dichotomy [the theory-practice binary] that it seemed to recall into multiple potential methods of solving problems specific to each project, its conditions, and its context."[216] Thus, each creative process has its own specificities, its own modes of operation, and collaboration, its own material (may that be material or immaterial) that are combined uniquely, illuminating different paths between the potentiality of that material and the way they can be actualized in different instances.

It is important to clarify that I do not suggest that through this process, no concrete results will appear, nor that it is impossible to make decisions and even set additional rules or methods that can guide a specific process. What I emphasize is that by focusing on the tension that arises between the potentiality of creative material and the processes of actualizing that potential, it becomes possible to get a better understanding of the complexity of dramaturgical practices, the multiple layers of signification in which they operate, the type of knowledge they engage with, and how this eventually leads towards a process of making decisions and gradually giving shape to the "final" work. In a manner that is in line with the proposition by

[216] Bauer, "Propensity," 49.

Heathfield when he invokes the idea of performative writing, virtuality assists in identifying all these elements and providing a framework through which dramaturgical practices can be articulated.

The role of the dramaturg

Having established the role of virtuality in this proposal of theorizing and articulating the qualities of dramaturgical thinking, this section focuses on how the role of the dramaturg can be understood through this theoretical framework. In chapter one, I identified several misconceptions surrounding the expected role of the dramaturg and re-positioned dramaturgical practice as a democratized process, which hinders the attempts to concretize the role of the dramaturg in the creative process. These misconceptions are connected to certain assumptions relating to the first instantiations of the practice, the dramaturg's associations with the theory-practice binary, and consequently, the expectation of specific types of knowledge that he/she is supposed to possess.

Current developments in contemporary (dance) dramaturgical practices further problematize the function of the role with some dramaturgs arguing that it is more productive to start from the proposition that the (dance) dramaturg is not necessary. At the same time, there is increasing attention paid to the function of the role, and within contemporary discourses, it seems that there is undoubtedly value in their inclusion in the creative process. In chapter two, I stressed the potential of dance dramaturgy as a practice of attending and trying to articulate movement within the creative process and how it can assist in providing a better understanding of the motion-related qualities of dramaturgical thinking. Hence, how can we analyse the theoretical tensions surrounding this role in relation to the specific dynamic mode of thinking

dramaturgically that has been explored so far? I argue that Châtelet's work can provide valuable insights.

Virtuality, perspective, and the (embodied) observer

After establishing the role of virtuality in the first chapter of his book, Châtelet directs his attention to the notion of the horizon and its importance in the diagrammatic representations of motion within the discourses of mathematics and physics. He also brings into sharper focus the invention of geometric perspective and how the horizon operates in the action of drawing and thinking throught geometric perspective. For Châtelet, geometric perspective is not a mere representation of the phenomena described through it but rather a "vehicle for staging space."[217] This staging merges the virtual with the actual. It brings together the immediately perceptible, which has been subordinated by the gesture of drawing and transposed using the standard measure of length, with the potential, which lies on the line where the finite and the infinite merge, on the horizon. The horizon clarifies the observer's point of view, but it also hints at what could be out of reach from the point of observation in the act of drawing it. As de Freitas and Sinclair suggest: "In articulating a horizon, one instantly perceives its enveloping character, and must begin the work of problematizing it as stasis."[218] Through this analysis, what is of value for Châtelet, is the awareness of "an everchanging horizon" [219] because in that possibility lies the source of invention, of a process of thinking that can entertain other possibilities for staging space. As Knoespel aptly points out, "it is the gestures or diagrams that register matter which are important not because they fix an understanding but because they become a stage for an intuition

[217] Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space*, xiii- xiv.
[218] de Freitas and Sinclair, "Diagram, Gesture, Agency," 142.
[219] Knoespel, foreword to *Figuring Space*, xiii- xiv.

of how the horizon may be altered." [220] It is through this process of problematizing what is presented as stable, where the reactivation of problems takes place.

Moreover, this mode of thinking does not only bring into sharper focus what is visible. It puts under questioning the methods that make the visible intelligible. It questions what becomes articulated through the act of drawing a diagram. The horizon is what guides the mode of articulation of thought. Within the field of mathematics and physics,

> [the horizon] provokes and controls thought experiments. A thought experiment does not set out to predict a fact or to transform this or that object, but rather to stage the physicist himself grappling with his mental habits, and above all to lay bare the imagery that he uses when he claims to be merely 'commenting on' or 'verbalizing' the operative power that is supposed to be buried in the calculations.[221]

The idea of an everchanging horizon invites us to question patterns of thought that have become domesticated, clichés repeated without becoming necessarily aware that they are. The mobilization of the horizon invites one to imagine the implications of occupying different points of view. The act of repositioning and redrawing a horizon requires not only a reconfiguration of conceptual constructs but it also re-sensibilizes, at least on a speculative and imaginative levels, one's physical implication within this revised point of view that the new horizon suggests.

Châtelet provides interesting examples of how Albert Einstein engaged with the possibility of an elastic and changing horizon in his thought experiments which consequently fostered his intuition for his theory of relativity: "… Einstein decided to position himself right away at the horizon of the velocities by perching on a photon."[222] Châtelet continues by arguing that,

---

[220] Knoespel, xiii- xiv.
[221] Châtelet, *Figuring Space*, 56.
[222] Châtelet, 55.

> [w]e know that Einstein liked to imagine oneself being dragged along in a chariot at the speed of light or totally isolated on a lift: to have shown that there is no innocence of intuition is certainly one of the most decisive contributions to the community of physicists.[223]

The value of his thinking lies in the ability to challenge some of the clichés of classical mechanics, of imagining what it would mean to occupy previously unthought-of positions as an (embodied) observer, and therefore questioning what has been considered a standard or "natural" way of observing and thinking about phenomena.[224] However, how could this relate to the role of the dramaturg in the creative process? In this last section, I elaborate on how the dramaturg's role has been discussed so far in relation to the mode of dramaturgical thinking that I have delineated.

Perspective and the work of the dramaturg

In the previous chapters, I have identified several problematics and misconceptions associated with the role of the dramaturg, in dance dramaturgy and dramaturgical practices. Arguably, the most dominant ones were that of the external eye and of the mediator between theory and practice, the holder of the necessary theoretical background, the analytical and critical skills which can provide the conceptual knowledge that can guide the creative process. However, the analysis that I have provided departs greatly from such an understanding of the dramaturg's role. The dramaturg does not necessarily hold any pre-existing conceptual knowledge that can be applied. Instead, the dramaturg is an active participant who needs to be attentive to the dynamic processes that form the performance in the making. How can the role and the knowledge of the dramaturg be further unpacked?

Bleeker's article "Thinking No-One's Thought" provides once again an insightful starting point for unfolding how the role of the dramaturg can be conceptualized through this proposed

[223] Châtelet, 56.
[224] Châtelet, 56.

theoretical framework. As discussed in the previous chapter, Bleeker proposes a dramaturgical mode of looking that focuses on becoming attentive to "the emerging potential of that which is being created" and "[i]t involves an understanding of the directions in which the creation could potentially proceed."[225] Since the creative process is inevitably a collaborative one and the emerging potential that is being materialized is an amalgamation of this collective process of working, it consequently belongs to no-one individually. Therefore, she suggests that entering this state of awareness requires the practice of "thinking no-ones thought."[226] Since this mode lies at the core of her understanding of dramaturgical practice, she argues that this is the primary concern of whoever fulfils the role of the dramaturg at any given time during the creative process.

Bleeker also invokes the notion of perspective as used in painting by Hubert Damisch to elaborate on the idea of thinking no-one's thoughts. Following a similar line of thought with Châtelet, she points out that "what is presented by a perspectival painting is not a representation of space as it already exists outside the painting, but a proposition about space formulated in the medium of painting."[227] She continues by pointing out that "[t]his proposition consists of relationships between the various elements in the image, as well as between the image and the viewer. Grasping this logic of these relationships is grasping the thought about space that is represented by the painting."[228] Moreover, according to Bleeker, the experience of performances invites the audience to engage with what is presented to them in a similar manner to perspectival painting. The experience of a performance does require or operate under the process of merely decoding representations. The audience is exposed to "certain propositions comprised of

[225] Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought," 69.
[226] Bleeker, 69.
[227] Bleeker, 73.
[228] Bleeker, 73.

complex sets of relationships within the work."[229] It is invited to engage with them as they become materialized in front of them as the performance unfolds. "The dramaturgical mode of looking involves a looking for how this happens as a result of how we are invited to enact the propositions presented to us by the performance."[230] Therefore, it can be argued that dramaturgical thinking is similar to the thinking processes that guide diagrammatic writing. There is a strong focus on the importance of actions and how they function as a medium for uncovering complex networks of relationships between different elements. Meaning and knowledge do not become sedimented and fixed in representations, but they get activated and mobilized through enactment. The guiding principles behind both modes are the potentiality of matter, material processes and actions and the way they invite us to rethink how we experience them and reimagine new ways of understanding and articulating them. At the same time, the perception of space (physical or conceptual) and its representation in both modes operate on a more critical level. What I mean by the word critical is that there is a particular focus on analysing the implicit and explicit prepositions that give rise to that representation and how this contributes to the production of meaning, insight, or a specific kind of knowledge.

At this point, I would also like to bring back Lepecki's work which was discussed at the end of chapter two. It is important to point out that Lepecki's main argument is that the dance dramaturg's work is to experiment with the idea of erring. This argument is developed to counterargue several of the misconceptions, misleading expectations, and anxieties regarding the role of the dramaturg as a subject of knowledge.

> Usually, the subject who is supposed to know the work is attributed to the figure of its author/director/choreographer. But the dramaturg arrives with the symbolic aura

[229] Bleeker, 75.
[230] Bleeker, 75.

> of someone whose work is not just to be another subject who is supposed to know the production, but as a subject whose sole function is to know. His or her arrival (whether early or late) reveals a constitutive anxiety at the core of our current economy of authorship.[231]

As discussed, this renewed mode of dramaturgical work does not necessarily require knowledge in the way it has been described in the quotation but rather a sense of awareness. The tension that emerges in the practice of dance dramaturgy is not that of knowing and not knowing. It is not the tension that exists between the transposition from theory to practice. It is the tension between the potentiality of the performance and the processes of actualization as they appear in the creative process. He goes even a step further by arguing that the work itself has its own authorial desire, its own authorial force that goes hand in hand with the creative process. For Lepecki, dramaturgy is a practice of erring which gains access to that force.[232] Although I do not wish to elaborate further on dramaturgy as a process of erring and the authorial force of the work, it is useful, for the context of this research, to have a closer look again at how Lepecki describes the work of the dramaturg.

Following a similar line of thinking with Bleeker, Lepecki suggests, the dramaturg must be attentive to and aware not only of "actions constantly being produced by the ensemble but also of all those actions being produced by every single element (including impersonal ones) involved in the co-creation of the piece."[233] As introduced in chapter two, Lepecki creates a parallel between the work of the dramaturg and the act of mapping: "[t]he dramaturg is simultaneously a rehearsal's cartographer and one of its catalysts – working singularly yet

[231] Lepecki, "Errancy as Work," 57.
[232] Lepecki, 60.
[233] Lepecki, 58.

always with the group and of or the work-to-come,"[234] a formulation that bears many resemblances with the mode of dramaturgical practice that Georgelou, Protopappa, and Theodoridou draw. As Lepecki would put it, the task of mapping is, on the one hand, collaborative, but it also requires someone to hold the position that aligns with the authorial force of the work to come. This work fosters an awareness of the diagrammatic consistency of the rehearsal, an awareness of dynamics that emerge, the "mapping how all these elements fall into place by sometimes cohering, sometimes adhering, sometimes conflicting with one another."[235] Moreover, this need for mapping, I would argue, stems from this aspect of not-knowing. It demarcates an attempt to find out through erring. But what is it exactly that needs to be figured out? Based on his experience as a dance dramaturg, he argues that what needs to be figured out, what nurtured the main terror of not-knowing, is the way to "help the work avoid the cliché."[236] Inspired by Deleuze's work in *The Logic of Sensation*, he argues that clichés are inevitably embedded in any apparently empty space that serves as "support for representation," whether that is a white canvas, a stage, or even a body.[237]

> This preoccupation of representational space by clichés is particularly prevalent in dance, when not only the stage but also the dancer's body have been filled with techniques and gestures that seem to be readymade in order to serve a certain preconception of what a dance work, an art work, is, or rather, what it should properly be. This is the drama, this is the terror – not knowing how to scramble what already fills up our bodies, our perceptions, or even the piece that is yet to exist, with clichés. [238]

[234] Lepecki, 61.
[235] Lepecki, 62.
[236] Lepecki, 63.
[237] Lepecki, 63.
[238] Lepecki, 63.

Thus, his work as a dramaturg is primarily to work towards removing the clichés so that something can be developed anew. This would arguably be the main driver behind the authorial force of the work that he points out. Ultimately, this cartographic process is for Lepecki the task of dramaturgy, and "[t]he dramaturg serves this task by identifying, following, and *enabling* this multitude of forces to follow the lines they themselves draw (emphasis in original)."[239]

It is especially through this metaphor of the mapping and the enabling of the drawing of lines where Lepecki's analysis can be understood as a parallel to Châtelet's idea of diagrammatic writing in terms of the mode of thinking that such a practice requires. Although the dramaturg deals with a very different subject matter, I think they share with the physicist or the mathematician/philosopher that Châtelet sketches, the same curiosity. They share all the same desire to understand the complexity of the phenomena that emerge in their corresponding fields. The desire to move away from the clichés that dominate their field of expertise and can inhibit discovery, innovation, creativity, and learning. At the same time, they both know that their work will never be complete and that it requires patience, much experimentation, and, most of the time, uncertainty. It is the acknowledgement of this incompleteness that guides their work. The acknowledgement when navigating through elements that operate between processes of actualization and potentiality, the articulation of phenomena should not fixate their meaning, but instead follow them as they become actualized. The path of these phenomena should be sketched out but never be sedimented in their diagrammatic or linguistic representation.

The everchanging horizon and the necessity of the dramaturg

Now that I have elaborated on the dramaturg's role, there is a final point that needs to be addressed, namely the argument regarding the necessity of the dramaturg. It is interesting how

[239] Lepecki, 62.

Bleeker argues that this mode of thinking is not necessarily exclusive to dramaturgs.[240] Different collaborators can engage in this practice; however, the dramaturg's presence adds another partner in the collaborative process, another voice, another unique point of view whose primary purpose is to support the dramaturgy of the work.[241] Different collaborators depending on their role in the production, such as the choreographer, the director, the dancers, or the light technician, occupy very different positions. These positions entail different expectations, motivations, and points of view regarding how they should contribute to the creation of the work in the making. They approach the creative process based on their expertise, experience, and specialization. The dramaturg, on the other hand, does not hold any of these positions. This liberates him/her from focusing on a specific aspect of the performance. Instead, it shifts the attention towards becoming aware of how all these different elements brought onto the table by all the other collaborators are broad together and what their implications and potential are, how they shape the experience of the performance.[242] Similarly, when reflecting on her collaboration with Ralph Lemon, Profeta points out how

> [i]n both these rehearsal rooms the dramaturgical labor felt dispersed, shared; despite the fact that the directors/choreographers had final word, we were all building and dissecting the piece, from scratch, together. And yet, there was still something different about my role with Ralph—being granted, and taking on, the specific title. In that context I was the only one in the room with no reason to be there *except* to support the dramaturgical (emphasis in original).[243]

[240] Bleeker, "Thinking No-One's Thought," 69.
[241] Bleeker, 69.
[242] Bleeker, 71.
[243] Profeta, *Dramaturgy in Motion,* 12.

This suggests that dramaturgical practice has a strong collaborative and democratized character, reverberating the observations made in chapter one. In that sense, a dramaturg is not necessary, yet their presence can be constructive in the creative process. [244]

In relation to Châtelet's work, it would be interesting to draw a parallel with the idea of the everchanging horizon to elaborate on the value of their presence. I would argue that the dramaturg's role is important exactly because it requires its holder to become aware of the mobility of the horizon and imagine the possibilities that emerge when one shifts their point of view. This does not mean that others cannot engage with this idea, but as stated earlier their presence means that there is one person whose role focuses on exactly that. At the same time, this idea of the everchanging horizon moves away from the idea of the dramaturg as the guardian of pre-existing concepts or theoretical background that should guide the creative process. The dramaturg does not possess the knowledge of how the performance should develop. The performance does not hold a priori an endpoint that needs to be reached. Instead, it is co-shaped through the collaborative processes and actions taking place during the rehearsals. The performance in the making exists in a sphere of potential configurations. Dramaturgical work focuses on becoming tuned to how different processes actualize these configurations and contemplate their implications. The performance emerges through the decision-making processes that operate on a collaborative level and by uncovering the implicit assumptions that guide those processes. As Lepecki suggests, "[d]ramaturgy emerges thanks to the dramaturg's capacity to bypass a subject-position of (fore)knowledge, and thus allow that the logic of the piece that is

[244] Although Lepecki, does not take a clear position with regards, to the necessity of the dramaturg, given the analysis and my understanding of his work, I would argue that he would most likely not argue against this proposition.

about-to-come becomes actual, concrete."[245] This mode of working places the dramaturg in an interesting position. However, how can this position be understood? What kind of knowledge does it entail?

In her work, "Propensity: Pragmatics and Functions of Dramaturgy in Contemporary Dance," Bauer affirms the need to revise the position of the dramaturg as the mediator of the theory/practice binary and proposes to "locate the dramaturg as a subject in the creative process."[246] She also points out that this might suggest another binary between the "subject of experience" and the "subject of knowledge."[247] However, as she argues and as this research has indicated, the shift from the theory-practice binary towards the notions of potentiality and actualization and the significance of actions as material and embodies practices makes this subsequent binary less problematic as it might initially appear. For Bauer, the deconstruction of the theory-practice binary allows her to "observe the empirical transformation of the dramaturg into an essentially pragmatic figure – a subject of a certain type of action, who therefore needs to be understood in terms of the strategies and functions he/she initiates."[248] This point echoes once again similar proposals of the role of the dramaturg, particularly its catalytic function.

At the same time, she addresses the role of the dramaturg's body and its literal and metaphorical proximity within the creative process, as opposed to the distant position of the external observer. The spatial metaphor of proximity has been used by several other dramaturgs, including Lepecki and Kunst. The value of this metaphor for Bauer lies in "how the [dramaturgical] process itself is metaphorized as a body of which the dramaturg is a part. The distance of vision is replaced by an integration of the body of the dramaturg into the body of the

[245] Lepecki, "Errancy as Work," 53.
[246] Bauer, "Propensity," 31.
[247] Bauer, 31.
[248] Bauer, 32.

process."[249] Thus, it is not only a type of conceptual awareness that is implicated in dramaturgical work, but also how the dynamics of the creative process ask for the dramaturg to be present physically, to process the interplay of all these elements by also suspending, at least temporarily, conceptual knowledge.[250] This is why Bauer suggests that "the dramaturg needs to be able to renew images and their connections, redistribute representations, and, in short, be the subject of aesthetic experience."[251] A formulation that echoes Lepecki's suggestion that the dramaturg's most important task is "to constantly explore possible sensorial manifestoes."[252] In that sense, the body operates as the locus of the dramaturgs acquired knowledge, without necessarily contradicting the value that can be gained from theoretical sources, from "conceptualized knowledge" that can be articulated through linguistic means.

Ultimately, I argue that embodied and conceptual knowledge are deeply entangled through this practice and constitute the mode of dramaturgical thinking I have analysed through this research. To provide a final parallel with Châtelet's work, I would argue that the examples of Einstein's thinking process suggest a kind of suspension of conceptual knowledge that does not operate on a strictly abstract level. Both in dramaturgical and diagrammatic writing, it is not a matter of one or the other, but rather a matter of how different modes of knowledge can work together. As Bleeker proposed through her parallel of the language games, what is important is what emerges from the interplay between the two. Thus, since each "body," each collaborator arguably holds a unique combination of aesthetic and conceptual observations, any person in the process can possess the role and contribute towards the dramaturgy of the work as long as they become attuned to this mode of *looking at, experiencing, thinking about* the creative process.

[249] Bauer, 33.
[250] Bauer, 38.
[251] Bauer, 38.
[252] de Lahunta, "Dance Dramaturgy," The Conversation.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this research, I posed two theoretical questions with regards to the state of contemporary dramaturgy, based on two propositions. The first was related to issues of definition and demarcation of dramaturgy. In short, the question was: if we start from the assumption that it is counterproductive to argue what dramaturgy is, using existing analytical tools, how can we theorize and write about this practice? The second one was connected more closely to the dramaturg's role and its connection with dramaturgical practices within the creative process. Thus, if we start from the assumption that the dramaturg is not necessary, how can we make sense of the expanding literature on the subject, and how can we still theorize and write about their contribution and potential value in the creative process? My initial observation was that the existing analytical tools are unable to engage constructively with these questions.

To engage with these questions, I identified some common points in the literature of dramaturgy addressing the motion-like qualities of contemporary dramaturgical practices. I proposed that a significant reason for the challenges in theorizing dramaturgy lies in the prominent role movement plays in the practice of dramaturgy on a conceptual, and a practical level, and that the existing analytical tools are not able to acknowledge movement's contribution in the creative process.

Moreover, I identified the value of dance dramaturgy and its potential of addressing further the common threads and problematics identified in (dance) dramaturgy. I delved into the history of dance dramaturgy and the challenge of distinguishing between different "fields" in dramaturgy based on the specificity of the creative material used to clarify the complexities that emerged from the rapid expansion and experimentation of dramaturgical practices. I identified the variety of ways language and movement operate within the creative process and the

ambiguities that this created. Nex to this, I traced in the literature a specific mode of thinking that emerged in contemporary dramaturgical practices of (dance) performances that focus on the dynamic qualities of dramaturgical thinking and, consequently, the need to move beyond the theory-practice binary that has dominated the literature of (dance) dramaturgy since its conception.

The conceptual analysis of virtuality allowed me to engage in-depth with the two observations I identified at the beginning of this research. Virtuality provided the metaphysical basis for a theoretical framework that acknowledges the potentiality of motion and constructs a method for representing motion through the practice of diagrammatic writing. The parallels that I identified between dramaturgical thinking and the mode of thinking implicated in diagrammatic writing, provided me with the means to articulate some of the embedded qualities in dramaturgical thinking and the way that motion is embedded in the practice. The proposition to move away from the theory-practice binary towards the potentiality-actualization pair allowed me to propose a shift from the need to define dramaturgy towards the value of describing and understanding the principles that guide this renewed mode of thinking. Secondly, the introduction of the pair of potentiality-actualization under the framework of virtuality allowed me to describe some of the qualities of this new mode of dramaturgical thinking. I identified the different modes through which dramaturgical thinking operates, and its ability to catalyse the actions, decisions and thoughts that emerge during the creative process.

The second aspect of this theoretical framework that was valuable for the context of this research was that diagrammatic writing entails an embodied approach in the way that knowledge is produced and codified. The concepts of perspective and of an everchanging horizon were constructive when working towards a better understanding of the value of the dramaturg's role

and their highly contested presence. On the one hand, this is because it frees the role from its necessity to be carried out by a single person; and, on the other hand, it reinstates the function of the role as a subject and an observer that oscillates between embodied and conceptual knowledge.

The freeing of the role means that the dramaturg is not necessary for the creative process as a separate collaborator. The practice of dramaturgy can be manifested during the creative process, as long as other collaborators become removed temporarily from the actions and thinking that their own role requires. They need to engage with the mode of thinking that the practice entails and approach the performance from the "perspective" of the dramaturg. This is not always an easy thing to do, nor is it possible to fully separate the roles when manifested in the same person. The framework does not intend to prescribe, but to articulate the complexity of the process. It proposes to shift the attention towards the different modes of awareness that the collaborators can go through, intentionally or unintentionally. This, consequently, highlights the highly collaborative character of the creative process. It transforms dramaturgy into a highly democratized practice, as has already been suggested at the beginning of this research. At the same time, this approach does not make the dramaturg redundant. Depending on the team's needs and dynamics, the presence of a designated dramaturg becomes valuable because it does not need to occupy any other role in the process.

The reinstatement of the role as a subject of both embodied and conceptual knowledge reaffirms the need for alternative analytical tools that move away from trying to define dramaturgy in purely abstract terms. Moreover, it reinforces the value of freeing the dramaturg's role. Different collaborators will occupy the dramaturg's role differently because of their own personalised embodied experiences and way of thinking. This brings into the process a potential

wealth of information that can fuel the creative process into unexpected territories. On the other side of the spectrum, this can also create more confusion and the inability to make decisions. However, this is, I would argue, the most challenging aspect of the dramaturg's role and the value of the pair of potentiality and actualization. The dramaturg needs to engage with the inventive spaces and the imaginary places that different information or actions bring forward on an aesthetic as well as conceptual level, contemplate their potential implications and value for the performance-to-come, and share that with the team. The dramaturg is not the one that decides what the performance will be about, but the one that constantly works with conditionals, the one that operates in a speculative mode, between potentials and how they can be actualized during the rehearsal. In a similar manner that Châteletargues that diagrams are the vehicles that foster knowledge and intuition, dramaturgical thinking entails and requires a form of intuition that is nurtured every time someone wears the *suit of the dramaturg*.

The practice of dramaturgy and this mode of dramaturgical thinking operates in uncharted territory with regards to modes of knowledge that cannot be grasped on a purely abstract level. At the same time, these new modes of knowledge production give rise to skills that can be valuable and insightful beyond the field of dramaturgy. In the introduction of *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, Madga Romanska argues that

> [d]ramaturgy increasingly is becoming detached from the specific theatrical function and becoming a skill necessary for the entire creating team involved in the theatre-making process to employ in the process of development and audience outreach. The dramaturgical skills of analysis, critical and structural thinking, and interconnectivity also become tools that can cross artistic boundaries and gain applicability in a world outside of theatre.[253]

[253] Magda Romanska, "Introduction," in *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, edited by Magda Romanska (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 8, ProQuest Ebook Central.

The highly embodied qualities of the practice and the skills that dramaturgs have obtained over the years make dramaturgy a field of study that can potentially inform ongoing interdisciplinary research that focuses on embodied knowledge, such as certain strands in the field of neuroscience, cognition, and perception. Ultimately, this research might be considered a first step toward a framework that can further ascertain dramaturgy's value within the field of performance studies and beyond; a framework that does not only reflect on the value of the practice, but it introduces a renewed way of thinking through the body. As a final proposition, I invite you to wear your own *dramaturg's suit* and think along with me. What do you *see*?

Bibliography

Bauer, Bojana. “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, 31-49. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Behrndt, Synne K. “Dance, Dramaturgy and Dramaturgical Thinking.” *Contemporary Theatre Review* 20, no. 2 (2010): 185-96. https://doi.org/10.1080/10486801003682393.

Bleeker, Maaike. “Dramaturgy as a Mode of Looking.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 13, no.2 (2003): 163-172, https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700308571432.

Bleeker, Maaike. “Thinking No-One’s Thought.” In *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, edited by Pil Hansen and Darcey Callison, 67-83. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Bleeker, Maaike. *Visuality in the Theatre: The Locus of Looking*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Châtelet, Gilles. *Figuring Space: Philosophy, Mathematics and Physics.* Translated by Robert Shore and Muriel Zagha. Dordrecht: Springer – Science + Business Media, B.V., 2000.

Cvejic, Bojana. “The Ignorant Dramaturg.” *Maska* 16, no. 131-132 (Summer 2010): 41-53.

de Freitas, and Sinclair, Nathalie. “Diagram, gesture, agency: theorizing embodiment in the mathematics classroom.” *Mathematics Education and Contemporary Theory* 80, no. ½ (May 2012): 133-152. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41485972.

Georgelou, Konstantina, Efrosini Protopapa, and Danae Theodoridou eds., *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance*. Amsterdam: Valiz, 2017.

Gilpin, Heidi. “Shaping Critical Spaces: Issues in the Dramaturgy of Movement Performance.” In *Dramaturgy in American Theatre: A Source Book*, edited by Susan Jonas, Geoff Proehl, and Michael Lupu, 83-87. Orlando: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997.

Hansen, Pil. “Introduction.” In *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement*, edited by Pil Hansen, and Darcey Callison, 1-27. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Heathfield, Andrian. “Dramaturgy without a Dramaturge.*”* In *Rethinking Dramaturgy: Errancy and Transformation,* edited by Manuel Bellisco, Maria José Cifuentes, and Ampraro Écija, 105-116. Murcia: Centro Parraga & CENDEAC, 2010. https://www.adrianheathfield.net/project/dramaturgy-without-a-dramaturge.

Van Imschoot, Myriam. “Anxious Dramaturgy.” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 13, no. 2 (2003): 57-68. https://doi.org/10.1080/07407700308571425.

Van Kerkhoven, Marianne. “On Dramaturgy.” *Theaterschrift*, no.5-6 (1994): 9-35. http://sarma.be/docs/3108.

Van Kerkhoven, Marianne. “European Dramaturgy in the 21St Century: A constant movement.” *Performance Research* 14, no. 4 (2009): 7-11. https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160903519476.

Kunst, Bojana. “The Economy of Proximity: Dramaturgical work in contemporary dance.” *Performance Research* 14, no. 3 (2009): 81- 88. http://sarma.be/docs/2872.

De Lahunta, Schott. “Dance Dramaturgy: speculations and reflections.” *Dance Theatre Journal* 16, no. 1 (2000): 20-25. http://sarma.be/docs/2869.

Lehmann, Hans –Thies, and Patrick Primavesi. “Dramaturgy on Shifting Grounds.” *Performance Research* 14, no.3 (2009): 3-6. https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160903519468.

Lepecki, André. “Concept and Presence: The contemporary European Dance Scene.” In *Rethinking Dance History: A Reader*, edited by Alexandra Carter, 170-181. London, New York: Routledge, 2004.

Lepecki, André. “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, 52-66. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Lepecki, André. “We’re Not Ready For the Dramaturge: Some notes for dance dramaturgy.” In *Rethinking Dramaturgy, Errancy and Transformation*, edited by A. Écija, M. Bellisco & M.J. Cifuentes, 183-199. Madrid: Centro Párraga, Centro de Documentación y Estudios Avanzados de Arte Contemporáneo, 2011.

Look, Brandon C. “Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.” In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Stanford University, Spring 2020 Edition. Article published Dec 22, 2007; last modified Feb 9, 2020. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/leibniz/.

Profeta, Katherine. *Dramaturgy in Motion: At Work on Dance and Movement Performance* Madison. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

Robinson, Howard. “Substance.” In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Stanford University, Spring 2020 Edition. Article published Oct 3, 2004; last modified Feb 26, 2020. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/substance/.

Romanska, Magda, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2014. Accessed March 7, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.